

A mum's MISSION

When Naomi's son Jamie tragically passed away, she was determined to save lives in his memory...

He loved fishing



Jamie and me



Me with Jamie and Callum

Me, Callum, Stanley Tucci and Jeremy

— that his pals said had felt like hours — the ambulance finally arrived.

The paramedics managed to get Jamie's heart going in the back of the ambulance on the way to the hospital.

But in the time it had taken them to get there, Jamie's brain had been starved of oxygen and his condition deteriorated.

Two days after we arrived at the hospital, the consultant called me and Gavin into a room.

'Have you thought about donating Jamie's organs?' he asked.

I felt a lump in my throat.

Jamie was caring, and as an organ donor he had actually signed the register three times.

He signed it when he turned 16, again when he applied for his driving licence, and once more when he turned 18 — just six weeks before his cardiac arrest.

We agreed —

next day.

Hours later, we landed at Heathrow and drove straight to hospital.

Gavin was at Jamie's bedside. He told us that when Jamie collapsed, his friends had called an ambulance.

In the meantime, his friend Josh and Nathan's dad Tim, took it in turns performing CPR.

They'd asked the call handler if they could take Jamie to the hospital themselves, but they'd said no.

While they waited for the ambulance, the police arrived, but they didn't have a defibrillator in their car.

Jamie's friends knew there was one in the school just around the corner, but it was locked inside and they weren't able to access it.

After 18 agonising minutes

finally landed in Canada and made our way to Niagara Falls, where we were staying.

The following night, on the evening of December 31st, Jeremy and I headed out for dinner to celebrate our anniversary.

But at around 10pm, my phone rang.

It was Jamie and Callum's dad, Gavin. Puzzled, I answered.

'Jamie's in hospital,' Gavin said. My stomach

My stomach tightened with fear.

'Why?' I asked, worried.

'He's had a heart attack,' he replied.

I froze in shock and confusion. 'How? What happened?' I asked.

A million questions raced around my mind, I couldn't think

straight, or get my words out.

'His mates said he felt unwell a couple of hours after midnight,' Gavin explained. 'They said he went outside for some fresh air but shortly after, he collapsed. When his friends went out to check on him, he'd gone into cardiac arrest.'

I couldn't believe what I was hearing.

'Can you come home?' Gavin asked.

'Of course,' I said, before I hung up.

'It's Jamie, he's in hospital,' I said to Jeremy, relaying what Gavin had told me.

His face paled, and we quickly settled the bill.

We hurriedly left the restaurant and made our way to the hotel, so we could pack and head to the airport.

Thankfully, British Airways were able to put us on a flight the

'His mates said he felt unwell'

'We can raise some money'

out to him from the kitchen.

We couldn't believe it. It felt like it was what Jamie would've wanted. He'd touched so many lives.

I was so numb and angry that Jamie was unable to access a defibrillator, so if we could do anything, we wanted to prevent this from happening again.

Every time the donations climbed higher, we all felt an immense sense of pride.

In time, we held his funeral.

Scores of family and friends turned up, armed with flowers, to help remember our wonderful lad.

Many wore black hoodies and tracksuits — Jamie's favourite thing to wear.

'Jay always made sure everyone else was OK, never really thinking about himself,' explained the funeral master of ceremony, Shirley.

Callum told everyone about their magical trip to New York together.

Meanwhile, we waited an agonising seven months for Jamie's inquest, but sadly, it left us with more questions than answers.

We were told that no reason could be found for Jamie's

cardiac arrest, and the pathologist had stated that Jamie's heart was the healthiest she had ever seen.

Our Jamie was one of a kind — and lit up the life of everyone he came into contact with.

Since his death, we have raised more than £140,000 in total and we've just installed our 105th defibrillator.

Installing accessible defibrillators and raising awareness of the importance of CPR is our new way of life and is what keeps us going.

It's Jamie's legacy and we will continue making communities more heart-safe in his memory.

Naomi Rees-Issitt, 43, Rugby, Warwickshire

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The 100th defibrillator we installed