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**FUNDING BOOST IS GAME CHANGER
FOR LIFE CHANGING CHARITY**

The Polar Academy, a Bo'ness based charity with the aim of inspiring and positively changing young peoples' lives through exploration, has today (Monday 21 August) announced it is the recipient of a significant award from The Weir Charitable Trust discretionary award fund.

Craig Mathieson, who since establishing The Polar Academy in 2014 has worked tirelessly to transform the lives of young people crushed by a lack of self-confidence and self esteem, described the substantial £60,000 sum as a "hugely generous donation and a game changer for The Polar Academy that through exploration is fully committed to positively changing young lives in Scotland."

In just four years The Polar Academy has already engaged more than 50,000 pupils across the country. However, despite the positive feedback from participants and their families involved with the charity, The Polar Academy has remained wholly dependent on private donations and the help of founding supporters, including Chris Tiso, CEO of Tiso Group, in order to raise the £170,000 annually required to operate.

Mathieson, Scotland's greatest living polar explorer and one of only 12 polar explorers in the world to have skied to both the south and north poles, has no doubt the donation by The Weir Charitable Trust marks a further and significant step-change for The Polar Academy.

The 48 year-old commented: "I'm personally overwhelmed by the hugely generous financial support offered by The Weir Charitable Trust. Its support will directly impact on our commitment to use exploration to transform the physical and mental wellbeing of young people who feel invisible at school and plagued by feelings of anxiety and self-doubt.

"Specifically, this donation will make a huge difference to our 2017/2018 expedition training programme that's focused on helping some of the pupils at Lochgelly High School in Fife."

Annually for the past three years, ten teenage boys and girls from Scottish schools have been selected by The Polar Academy to undertake a rigorous and life-changing eight-month training programme.



With the active support of their school and family, for each participant the journey to transform their life culminates in a challenging, self-guided 100km, 10-day expedition in Eastern Greenland. It's relentless and tough but individual confidence soars as each young person successfully hauls his or her own 45kg sledge, camps and navigates through some of the world's remotest terrain. All return home as ordinary pupils who have achieved the extraordinary. Exuding fitness and a can do attitude, the youths subsequently recount their experiences to peer groups in schools across Scotland; inspiring others to also change their life for the better."

Lorraine Tait, manager of The Weir Charitable Trust, explained why the trust decided to support The Polar Academy. "Since creating The Polar Academy, Craig Mathieson has demonstrated a passionate and relentless commitment to help positively transform the mental and physical wellbeing of young people in Scotland.

"Significantly, feedback from parents and participants involved with The Polar Academy highlights how its methods undoubtedly help a young person regain self-confidence and esteem. Previous participants clearly gain the physical and mental strength to lead positive and fulfilled lives and to serve as role models in their community.

"The Weir Charitable Trust hopes that this £60,000 award towards training and running costs will ensure that The Polar Academy can continue to build on its impressive work to boost the mental and physical health of Scotland's young people."

www.weircharitabletrust.com
www.thepolaracademy.org

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