

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Students' support blind teacher's fundraising for Guide Dogs for the Blind**

WITH PHOTO – Students with Lisa Smith and Venture administrator Poppy Thompson

20 October, 2014

For immediate release:

Students from Ormiston Venture Academy joined visually impaired staff member Lisa Smith at the Gorleston branch of Morrisons to raise money for Guide Dogs for the Blind. Mrs Smith, student support officer, is aiming to raise £2500 before she runs the London Marathon in 2015 for Guide Dogs for the Blind, aided by her guide Carl Jessup, from Jessup's Clinic, Gorleston.

The students packed customers shopping from 9.00am until 3.00pm raising £922.81. This has been added to Mrs Smith's just giving site and she stands at total just short of £2000.00 with her aim of £2500.00 getting ever closer. Mrs Smith discovered she had RP following a standard eye test when she was 21. The condition causes permanent changes to vision but how quickly this happens and how it changes differs between people. Within 15 months of the eye test she was registered partially sighted and was registered blind at 30. Despite the condition being hereditary no one in Mrs Smith's family has the disease.

Mrs Smith explained: "I am not afraid to do all I want to do. My latest challenge is running and I love it. It is the sense and feeling of being what I call normal and free.

"I have my second guide dog, Unity, who is three. I got her last year after my first dog Vanity, who spends her days at Venture with the children, retired in 2012. I was without a guide dog for a year whilst waiting. This is usual but not having a dog meant I became a bit of a recluse again.

"I know how important the role of a guide dog is and want to raise funds to help ensure those who need one can have one."

The full lifetime cost of a guide dog from birth to retirement is £48,500.



Ormiston Venture Academy is supporting Mrs Smith with a range of activities incorporating world sight day and her marathon run. This includes a team Marathon in December where 26 teams running a mile each will help raise more money. ENDS

