

# Young referees offered vital funding in memory of Joel Richards

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Young referees across the UK are being offered a helping hand through a new fund set up in memory of Joel Richards, who was killed in a terrorist attack aged just 19.

Joel was a promising referee with his sights set on the Premier League, but his journey was cut short when he, his grandfather Pat and uncle Adrian were killed in the 2015 Tunisia beach attack.

His younger brother Owen, who survived the attack, and his mother Suzy, from Wednesbury, went on to set up the Smile For Joel charity in his memory, helping families affected by murder and violence.

The charity has now launched the Joel Richards Development Fund to help young referees who may be struggling with costs.

Suzy said: "We are so proud to be able to offer this help to young referees in Joel's memory. Whether it's kit or training costs, or maybe they've been asked to ref abroad but can't afford to travel – whatever it is we can help.

"Joel was a Level 4 referee at the age of 19 and his dream was to become a Premier League referee. He was robbed of that dream, but now we want to give someone else that opportunity.

"We felt we wanted to do this for Joel and we know it's something he would be proud to be part of."

Owen added: "The aim of this fund is to be able to reward those young referees who give back to those around them and encourage them to continue on in their football journey in the same way we know Joel would be doing if we were lucky enough to have him with us.

"I believe this is something that reflects and represents who Joel was as a character. He would be tremendously proud to have this in his name."

The charity had previously run the Joel Richards Foundation Legacy Fund in partnership with Birmingham FA.

It is now being relaunched as the Joel Richards Development Fund in collaboration with the Referees' Association and has a much wider reach and scope.

It is open to young referees aged between 16 and 26 who have been a paying member of the Referees' Association for two years.

To find out more and to apply, visit [www.the-ra.org/news/joel-richards-development-fund-application-form](http://www.the-ra.org/news/joel-richards-development-fund-application-form) or email [membership@the-ra.org](mailto:membership@the-ra.org)

To find out more about Smile For Joel, visit [smileforjoel.com](http://smileforjoel.com)

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