

I had sex swap op on my 16th birthday

Brave teen's amazing story of transformation



Role model ... Jackie Green hopes to be an inspiration to others suffering from gender issues

STEWART WILLIAMS

By JENNA SLOAN

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LIKE most teenagers Jackie Green couldn't wait for her special 16th birthday present.

But the gift from her mum Susie wasn't clothes or jewellery — it was a £13,500 sex change operation.

Jackie, who was born Jack, knew she wanted to switch genders from the age of four.

And following years of horrific bullying and **FIVE** suicide attempts Jackie, from Leeds, became one of the youngest transsexuals in the world after the seven-hour procedure in Thailand turned her into a woman.

Jackie, now 18, said: "I've gone through hell to get where I am today but now I want to tell my story to prove I'm not a freak. I'm just a regular young woman.

"I've had to put up with terrible insults all my life. I've been spat at in the street and beaten up as a teenager. But I want to show that you can survive this and come out the person you always wanted to be."

Susie, who is divorced from Jackie's dad, said: "As a toddler Jack wanted to go to the aisle of dolls and cuddly toys in Toys R Us. He put jumpers on his head as they felt like long hair and he loved Barbie."

Thinking it was a phase, mum-of-four Susie happily let her son, the eldest of four boys, raid her wardrobe. But when he started school, it became clear this wasn't just a fad for Jack.

Susie, 43, said: "We were in the car when Jack was four and he said to me, 'Mummy, God has made a mistake, I'm really a girl'. At the age of six he told me he wanted a sex change operation. I decided to go to my GP. I was worried. I thought maybe I'd done something to make him behave this way."

The doctor advised Susie that Jack would grow out of it, but he didn't.

Susie, an IT manager, added: "Jack became isolated. He was disruptive in class and started to run away from school. He hated having his hair cut short and loathed wearing the boys' uniform. As soon as he got home he'd rip off his school clothes and put on his sparkly girls' jeans.



'I have a girl's brain in a boy's body' ... Jack, who would want to wear girly dresses, sent plea to classmates
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"I have three younger sons and they were all into trucks and football, whereas Jack wanted girly dresses and dolls. I tried to ban his dolls and girls toys but I couldn't force him to be miserable so I let him have the toys back.

"Despite being the complete opposite of Jackie when she was their age, my three sons are very supportive of their sister.

"It was only when I saw the boys growing up, running around pretending to be soldiers, that I realised just how big the difference was between them and Jackie."



Prayer ... Jackie in a Thai hospital following her sex-change operation
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After an IT lesson where Jack, then nine, emailed all his classmates saying, "I have a girl's brain in a boy's body", Susie spoke to the head and Jack was allowed to grow his hair and wear a girls' uniform.

It was when Jack moved up to high school, aged 11, and became Jackie that the sickening abuse began.

Susie said: "Jackie was being terribly bullied. She hated her body so much she would shower with her knickers on. I once found her sobbing, holding a knife and threatening to cut off her genitals.

"Boys at school would kick her in the corridor and shout 'tranny'. She locked herself in the toilets at school once and took an overdose.

"She tried to commit suicide five times. I had to lock all our medicines in a safe to stop her getting them. Then she stole tablets from a supermarket. I also had to lock all our knives away.



Support ... proud Susie and daughter Jackie are closer than ever
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"It was terrible to see. How could I force her to go through a puberty which she found so abhorrent? I wanted a daughter who was alive, not to be burying a dead son." Jackie ended up with post-traumatic stress disorder because of the bullying and eventually left mainstream education to attend a special learning unit for kids with health issues.

After being refused medical treatment in the UK, endless hours of internet research led Susie to Norman Spack, a doctor at Boston Children's Hospital in America.

His clinic treats children with gender issues, or gender dysphoria, with drugs known as puberty-blockers — monthly injections which stop the normal changes of a boy in puberty including facial hair, the voice deepening and an Adam's apple developing.



Living life as an girl ... Jackie, seen here aged 11, was denied medical treatment in the
UK
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The pair flew to Boston for a consultation and, after extensive psychological tests, 12-year-old Jackie was accepted on the programme.

Dr Spack prescribed the drugs and Susie bought the puberty-blockers — now available in the UK for those aged 12 and over — online.

Together with the flights, the treatment cost £5,000 a year. Jackie was also prescribed the female hormone oestrogen so she developed breasts and hips.



New chapter ... Jackie and Susie tell Sun's Jenna Sloan, middle, their story
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Susie then remortgaged her house and booked the sex change op in Thailand for the day of her daughter's 16th birthday. The ops are not performed on under-18s in the UK.

Susie estimates all the medical bills and flights have cost her £28,000 in total. Jackie, who had already been living as a girl for years, said: "When I got to Thailand I couldn't wait for the operation. I wasn't nervous, I was euphoric. I knew this would be the answer to my problems. The nurses even sang Happy Birthday as they wheeled me into theatre."

Jackie works in a video shop but is hoping to launch a career as an actress, model and singer.



Jack the lad ... Jackie when 18 months old and, right, aged 2½
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She said: "Most people in my area know my history. I do still get kids running into the shop and asking if I'm a boy. I just ask them if I look like a boy and that normally shuts them up.

"I love singing, shopping and going out with my friends, like any other teenager, and I've had a boyfriend, although we recently broke up.

"I'll never be able to be pregnant, but there are other options, such as adoption, if I want a family. I'm even appearing in a show on ITV2 called Models, Misfits And Mayhem as I try to get my modelling career going."

Susie added: "The NHS really need to do more to address the needs of children and young people like Jackie. They will end up self-harming or even killing themselves if left without treatment.

"When Jackie was younger I felt like we were alone, or that I was a terrible mum. But now I know there are other families out there like us.

"I help out with Mermaids, a charity which helps parents and children who have gender identity issues. We want to show them you can survive.

"My daughter may have been born a boy but now, at last, she's grown into a confident, beautiful woman."

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See mermaidsuk.org.uk for more info.

