

A blind singer is hoping to win over the judges on RTE's Voice of Ireland this week

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By Maeve Quigley

Brave Rebecca Kelly from Wicklow has insisted she won't let disability stand in way of her goals



Rebecca Kelly won't let disability stand in way of her goals

A blind singer is hoping to win over the judges on this week's Voice Of Ireland.

Rebecca Kelly suffers from macular degeneration but she hasn't let her disability hold her back.

The Maynooth graduate, who is now studying at music school BIMM, said: "I have had macular degeneration all my life - my grandfather had it and my dad and my auntie have it out of his family.

"I'm the eldest so I have it and my sister Emily and brother John have it but my other sister Orla was lucky and escaped it.

"But we have never let it affect us as we feel we should be able to do whatever we want to do. We have no central vision but our peripheral vision is better but I am registered blind.

" I am very light sensitive and that has got worse over the last couple of years. I have to use a guide stick and dark glasses.

"We are very lucky because the National Council For The Blind and the National League for the Blind have been very supportive."

Rebecca, from Ashford, Co Wicklow, and her siblings are very active and she said trying sports has given them all confidence to take on challenges.

She has tried her hand at everything from water skiing and rock climbing and says her dad Frank has inspired her.

Rebecca said: "My dad is my inspiration - he is great. He is a musical director of four choirs, he's a retired music teacher and he still teaches piano.

"He does loads of different things and he has done a lot with his life and I hope to follow in his footsteps and not let my sight get in the way of anything I want to do."

And she hopes to follow the example of blind Voice UK winner Andrea Begley.

She said: "I want to be an inspiration to other people with disabilities who might think they don't have the confidence. To show them they can do whatever they want if they put their minds to it."