

LITTLE STARS

Autumn Edition 2023

Welcome to our Autumn Newsletter



A community
of care for
nine-year-old
Saoibh

Inside:

BRAVE HENRY'S
JOURNEY THROUGH
SURGERY AS
A NEWBORN



Meet Ann
Higgins:

Principal of Children's
Health Ireland
at Temple Street
Hospital School

And much more...

WELCOME!

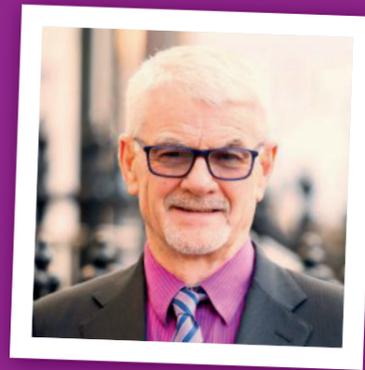
Thank you for being part of our community

I'm delighted to welcome you to our Autumn edition of *Little Stars* newsletter!

Inside you will read the stories of sick children and families whose lives have been touched by generous supporters just like you. It is impossible to overstate what a difference you make to everyone who comes through the doors of a Children's Health Ireland hospital or urgent care centre.

I hope that on every page of this newsletter you will feel the impact you're having as part of our community of care.

Hugh Kane, Interim Chief Executive, Children's Health Foundation



Thank you TESCO!

A huge thanks to Tesco who held amazing events over the summer to raise funds for the vital redevelopment of the neonatal ward in Children's Health Ireland at Crumlin. Tesco colleagues, suppliers and customers raised over €262,000 to fund the redevelopment which will create new high dependency and intensive care beds on the ward. These beds will allow sick babies to be treated as soon as possible without being transferred to a different ward or hospital.

Tesco's annual golf classic took place in Dun Laoghaire Golf Club and raised over €100,000. Meanwhile, the Mega Summer Prize Draw in July raised over €160,000 in stores across Ireland and prizes included cruises, new phones and Tesco vouchers! Fionn Plunkett, nine-months-old, and his Mam Ashlinn were on hand to pull the winning tickets in the draw. Fionn needed two serious surgeries not



long after he was born, due to his severely restricted airway and an issue with his bowel. Fionn spent the first seven months of his life in the neonatal unit in Children's Health Ireland at Crumlin. Having spent so much time on the ward, Ashlinn knows all too well the impact Tesco's generosity will have for babies like Fionn. "Your support makes such a difference and does not go unnoticed, so thank you!"

We're so lucky to count on Tesco as one of our supporters. Make sure to keep an eye out in your local Tesco on how you can support sick children this year!

TRICK OR TREAT

For sick children

This year, as the spooky season draws near, we are once again calling on all our supporters to raise vital, life-saving funds by bringing Halloween to their homes, offices, schools, crèches and clubs.

Trick or Treat for sick children is one of our most popular fundraising events, and it couldn't be easier to take part. Simply host a party in any setting and invite guests to make a donation.

Check out the details online at childrenshealth.ie/trickortreat Sign up there and we'll send you a Party Pack.

Join the fun! It's a spooktacular way to support sick children and their families!



Katie, six-years-old

2022 Impact Figures

In 2022, Children's Health Foundation invested a little over **€8.5 million** in Children's Health Ireland hospitals, urgent care centers and the Children's Health Ireland Research and Innovation office, (previously NCRC). **This sum included:**

€4.15m

that went to life-changing research

Almost **€4.7m** invested across the hospitals on the upgrading and replacement of vital and life-saving medical equipment, including:

€905k

to purchase a new CT scanner

€265k

to purchase 3D ECHO machines

€200k

to purchase a 3500xl fragment genetic analyser

€1.5m

to purchase a new MRI Scanner

Over **€826k** to fund a range of support activities including:

Play Therapy and resources at all Children's Health Ireland sites

The Giggle fund in Children's Health Ireland at Crumlin

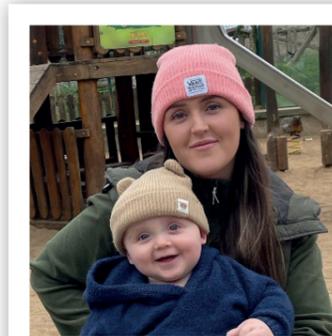
Medical Social work department funding to support families and patients in Children's Health Ireland at Temple Street

Music Therapy across Children's Health Ireland sites

VHI WOMEN'S MINI MARATHON

Sarah ran this year's VHI Women's Mini Marathon for Children's Health Foundation, to support the little patients and staff in Children's Health Ireland hospitals and urgent care centres, after her son Axel was born in 2022 with PROS-PIK3CA related overgrowth syndrome.

"From our first visit to Crumlin, we could not have received better care, support and empathy from every single member of staff," said Sarah, talking about her reasons for taking part in the Mini Marathon. With their dedicated effort, Sarah and Axel's Aunt together raised an incredible €6,430 for Dermatology! Thank you so much to Sarah — and Team Axel — for helping support sick children!



My year at Tallaght Hospital School

For the school year of 2021-22, I was lucky to work as Acting-Principal teacher in Children's Health Ireland at Tallaght Hospital School, which caters for children attending the hospital between the ages of four and sixteen.

I learned a lot in my year in Tallaght Hospital — time spent in a hospital, when one is well, makes one appreciate health and happiness. 'Is fearr an tsláinte!' (Your health is your wealth). When I left Tallaght, I promised I would do something soon to support the patients and staff, so in April I ran my first marathon in Limerick and raised €7,461 for Children's Health Foundation.

Vinny Byrne, ex-acting Principal of the school in Children's Health Ireland at Tallaght.

You can learn more about Hospital Schools by scanning this QR code...



Donate online: childrenshealth.ie/donate

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HEROIC HENRY

The story of a brave little boy who urgently needed surgery at just five-days-old



Henry is 18-months-old and as bold, confident and adventurous a lad as you could ever hope to meet. "He's a rocket!" says his Mam, Avril. "He's really active, really inquisitive, really enthusiastic. He just embraces

everything that life has to offer, and he has done from day one."

When Henry was born, back in November 2021, he seemed to be a perfectly healthy and happy baby boy. But the following day Avril and her partner began to notice their newborn was struggling a bit when it came to feeding. He was unsettled, crying a lot, he hadn't pooped at all, and was even throwing up.

"Now I was brand new to parenting so I had no idea what was normal and what wasn't," recalls Avril. But the doctors were growing worried, especially when they noticed Henry had thrown up some green bile. They decided it would be best to give Henry an x-ray, so they could determine the nature of the blockage.

The x-ray did not provide an answer, so Henry was taken to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), while we waited for an ambulance to bring him to Children's Health Ireland at Crumlin – it was vital to find out what was the matter with him, and they had the equipment and the expertise to do that.

As soon as Henry arrived at Children's Health Ireland at Crumlin, the medical team formulated a plan. When their initial interventions were inconclusive, it was decided that surgery was the only answer. Henry was unable to feed and the doctors urgently needed to see what was causing the blockage.



at ease. They said: "We'll do this and we'll mind him like he's our own," she says.

"...we'll mind him like he's our own."

The surgical team in Children's Health Ireland at Crumlin

Henry's surgery lasted five hours, but it yielded the answer everyone had been waiting for. Little Henry had malrotation - nothing inside him was where it should be. There was also an atresia in his intestines - like a twist in a hosepipe – that was preventing food from progressing through normally.

Not only did the surgery enable the team to

Avril recalls being uneasy about her five-day-old son having surgery, but at the same time understood why it was needed. "We just wanted a solution," she says. The confidence and care of the surgical team also put her

identify the problem, it enabled them to fix it. They smoothed out the kink in Henry's intestine and carefully stitched him back up.

When Avril and her partner got the call to say that not only was Henry fine after surgery, but that his intestinal issue had been found and rectified, they couldn't believe the good news. "There were so many stages of relief," says Avril.

After his surgery, Henry stayed in Children's Health Ireland at Crumlin for several more weeks to recover. He was tube-fed for another ten days as his body adjusted, but Avril vividly

recalls the first time she was able to feed him. "I think it was about ten days out or so, we were able to give him 1ml of milk. Now I don't know if you've ever seen 1ml of something," she laughs as she remembers her son hungrily drinking down a few drops of milk. "I have a beautiful video of it," she adds.

Henry's milk intake increased daily, and before long he was able to swallow and digest without any issue. And today? "He's not just an eater, he's a guzzler!" laughs Avril. "He just loves his grub no matter what it is."

"There were people looking out for us and looking over us the whole way."

Avril, Henry's Mam

This whole experience has left a strong impression on Avril. "Our experience in Crumlin was life-changing," she says. "I just found everybody so incredible. There were people looking out for us and looking over us the whole way. Just to be able to come to Crumlin, it's given us a completely different outlook on life."



A warm welcome for Saoibh

Watch Saoibh's special message to you here!



When she came to Children's Health Ireland at Temple Street for spinal surgery, the staff did all they could to make her feel at home

In July 2022, nine-year-old Saoibh was being treated in a local hospital in Waterford for chronic back pain when a routine MRI scan showed she had a large tumour on her spine.

The very next day, Saoibh, her Mam Orla and Dad Kenny were being taken to Children's Health Ireland at Temple Street, where they would spend the next eight weeks under the care of the neurosurgery team.

Kenny recalls how anxious the whole family was when they first arrived. "We didn't know how serious Saoibh's tumour was or what was down the line, but the surgeon was brilliant. He immediately put us at ease, not only us but Saoibh too. He made her feel so comfortable and made sure she was fully informed."

Saoibh's tumour was removed a couple of days after she first arrived to Children's Health Ireland at Temple Street and was thankfully found to be benign. Over the weeks that followed, Saoibh formed a particular bond with music therapist Alison Sweeney. "It was amazing!" says Kenny, remembering seeing his daughter smiling and laughing with Alison. "Saoibh has always loved music, but this showed us just how powerful music can be."

Kenny was very impressed by the level of care the whole family experienced. "We've never been made to feel more welcome than we have in Temple Street," he says. "It feels like a real community there and we will be part of the Temple Street family forever. Some of the people we've met along the way will truly be friends for life."

Water Babies Splashathon

In April, a very special fundraising event made a real splash! At Water Babies swim classes across Ireland, hundreds of children joined the fun — dressing up as their favourite superhero and taking part in a sponsored swimming challenge, suited to their age and ability.

These fabulous floating fundraisers kicked, paddled and splashed their way to a whopping €90,000 total! Carol McNally of Water Babies Ireland said, "We are absolutely thrilled to raise €90,000 through Water Babies' Splashathon this year — our little swimmers and their families have been tremendous fundraisers."

All of us at Children's Health Foundation are extremely grateful to all the wonderful Water Babies who raised so much for sick children and their families. Thank you all for taking the plunge!



MEET ANN HIGGINS

Principal of Children's Health Ireland at Temple Street Hospital School

Hundreds of thousands of children across the country have returned to school after the summer break. We caught up with Ann to find out about day-to-day life in the hospital school...



Can you tell us a little about the Hospital School?

When a child is in hospital it can be incredibly difficult and scary. For many, the option to attend school or have a class with a teacher at their bedside brings some normality and makes them feel safe. Our six school teachers, two special needs assistants and school secretary provide a mix of class learning, bedside lessons, and individual learning to patients of all ages and abilities across Children's Health Ireland at Temple Street, to ensure that a child's education isn't negatively impacted by their hospital stay.

How important is it for children to be able to attend school whilst they are in hospital?

Everything can feel so uncertain in hospital, but the familiarity of school can be a real comfort and drastically improve a child's emotional wellbeing and potentially their recovery time.

It is also so beneficial for a child to take some time away from the ward, working and learning

alongside other patients of similar ages. It helps them feel less alone and shows them that there are other children facing similar challenges.

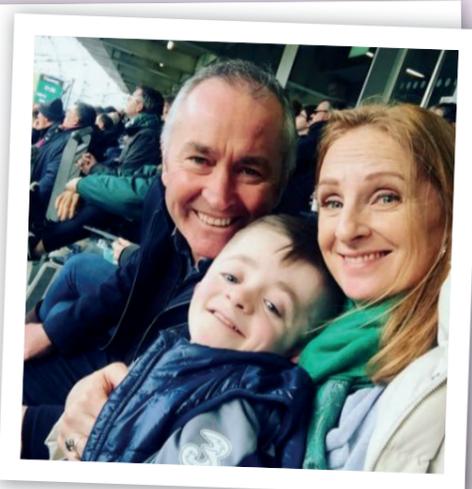
For regular patients and others who may need to stay longer in hospital, we provide a link with their base school and ensure they are following a similar curriculum to their classmates. We can also arrange Zoom lessons or chats with their class back home, so they can keep in touch with their teachers and friends. Lastly, we work to ensure a smooth transition for the child back to their base school.

How has fundraising helped the school?

The generosity of Children's Health Foundation's supporters has allowed us to create and furnish two satellite classrooms. Without these, we could not operate such a comprehensive and holistic educational service. Many children can't get to the school hub, so having these smaller, accessible classrooms around the hospital ensures that we can provide a service to as many children as possible.

REMEMBERING Michael

Ann has a very personal connection to the work of Children's Health Ireland — her son Michael. Michael was an incredible child who lived with a condition called osteogenesis imperfecta (often known as Brittle Bone Disease). However, he never let this get in the way of his absolute joy and excitement for life. After his life began in residential care, Michael came to live with Ann and her husband Barry — this was the start of a beautiful love story. His personality was infectious and he made an impact on everyone he met. Ann and Barry are forever grateful to Children's Health Ireland at Temple Street for the outstanding medical care he received throughout his short life.



Donate online: childrenshealth.ie/donate

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Save The Date



Ladies Christmas Lunch

Kick off your festive season on **Friday 1st December 2023** at the **Herbert Park Hotel, Ballsbridge** for an afternoon of fun at the Children's Health Foundation Ladies Christmas Lunch.

Enjoy a drink's reception, a delicious three-course lunch, guest speakers, goodies to take home and a Christmas raffle with lots of amazing prizes. There will also be gift stalls so you can start Christmas shopping. It's a great way to kick-off the Christmas season whilst supporting sick children and their families.

To purchase tickets (€120 each) or a table, please contact Louisa – lkennedy@childrenshealth.ie or call **01 709 1700**

'Dare to be Brave' for sick children

Will you 'Dare to be Brave' to support sick children and their families in Children's Health Ireland at Crumlin, Temple Street, Tallaght and Connolly?

The final event in our adventure series this year is a mental and physical endurance challenge called Hell & Back. It will take place on 30th September in Kilruddery House in Bray, Co Wicklow.

If you're ready to get muddy, sign up at www.childrenshealth.ie/daretobebrave or email daretobebrave@childrenshealth.ie

YOUR LEGACY COULD BE THEIR FUTURE

Including a gift to Children's Health Foundation in your Will is a powerful way to make a positive difference to the outcomes for sick children in Ireland, for generations to come. Every gift that is entrusted to us will be put to work where it is needed most, ensuring that our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren receive the best possible standard of care and support – today, tomorrow, forever.

"A few years ago, I became a dad. As soon as my son was born, I started thinking about the future and I decided that it was time to make a Will. It was very easy; I just spoke to my solicitor and she guided me through the process. Making a Will allows you to take care of your family after you are gone and it's also an opportunity to help support work that matters to you."

Fergus McFadden
Irish Rugby legend



For a private and confidential chat, or to find out more, please contact Caroline Cummins on **01 709 1700** or email ccummins@childrenshealth.ie.



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