

LITTLE STARS

Spring Edition 2024

Welcome to our Spring Newsletter



Áine's lovely
Christmas
memories

Inside:

ZOE: The brave
"LITTLE FIGHTER"
with a big
PERSONALITY



10 Years of
the Children's
Heart Centre
in Crumlin

And much more...



Children's Health
FOUNDATION

Crumlin • Temple Street • Tallaght • Connolly

SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S HEALTH IRELAND



LOOKING TO TOMORROW

The new hospital is transforming the future of children's healthcare

The new children's hospital is set to open its doors in 2025. This new hospital and satellite centres present a unique opportunity to transform how clinical care is delivered to children across all specialities within Children's Health Ireland.

There is a lot of work to be completed over the coming months, and throughout the process Children's Health Ireland wants to make



The Youth Advisory Council on a tour of the new hospital

sure children and families remain at the heart of everything they do. Their transformation team is meeting parents and patients to hear about their experiences in Children's Health Ireland hospitals and urgent care centres to ask them about what works well and what can be improved in the services offered to children. By engaging with families, they'll be making sure they can meet their needs as fully as possible, both now and for the future.



WELCOME!

Meet our new CEO!

I am honoured to have taken up the role of Chief Executive of Children's Health Foundation in February of this year and I am delighted that one of the first things I get to do is to **thank you!**

What a pleasure it is to be able to share with you all that your kindness has achieved for sick children and their families.

Every single day, thanks to you, there are amazing things happening in Children's Health Ireland at Crumlin, Temple Street, Tallaght, and Connolly.

Dedicated medical teams are providing state-of-the-art treatments and care to thousands of children, many of whom are seriously-ill or have complex conditions.

Your full impact is impossible to put into words, but I hope this issue of Little Stars helps convey the difference you are making.

It is a privilege to now be a part of this amazing caring community with you.

Fionnuala O'Leary
Chief Executive Officer



The new site will bring much opportunity for children and their families, there will be:

380 individual, en-suite inpatient rooms, each with a bed for a parent

22 CICU beds;
18 NICU cots/beds; and
20 PICU General beds

4 acres of outdoor space with 14 gardens and courtyards

93
day beds

22 state-of-the-art operating theatres

1000 car parking spaces - 675 dedicated to families

LIGHTS, PRESENTS AND WONDERFUL TIMES WITH FAMILY

An update on little Áine, who finds so much to enjoy about every Christmas

Last year, Children's Health Foundation sent a letter to some of our supporters about a little girl named Áine. Maybe you remember receiving it?

Shortly after she was born, Áine was diagnosed with a rare bone condition called osteopetrosis (or 'stone bone'). Over the ensuing months this brave girl spent a total of 108 days in

hospital, at times fighting for her life. The medical teams in Children's Health Ireland at Crumlin took fantastic care of her, through a bone marrow transplant and beyond.

One thing we got to know about Áine is how much she loves Christmas – not just the excitement of presents but the lights, the festivity, the family togetherness. Her last few Christmases, since her medical treatments, have been a huge source of joy for Áine and her whole family.



Remembering their first family Christmas post-surgery, Áine's mum, Sara recalls the magic and the relief of the return to normality, "We all woke up, we were all together, we weren't worried about Covid or hospital



Áine and her siblings love sharing the excitement of Christmas

stays or temperatures. We were just in the moment and it was just good food and good conversation and good company, and the kids – their wonder of walking in and just seeing all these presents and just everything."

"Just being together, that's my favourite memory around Christmas and not thinking about an illness."

Áine's mum, Sara

Every single year, your warm generosity supports many sick children to get better so they can go home to spend the holidays together with their families. **Thank you!**

OUR CHRISTMAS RAFFLE WAS A SMASH HIT!

We want to say a massive **thank you** to everyone who took part in the Car Raffle for Children's Health Ireland at Crumlin and the Christmas Raffle for Children's Health Ireland at Temple Street.

You raised over €750,000, which is an incredible achievement! These vital funds will support sick children and their families in Children's Health Ireland

at Crumlin and Temple Street. Your support has been phenomenal – you're continuing to change lives each and every day.

Why not play in our next raffle? You'd once again have the chance to win big while providing essential support. We'll include details in our Autumn Newsletter.



Patrick pulling the winning ticket for the Christmas Raffle



"OUR LITTLE FIGHTER"

Zoe's medical journey has been long and difficult, but her determination, her family's love and your kind support have seen her through



"She wouldn't put her legs to the ground. And she was screaming, crying, holding her knees with her hands – we couldn't understand what was wrong."

Natalie, Zoe's mum

For the first two years of her life – first as a baby then as a toddler – Zoe was healthy and happy.

Then, literally overnight, Zoe began having severe pain in her legs. Her mum Natalie recalls how upsetting this was for her whole family.

The following day, Zoe's worried parents took her to their local hospital, fearing that their daughter had perhaps injured herself, even broken a bone, without them knowing. The doctors examined Zoe and

carried out an X-Ray, but could find nothing wrong. Zoe's parents tried managing the pain at home, but as soon as medication wore off poor Zoe would be in agony again.

On a follow-up visit to the hospital, the doctors decided to do some blood work to see if they could get to the bottom of what was affecting Zoe. What they found alarmed them enough that they sent Zoe by ambulance to Children's Health Ireland at Crumlin, where a further battery of tests was carried out in the hope of identifying what was troubling Zoe.



"They said it looked like Zoe had an aggressive form of systemic arthritis – that her immune system was attacking itself, causing inflammation in her joints," says Natalie. "They had to get in there with immunosuppressant drugs, to calm her body down."

For two years Zoe had different drug combinations, and although she had periods of being active and pain-free, none of the medicines fully addressed Zoe's condition. The Children's Health Ireland at Crumlin medical team and Zoe's parents agreed that she would need a bone marrow transplant, which would hopefully 'reset' her immune system.

For the surgery, Zoe – then four-years-old – needed to go to a hospital in the UK. Her family

went with her. The transplant process was long and uncomfortable. *"It was upsetting for all of us,"* recalls Natalie, *"But we had to do what was best for Zoe."*

For six months after the transplant Zoe was in great health. *"Everything was going brilliantly,"* says Natalie. *"She was running around, she was playing, she was happy."* Then

complications arose, becoming more and more severe as her body once again attacked itself, until finally a drug was found to bring her symptoms under control.

Today, ten years on from her diagnosis, Zoe is a happy and positive twelve-year-old.

"She's such a little fighter."

Natalie, Zoe's mum

Zoe is extremely outgoing, and especially enjoys meeting older people and comparing notes with them about arthritis. *"She's so funny and I swear everyone she meets, she's just like, 'Be my best friend, let's chat about everything.'"*

She adores swimming – as it's a great way for her to stay active but it doesn't put such a strain on her body. Natalie says, *"She'll happily stay in the pool until she gets properly wrinkled!"*

Zoe's medical journey remains a challenging one – she takes many medications and still gets sore at times. She also still comes in to Children's Health Ireland at Crumlin every week for appointments. Natalie says Zoe loves having a place where everyone understands her, where she doesn't have to put on a brave persona. *"She knows everyone in Crumlin by name, and calls them 'my medical day family.' It's her safe place, really,"* says Natalie, *"She feels like herself there."*



GREAT IRISH Bake for sick children

Dust off your aprons, it's time for this year's Great Irish Bake, proudly supported by Gem.

Sign up today at www.childrenshealth.ie/greatirishbake to bake it happen for sick children and their families. Make sure to post a photo of your bakes on Instagram with the hashtag #GreatIrishBake to be in with a chance of winning a €1,000 cash prize!

DARE TO BE BRAVE

Do you have what it takes?

Every day, thousands of sick children put on a brave face and receive treatment in Children's Health Ireland. This year, you can be brave and give every sick child the very best chance. Children's Health Foundation's Dare to be Brave adventure series is made up of three fun, once-in-a-lifetime fundraising events designed to push you to be brave in support of sick children.

How it Works

1. Pick your challenge(s)
2. Set your fundraising target
3. Have fun! You are in good hands

The Challenges

Abseil Challenge – Croke Park Hogan Stand

19th & 20th April 2024

Hell & Back

21st September 2024

Skydive 2024 (€50 booking fee required)

Open booking (we recommend March – October)

Show Your Big Heart Ball

raises over €150,000!

The ball took place on 25th November 2023 and to date has raised over €150,000 for The Heart Centre in Children's Health Ireland at Crumlin!

The driving forces behind this amazing fundraiser are the mothers of Alanna and Zack, two incredible warriors with hearts of gold who faced unimaginable challenges at tender ages. Alanna, who developed sudden heart failure at just thirteen-months-old, and Zack, born with serious heart complications, have both triumphed over adversity thanks to the life-saving care at The Heart Centre.

In honour of these two remarkable children, guests gathered for a wonderful evening, and all for the very best cause. Keep a lookout for the announcement of this year's ball, coming later in the year.



Are you and your colleagues ready to take on Clash of the Companies?

It's Ireland's foremost team-building event, in which hundreds of people from all sectors of business compete while raising vital funds for sick children.

Taking place in the RDS on 28th June 2024, companies will battle it out in a giant scavenger hunt across Dublin whilst supporting the life-saving work of Children's Health Ireland at Crumlin, Temple Street, Tallaght and Connolly.

So, is your company ready to Clash? Register now at www.childrenshealth.ie/clash or email clash@childrenshealth.ie.

WEST PHARMA – OUR AMAZING PARTNER!

Children's Health Foundation is proud to be a charity partner of West Pharma's 'West Without Borders' initiative. Since 2012, the West Dublin team in Damastown has raised a staggering €500,000 for sick children and their families.

In 2023, the year in which West Pharmaceutical Services celebrated its 100-year anniversary, the company achieved an outstanding fundraising total of over €59,000 from a huge range of activities.

This generous support has been instrumental in funding essential life-saving equipment, advancing medical research, and enhancing patient and parent services. Thank you so much!



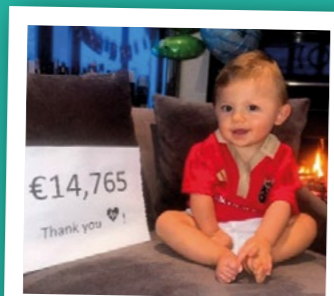
West Pharma really are a fundraising powerhouse – happy 100th!

FUNDRAISING FOR TJ

He had brain surgery at just five-days-old

TJ was just five-days-old when he had his first of four brain surgeries. The newborn was experiencing a build-up of fluid on his brain, and so the team in Children's Health Ireland at Temple Street – described by mum Emma as, "a wonderfully kind, empathic and quite honestly life-changing team of neurosurgeons" – had to take action.

For TJ's first birthday, his parents set up an online fundraiser for some of the wards where TJ was so well looked after. To their disbelief, they raised just under €15,000. They are so grateful to everyone who got involved.



A huge sum raised in honour of little hero TJ!

Thank you, TESCO!

Celebrating Children's Health Ireland's Neonatal Unit

In November 2023, Children's Health Ireland's Neonatal Unit celebrated its first birthday! Over the past year, the Neonatal Unit in Children's Health Ireland has become a special place, nurturing tiny lives and providing comfort to families during their most challenging times.



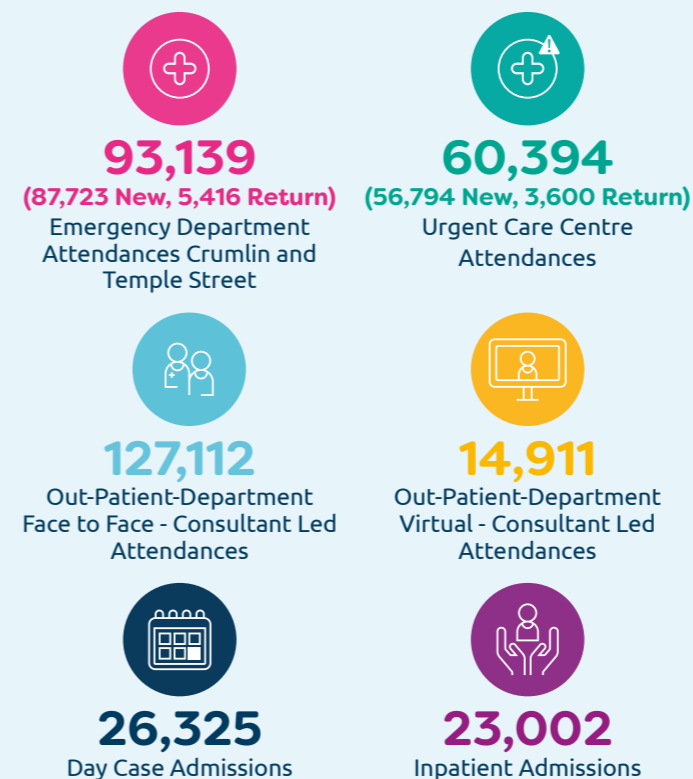
Tesco have had an amazing impact on sick children.

This wouldn't have been possible without the unwavering support of our partner, Tesco Ireland. Last year, as part of their overall fundraising efforts, Tesco colleagues and customers raised a phenomenal €440,000 in support of the Neonatal Unit. The unit now features high dependency and intensive care beds, as well as breast-feeding pumps and two ultrasound machines.

Take a look for yourself! Scan the code



Children's Health Ireland Key Statistics 2022



In 2022, Children's Health Foundation invested €8.6m in Children's Health Ireland hospitals, urgent care centres and the National Children's Research Centre

This included:



IT'S all about heart

Marking 10 incredible years of Children's Health Ireland's Children's Heart Centre in Crumlin

November 2023 marked the tenth anniversary of the start of a revolution in caring for the littlest hearts in Ireland.

It was in 2013 that the Children's Heart Centre in Children's Health Ireland at Crumlin first opened its doors and began transforming the lives of young patients with heart conditions.

Every year, about 500 children in Ireland are born with some form of serious heart disease. A great many of those children are now treated in Crumlin, where expert teams apply the very latest in surgical techniques to treat a wide range of potentially life-threatening conditions.

Not only does the Children's Heart Centre boast the most cutting-edge equipment, it also offers vital support to young patients and families alike, supporting them with whatever they need before, during and after surgery.

The Children's Heart Centre was built thanks entirely to donations from kind supporters like you – **thank you, from the bottom of our hearts**, on this important anniversary.



Celebrating 10 years of the Children's Heart Centre

YOUR legacy could be THEIR future

With a generous gift in your Will, you could change – and save – children's lives for generations to come

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

Whether you're making a new Will or amending an existing one, the process is usually quite straightforward. Simply speak to a solicitor and they will guide you. Making a Will is not just a great way to take care of your family after you are gone, it's also an opportunity to help support work that matters to you.

Please tick the box on the enclosed form for more information or contact **Caroline Cummins** at ccummins@childrenshealth.ie for enquiries in confidence.



A legacy of caring for sick children



Donate online:
childrenshealth.ie/donate



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