15 years of quality time in our Children’s Service

This year marks a very special anniversary for our Children’s Service- we turn 15!

To kick off the celebrations, we held a summer garden birthday party just before Children’s Hospice Week (21st – 27th May), for the young people and families we support in our Children and Young Adults Service.

The party celebrated the memorable moments that the Hospice has provided to 171 babies, children, young adults, plus their families over the last 15 years.

Families enjoyed entertainment including a disco, opportunities to meet their favourite superhero or princess, arts and crafts, storytelling and much more! Guests also got a first look at the sculpture of our next trail in 2019, Elmer’s Great North Parade, which follows on from the success of Great North Snowdogs.

Jocelyn Thompson, Children and Young Adults Service Manager, said: “The party was a fantastic special day for us and a lovely way to be able to celebrate our birthday with the children and families we care for. On behalf of the children and families, thank you for your continued support over the last 15 years.”

Linsey Preston’s daughter Gracie comes to St Oswald’s Children’s Hospice for short breaks and shares what the Hospice means to her family: “When Gracie stays at St Oswald’s for short breaks, me and my other daughter Betsie get to spend quality time together. I feel so blessed that our family have access to St Oswald’s. I really don’t know if I could have coped without the support from everyone who works and volunteers there. Thank you all so much.”

For updates about Elmer’s Great North Parade, follow the trail on Facebook and Twitter or contact hello@greatnorthelmer.co.uk
Let’s focus on living

Patients and families who we care and support often tell us that coming to the Hospice gives them a sense of purpose. Within our Focus on Living Centre patients have the opportunity to spend time with us during the day and take part in short courses, often making friendships and learning new skills.

Clive Rutter, 83 from Birtley, Gateshead came to the Hospice after being diagnosed with prostate cancer. He and his wife, Myrna, have been married for 60 years, and celebrated their wedding anniversary recently by having a blessing at the church they go to. Clive and Myrna have a son, daughter and four grandchildren. Two years after his diagnosis, Clive has a positive outlook on life and his wife Myrna says that he is a different person. Clive, who comes to our Focus on Living Centre, tells us more:

“As soon as I walk through the doors at St Oswald’s I feel a sense of peace and tranquillity. Due to my condition, I can no longer drive, so my typical day at the Hospice begins with a volunteer driver picking me up from home. From the moment the car door opens, my driver has a smile on their face. I’ve got involved in so many activities at the Hospice, I’ve spent time in the craft room making paintings, silk scarves, jewellery and we even keep a silk painting I created in our dining room at home. Fiona, who facilitates the therapeutic activities, has brought out skills and passions I didn’t know I had! I have never done anything arty and I’ve found a talent that I didn’t know existed.

As well as arts and crafts, I’ve taken part in relaxation sessions and had complementary therapy, which has been so relaxing. I have met a lot of people at the Hospice and without exception, everyone has been fantastic.”

Myrna, Clive’s wife, explains how she has seen him benefit from coming to St Oswald’s:

“Since being diagnosed with his condition Clive has become a different person. He was always a private, glass half empty sort of person, but now he is so positive and will talk to anyone.

Coming to St Oswald’s, Clive obviously gets the medical support he needs, but it’s more than that, he looks forward to his days there and I’d say he even gets excited for them. As a couple, we spend so much time together, so when he is at the Hospice it’s good that we get some time out, and I really enjoy hearing about his day.”

Talking about goals for the future, Clive ended:

“I’ve always been an active person but due to my condition I haven’t been able to move my legs and feet like I used to. Golf was a big part of my life so I want to set myself a goal to take part in a golf tournament in a few weeks.”
Amazing spaces that make all the difference

Being able to provide the best possible surroundings for our patients, children, young adults and families is very important to us. We’re aware that being cared for in the right setting can have a huge impact on wellbeing and comfort.

With that in mind we have recently carried out two projects in the Hospice – one to fully refurbish our kitchen on our Adult Inpatient Unit and one to create a ‘Secret Garden’ for the young people who access our Family Support Centre.

Jane Hamblin, Facilities Manager at St Oswald’s, said:

“A kitchen is often described as the ‘heart of a home’ and at St Oswald’s that is no different. The kitchen on our Inpatient Unit is a place where families can take some time out, make a cuppa and chat to other visitors but it was outdated and no longer fit for purpose. Thanks to a very generous family donation, the space has been transformed into a stylish, modern, sleek and easy to clean kitchen.”

Joyce Spencer, from Alnwick, donated an amazing £23,000 for the refurbishment after her husband, Andy, spent four months being cared for at the Hospice last year. Joyce said:

“For me, the kitchen was a haven and sometimes I just needed a few minutes to pull myself together. It’s also a good place to meet others in the same position as you. Unfortunately the kitchen was in a shabby condition but now it’s amazing.”

We also recently received the top funding prize from Tesco’s Bags of Help initiative, to support us to revamp our ‘Secret Garden.’ The funding has allowed us to develop a beautiful garden, creating a safe space for children to enjoy imaginative play and a sense of escapism at what can be a difficult time.

The garden includes secret paths, colourful discs, a painted mural and a storytelling area.

Beth Gregan, Family and Support Practitioner said:

“The children absolutely love the new garden, we’ve been using it as much as possible and it’s great to be able to get into the fresh air and for the children to have their own special place. The children seem so much keener to open up when they are outside and talk about their feelings which is fantastic.”

Huge thanks to the Spencer family and Tesco’s Bags of Help for making these projects possible.

Charity begins at home

Did you know that here at St Oswald’s we have our very own house clearance and collection service?

Andrew Moir, Head of Retail at St Oswald’s, said: “For an agreed donation, we’re able to clear properties and collect large goods such as furniture at a time convenient to you. Our team of experienced, fully trained and insured staff cover a wide range of areas across the region including; Northumberland, Gateshead, North Tyneside and Newcastle.

By using this service, you’ll be directly supporting our work by helping us to raise even more money as any goods we collect from you will be sold in one of our 26 North East charity shops. You’ll also be helping the environment by reducing the amount of waste you send to landfill. On request we can even tell you how much money your house clearance has raised for St Oswald’s.”

A supporter who has used our service said: “I needed a house clearance and our local estate agent passed on the information about St Oswald’s service. I was thrilled to have found it as it was excellent and I have already recommended it to people I know. It’s a lovely bonus that St Oswald’s would benefit too.”

For further information about our clearance and collection services, please contact our Collection Line on 0191 246 8123 or email: retailhelpdesk@stoswaldsuk.org

To find your nearest St Oswald’s shop as well as a list of the items you can donate to us, head to our website: www.stoswaldsuk.org/shops
You are a valued supporter of our work and we will continue to stay in touch with you by post and telephone until you ask us to stop (opt out). However, new legislation called GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) comes into effect on 25th May this year which means we need to prove your consent to allow us to send you an email or SMS (text message) about our service updates, fundraising and retail activities. We are also keen to keep in touch in the most relevant way for you and most cost effective for the Hospice.

To allow us to do this, we would be grateful if you could spend a moment to complete the enclosed form and return it in the prepaid envelope. You can change your mind at any time simply by contacting us on 0191 246 9123 or emailing supporter@stoswaldsuk.org

Join the fun!

We have lots of exciting ways you can get involved in fundraising throughout the spring and summer months.

Check out some of our upcoming events below or visit www.stoswaldsuk.org, contact us on 0191 246 9123 or email fundraising@stoswaldsuk.org for more information.

Make a Will Month

Make or update a Will this June at one of our participating solicitors for a suggested donation of £90 for a single Will or £125 for a pair. All of the money you pay will be donated to the Hospice.

The Lantern Walk

Saturday 30th June, Rising Sun Country Park

Join our 5k sponsored walk or donate to the campaign this summer and remember someone special. Hundreds of people will join in a single act of remembrance, meaning even if you attend solo, you won’t walk alone. The evening will be upbeat, suitable for all the family and fancy dress is welcome. Saturday 30th June at Rising Sun Country Park, just off the Coast Road, North Tyneside.

CLARTY BAIRNS

Sunday 12th August, 2pm–3pm, Broomley Grange

£8 Children  £10 Adults

Let your kids get their hands dirty this summer with a fun and messy obstacle course just for the little ones, taking place in Northumberland this August.

Annual Raffle

Be in with the chance of winning a car, courtesy of Bristol Street Motors. Tickets on sale online or in our charity shops now, winner drawn at our Christmas Market in November.

£1 Per ticket

A huge and heartfelt thank you to you, our supporters who allow us to continue with our vital work.

YOU ARE ALL AMAZING!