

NEWSLETTER

Children in Hospital Ireland Update to
Volunteer, Members and Supporters



Welcome to the Autumn 2021 Newsletter of Children in Hospital Ireland.

I hope all our members and volunteers have enjoyed the summer months and remained healthy and safe. It is heartening to see the country returning to somewhat normal routines and we are hopeful that children and young people will return to education in schools and colleges next month. We are also delighted that we are actively preparing for the return to volunteering in all hospitals over the coming months. Thanks to everyone for remaining in contact and responding to the emails and surveys which will make that return easier to manage. We know that most of our volunteers are excited to return to the wards and we also have a number of people who are trained but were never placed due to Covid-19. Elizabeth is working to ensure that we can have everyone paired up and ready to go when the hospitals give us the green light.

Over the summer months, we continued to send play packs to paediatric units throughout the country and have received a very positive response from hospital staff. The toys and activities have been well received by all as play areas are still restricted in most hospitals.

We have also continued to work on the advocacy side of things and hope to bring you news of some projects in the autumn which will support parents, families and young people with information they need in and around the time of hospitalisation. We have prepared a pre-budget submission following on from our research in 2020 and are asking the Government to establish a new payment for parents when their child is in need of long-term or frequent hospitalisation.

You will also find here details on our annual *Cuppa and Cookie* event which will take place in October. We aim to raise funds which will to enable us to provide parents with a complementary tea/coffee when they need a break in the hospital.

We are getting close to finalising our 50-year memoir and it has been an amazing journey for us to delve into the archives and the inspiring history and stories of Children in Hospital Ireland. More news soon on the launch of this publication.

As always we thank you for your ongoing support and commitment of our work in supporting families and effecting positive change for families facing childhood illness.

Anna Gunning



The Annual General Meeting of Children in Hospital Ireland will take place on Saturday, September 11th at 11am. Once again, our AGM will take place virtually, by Zoom. Last year we had a great attendance and we hope that you will be able to attend this year. After the business of the AGM we will have a discussion to kick start the development of our next strategic plan to bring us to 2024 and beyond. **It is really important for us to hear your views and to ensure that you, our members, have a strong input so please sign up to attend.** We will be happy to present to you our new / modified logo and our updated website.

A formal invitation to the AGM will be sent out next week with all of the relevant details

In advance of this year's AGM we are inviting members to consider putting their names forward for nomination to the Board. Our aim is to ensure that the Board includes a good range of experience and representation from all aspects of the organisation. We invite in particular those members with experience volunteering with our hospital play service and those who have skills in the following areas: HR, voluntary sector, experience with patient organisations or in the wider health sector. In support of the objective of having a diverse representation on the Board, we would especially welcome applications from men and from people living outside Dublin.



Volunteering Update & Autumn Recruitment

Alongside our pilot team in CHI@ Crumlin who have been actively volunteering since November 2020, volunteer pairs are being eagerly welcomed back to the wards and the playroom of CHI@ Temple Street hospital this summer. This very positive change coincides with encouraging discussions to return volunteers in many more hospitals. We look forward to resuming play volunteering over the coming weeks and months.

To support returning volunteers and the children and families we work with, we will be holding 4 recruitment opportunities for new volunteers this autumn. Our capacity to recruit and place new volunteers will be more limited than in previous years, but we are excited to meet new volunteers and welcome them to our team. If you have friends or family keen to get involved, please ask them to get in touch. Interested new volunteers may travel to an Information or Training Day that is different to their desired volunteer location, but must be pre-registered.

Autumn Recruitment Dates

Limerick

Information Evening September 15th
Training Day October 2nd

Waterford

Information Evening September 29th
Training Day October 16th

Online*

Information Evening October 6th Training
Evenings October 19th & 21st *In person
follow up meeting or short training session
TBC

Dublin

Information Evening November 3rd
Training Day November 20th

Introducing new members of the team



Emma Barrett – Volunteer Coordinator

I am thrilled to have recently started the role of Volunteer Coordinator at Children in Hospital Ireland. I have worked in the charity sector for nearly 8 years and worked as a Fundraiser for the Temple Street Foundation for nearly 5 of those years, during that time I got to witness the demand for the service that Children in Hospital Ireland provides. I am looking forward to working with and supporting the wonderful volunteers who dedicate their own personal time to support children and their families from all over Ireland.

Fiachra Brennan – Policy Officer

My name is Fiachra Brennan and I am delighted to have started as Policy Officer with Children in Hospital Ireland. My background is in international development, spending several years supporting marginalised groups in the Global South. This role is an exciting new challenge, working with a great team and for a wonderful cause. I am looking forward to pushing for policy change and fighting for the rights of sick children and their families.



Events and Fundraising Campaigns

VHI Mini Marathon

VHI will be holding their annual mini-marathon virtually this year on **September 19th**. There has never been a better opportunity to be able to get involved from anywhere in the world. To take part and raise funds for Children in Hospital Ireland you simply [register here](#) and don't forget to select Children in Hospital Ireland as your charity to run as part of **Team Children in Hospital Ireland**.



A note from VHI: ***"Everyone who's signed up for this year's event gets our 2021 race pack, including the VHI Finisher t-shirt, and the 2021 Commemorative Medal. And of course, everyone also gets exclusive access to our brand-new Official Event App."***

Lighthouse Storybook

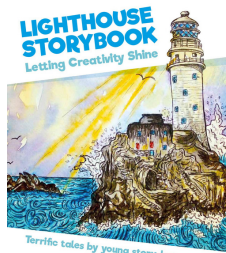
This is a magical book which is a fundraising initiative from Irish Lights in collaboration with Fighting Words and their Young Story Keepers project. We first launched the book at Christmas and we raised €10,000 in support of our work and that of Northern Ireland Hospice, selling the book online through our website.

We have further copies of the book for sale now through our website and some tourist retailers. This book is a publication of original writing inspired by lighthouses from young writers aged 7-12 and makes a beautiful original gift for any age.

The books are priced at €10.00 with all proceeds directly supporting the work of Children in Ireland (85%) and Northern Ireland Hospice (15%). [Click here to purchase your copy.](#)



Big Al's Lighthouse



Cuppa and Cookie - October 2021

Now in its 5th year, the Children in Hospital Cuppa and Cookie event is an important fundraiser for us.

Volunteers provide hours of play for children in paediatric units across the country, which means that each day our volunteers allow parents to take a much needed short break to gather their thoughts, or indeed grab a cuppa - this makes a world of difference to an exhausted, stressed parent:

***"a flurry of make and do with stickers and glitter, and I got my cup of tea, small pleasures but a big deal at the time"* - parent, Cork University Hospital.**

This year our campaign will focus on highlighting the importance of the volunteer service to the wider family and the support and relief they can bring. We are appealing to people to donate to allow parents to "have a cuppa" on us. By increasing volunteer hours provided and volunteer numbers, this allows us to engage with more parents and carers to encourage them to take a much needed break.

How you can get involved

- Host a coffee morning at home, in your community, school or work place
- Have a cake sale
- Donate the price of a cuppa & cookie - €5.00 directly on our website
- Share our social media campaign



We will update you as soon as the campaign launches and do keep an eye on our social media pages.

World Book Day - March 2021

During the month of March, to recognise and celebrate World Book Day, Children in Hospital Ireland encouraged people to "donate to buy a book" for a child in hospital.

We were thrilled when author Lorraine Levis approached us with this fundraising idea, as much of our volunteering services were on pause during Covid-19 and visiting restrictions made hospital more difficult for children. Funds raised from this campaign continue to enable us to select the most appropriate books suitable for all ages and abilities include these books in our activity packs that we distribute to paediatric units all around the country. We received terrific support for the campaign from well known children's authors including Judi Curtin, Eve McDonnell, Sarah Webb, Alan Nolan, Gerry Daly and many more, who all committed time to create short videos about their favourite stories for children. These videos helped us to reach a wider audience and will have brightened up some days in hospital for children.

Between March and December 2020 we delivered approximately 10,000 hospital friendly individual activity packs and play resources to 21 hospitals with paediatric wards across the country and are continuing these distributions while restrictions are in place.

Thank you to all of you who donated and supported this campaign.



Memoir

To acknowledge and celebrate 50 years of Children in Hospital Ireland we are at the final stages of bringing this commemorative book to publication.

This book is the story of Children in Hospital Ireland, the organisation founded in 1970 as the Association for the Welfare of Children in Hospital Ireland (AWCHI) with a mission to change how children were cared for in Irish hospitals. It shows how a group of "accidental activists" changed the course of Irish healthcare history for children.

We are excited to finally launch this book and grateful that we have been able to record this important story, and to recognise the enormity of the work of our founders and also to acknowledge the continued commitment of our 500 strong volunteer team.

We will keep you informed of our launch date and plans.

Diary Dates

- **AGM September 11th**
- **Autumn Recruitment Opportunities begin September 15th**
- **VHI Mini Marathon September 19th**
- **The Impact of Play: An Irish Play Specialist's Perspective with Lorraine Smith, Play Specialist, CHI @ Connolly Urgent Care Centre Date TBC**
- **Cuppa and Cookie October 14th**