

SUPPORTER UPDATE

Welcome to our first quarter newsletter for 2022.

Like so many, we were glad to see 2021 behind us and although Covid-19 remains with us and 2022 will not be without its challenges, there is a sense of optimism as we head into the longer days and the hope of a continued return to volunteering and engaging with families and children in hospital.

Our committed volunteers remained engaged with us during 2021 and a number of training events were held during this time in order to provide opportunities for learning and for networking with other volunteers.

In the last number of months volunteering, at bedsides and, in a few lucky playrooms, has resumed in CHI at Temple St and Crumlin, the National Rehabilitation Hospital, Cork University Hospital and Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital in Drogheda. Over 80 volunteers across these hospitals have resumed volunteering, or have just joined us as new volunteers.

Spring recruitment is underway and is always one of the busiest times of year, and it was fantastic to get back to meeting new volunteers in person as information evenings and trainings days took place in Cork and Dublin this February. We have also held a number of online information evening and training days.

Like most charities, CIH suffered financially in 2021 with little opportunity for arranging fundraising events. However, through our volunteer network and the generosity of the public, we continued to receive donations. You might recall in October, we raised funds through our 'Give parents a Break' initiative, to provide parents who were in hospital with their child, to receive a free coffee/tea to help provide a little respite. This is an initiative that we hope to grow annually.

Our presence in mainstream media and social media continues to grow and has been vital in gaining new supporters and an increased awareness of our work.

We look forward to continued working with our many partner organisations over the coming months to ensure that a hospital visit by a child is as stress free as possible for the whole family.

Anna Gunning



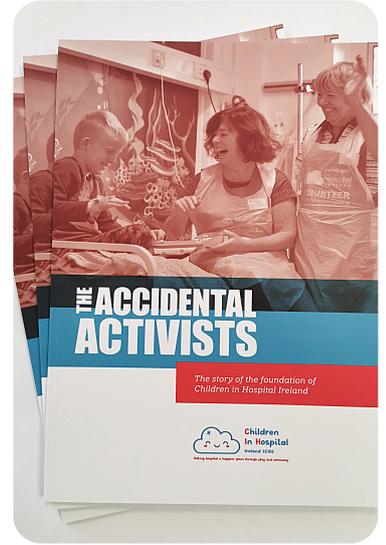
Follow us @



50th Anniversary Celebrations

Only two years later than anticipated, we launched our 50th Anniversary publication - **The Accidental Activists**, on 26th March 2022.

We were privileged to be joined by Dr Tony Bates who delivered an inspiring keynote speech. Joining us also was journalist, Sheila Wayman who wrote the foreword to our book. Among our many guests were founding members, early volunteers and members from the 1970's as well as strong support from the medical profession past and present. It was a much needed celebratory get together for so many reasons.



Dr Tony Bates, Clinical Psychologist



Sheila Wayman, Journalist, Irish Times



Volunteers, Jacinta Nisbet & Suzanne Lynch - who feature on the front cover of the book



1,900 books and isolation packs distributed to 21 paediatric units in February .

Sandyford Business District came to our assistance when we were searching for a venue large enough for our “production line” set up needed for the isolation play / craft packing. They introduced us to Naomh Ólaf GAA Club that opened its doors to us in February to allow CIH staff and volunteers got packing. We were joined by Greg Brennan: CEO Brennan & Co and Chair of SBD, An Cathaoirleach Cllr. Lettie McCarthy



The state of play in Irish hospitals

This February we asked play specialists and clinical nurse managers about the current state of play in their hospitals, the number of play specialists employed, the number of play rooms open, and how COVID has impacted play in hospital for themselves and children. Many playrooms remain closed, and staffing has been difficult. However, play specialists note that while there has been fewer play materials and spaces, there has been great creativity to keep play going. Where there are play specialists, one to one play and single use toys have kept play alive for children throughout COVID restrictions. More details on this to come soon.

World Book Day 2022



Hospital can be a difficult time for children and their families and by giving books, we know that the experience of hospital is made a little easier. Children in Hospital Ireland were one of the organisations to be included in the An Post / Children’s Books Ireland book gifting programme. This initiative saw books being delivered to fifty locations across Ireland in partnership with charities including Saint Vincent DePaul, Barnardos, the Peter McVerry Trust and Children in Hospital Ireland. As play materials and books have been restricted in hospitals due to infection control over the past 18 months, these beautiful new books were particularly welcome and help to create a sense of normality and provide a break from the hospital routine.

The Parentline / Children in Hospital Ireland Spring lunch returned to the Westbury on 3rd of March this year.

This is a wonderful fundraiser in the luxurious Westbury Hotel. Not only is it one of the most stylish events of the year, but it also raises much appreciated funds each year for Parentline and Children in Hospital Ireland.

This lunch is a sell out each year and this year was no exception. The fabulously glamorous Miriam O'Callaghan was the MC for the lunch. Many thanks to our volunteer, Olivia Watson and committee for organising this fabulous event.



We thank all of the generous businesses large and small that provided sponsorship, gifts, prizes and their time to help make this event happen.



Upcoming Events and Developments

Online Conference Working Together for Families with a Child in Hospital. May 11th 2022.

Jointly organised by Children's Heartbeat Trust Northern Ireland (CHT) and Children in Hospital Ireland (CIH), this virtual conference will delve into some of the key issues related to childhood illness and the impact on families throughout the island of Ireland. It is an opportunity for anyone involved in the area or impacted by childhood illness to come together and collectively explore the issues to learn more about what is working well on the island and consider what is needed to achieve positive and meaningful changes for sick children, their parents and their families. Attendees will hear from a range of people active in the field, including advocates, researchers, frontline workers, and parents, all of whom can offer unique insights into the challenges faced by families when a child is sick in hospital. Please see attached the 'Save the Date'.

SAVE THE DATE
Wednesday 11th May 2022

CHILDREN'S HEARTBEAT TRUST
Northern Ireland
Children's Heartbeat Charity
Charity No. 101-10000

Children in Hospital
Ireland CICSI
Making hospital a happier place through play and advocacy

Children's Heartbeat Trust and Children in Hospital Ireland

Working Together for Families In Hospital

Virtual Conference

This conference will explore the impact of having a sick child in hospital on families and consider how charities, health professionals, policy-makers and those in power can work together across the island to provide improved supports.

To register your interest in attending please email:
admin@childrensheartbeattrust.org

Funded by:
ALL-ISLAND FUND



Tailor made play service support

We continue to receive increasing numbers of requests from hospitals for individualised support and additional play hours for some children in their care.

We will be piloting a new volunteer role focusing on these requests which would bring in additional volunteers as required to supplement our weekly service.

Parent's Hub

We know from the findings of our research in 2020 that parents can find it difficult to get all the information they need about hospital facilities and requirements and what supports and services are available from the state or from charities to help them at this stressful time. Children in Hospital Ireland are delighted to have been awarded a grant from Early Childhood Ireland's Pyjama Day Fund to enable us to develop a Parent's Hub which will be a one-stop-shop for information for parents with a child in hospital. This is a really exciting project which will bring together lots of useful information all in one accessible place. Keep an eye on our website for more information.

Thanks and farewell....

This month we say goodbye to Maura Lavelle our Marketing and Development Manager for the past 6 years. Maura has been behind all of the fundraising, communications and social media work in Children in Hospital Ireland and she will be hugely missed by all in the organisation. We wish her well in her new career and say thanks for all her work in making Children in Hospital Ireland the strong and visible organisation that it is today.

