

Volunteer Bulletin

April 2020

Hello from Liz Thompson, Volunteer Coordinator

We'd like to say hello and a huge THANK YOU to all our incredible Julia's House volunteers during this very difficult time. We miss you and hope you are all keeping safe and well at home. You are always in our thoughts so please do keep in touch and let us know how you are and what you've been doing to stay busy.

This newsletter will update you on what we're doing to weather the storm of COVID-19. Times may be hard, but the care does not stop and we are continuing to support our families in any way we can – we've shared one of our families' stories below.

We count ourselves so lucky to have such an amazing team of volunteers and we look forward to a point in the future when we can all be back together. In the meantime, please keep in touch – you can contact me at any time for a chat by emailing me at liz.thompson@juliashouse.org and requesting a call back. Staying connected to each other is so important right now and we are always at the end of a phone or email.

Best wishes and stay safe,

Liz



Great result for the HIIT Squad!

You may have been following the progress of our HIIT Squad fundraising challenge, which took place just prior to the lockdown. Martin Edwards, AFC Bournemouth's Eddie Howe and a group of local business leaders sweated their way through a gruelling 2-hour high intensity interval training workout in an attempt to raise enough money to fund two nurses for a year. We're proud to report that the HIIT Squad's superhuman efforts have paid off and they have hit their target!

James McVey records songs for our families

Julia's House Patron James McVey, a member of boy band The Vamps, has recorded some songs specially for our families to enjoy at this difficult time. James, who grew up locally, has given us permission to share these songs to a wider audience, and the videos are now available to view on our YouTube channel and Facebook page.

Fundraising gets creative

Social distancing has led to our supporters coming up with new and ingenious ways to raise vital funds for Julia's House.

Here's just a couple that caught our eye:

Corona or Coffee
Donate the cost of your daily cuppa to raise funds for Julia's House

The Terry Nutkins Challenge
Sponsor Rob Loveridge as he grows his hair out like TV presenter Terry Nutkins!

Don't forget to let us know if you are planning any corona-friendly fundraising activities!

A message from our CEO

Our CEO Martin Edwards has been talking about how COVID-19 is affecting us a charity.

"These are uncertain times for all of us, with the COVID-19 Coronavirus situation changing so rapidly. Our thoughts are very much with you and your families, and I just wanted to keep you updated with all that we are doing at Julia's House to help our families who live with this kind of isolation, loneliness and anxiety every day – it has just got a lot worse.

Through the current difficult and unsettling times, we are continuing to care for the children in their homes, to give them the support they so desperately need. A need that is even greater, when operations have been postponed and their lives have suddenly become much more isolated. We are here for them.

We are also here to help support the NHS, not only by continuing our care but also by looking at what NHS services we can take on to relieve the huge pressure on our local health services.

With our shops closed and our fundraising events postponed or cancelled, we estimate that the impact of COVID-19 Coronavirus on our income is a loss of around £1.2 million every three months. This is a devastating loss for us. We also have to expect that any recovery in the economy, and therefore in charitable giving, will be gradual rather than swift. We are working hard to secure the income we need going forward and appreciate and value everyone's continued support during this unprecedented and challenging time.

Like many businesses and organisations, we have had to take some tough decisions and currently 1/3 of our staff are furloughed. We are supporting them, as well as our volunteers, to ensure they still feel connected to the Julia's House family.

Everyone who touches Julia's House has a very special combination of resourcefulness, commitment and compassion, which we are seeing demonstrated in so many ways every day at present. We know times are worrying and challenging for us all, but for some families the situation is really acute."

Charmaine's Story

Just 20 months old, Alfie has a condition called an 1P36 deletion – there is data missing from one of his chromosomes and as a result he has problems with his sight and hearing, heart defects and brain abnormalities. His condition is so rare that no-one knows what the future holds. Here's how Alfie's mum, Charmaine, is coping with COVID-19 Coronavirus:

"Right now is how we spend every day, especially during the winter, when we're trying to keep Alfie away from bugs and viruses. To everyone else they're just coughs and colds, but for Alfie they're a really big thing – in six months, he was in and out of hospital four times with chest infections. But of course Coronavirus is different. It's really dangerous for Alfie and so worrying for us. I'm thinking about it all the time and not sleeping. We're all OK at the moment but we worry about Alfie, especially with the number of cases rising so rapidly. It doesn't feel like there is a light at the end of the tunnel. This is not the next three weeks for us; this is the next 18 months.



Sam, our Julia's House nurse, has been a lifeline coming out to visit us and care for Alfie. Just a few hours a week has meant I could spend some time with Tia either on her school work, baking or just pottering about in the garden together. Also, having the time to go shopping for essentials before they sell out. That time has been really important for us. But we've literally just had to take the decision to cancel our Julia's House sits for now and the community nurse. Everyone has been great, washing their hands and using hand sanitiser but we just want to restrict people coming into the house- now it's no-one in, no-one out. It's just us but it means one less thing for us to worry about. Sam has said she'll be around if we need her so I know I can call her at anytime. She's offered to collect medicines and supplies for Alfie, really anything we need. That's so good to know when you're feeling very alone. I know I'll be able to call if we change our minds about the sits too and feel we need a couple of hours help at home. Our community nurse has been great as well.

Alfie has just had major surgery cancelled for the third time. That's a worry too, as you build yourself up and then it doesn't happen. We understand and right now we would obviously prefer him not to be in hospital, but that's now in the back of my mind that I've got to build myself up to it all over again. There's just so much. It's all very stressful. I just want it to be over.

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