

Autumn / Winter 2022 Issue 4

HOSPICE CONNECTION

Your link to us and the care that you support

NEWS In this issue

Meet Carter,
our latest
Hospice Hero



Learn more
about how
your support
makes a difference
to our patients and
their families

Bewley's Big Coffee
Morning Social
for Hospice 30th
Anniversary



Dignity | Respect | Compassion | Collaboration | Excellence | Kindness

St. Francis Hospice Dublin

Community Connections

Connection is something we feel strongly in St Francis Hospice: connection with our patients and their families, and connection with our wonderful community in North Dublin and surrounding counties.

In this issue, we bring you stories that illustrate those connections. You can read about 9-year-old Carter, our latest Hospice Hero, who raised money and awareness for St Francis Hospice in his own "Marathon in a Month" challenge.

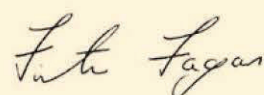
You will also meet the Leonard/Seymour family, who share their precious memories of their mother Mary's time living her life to its fullest in our Blanchardstown in-patient unit.

We bring you photos from a great re-connection, as we were able to gather with members of our community again to celebrate the milestone 30th anniversary Bewley's Big Coffee Morning Social for Hospice on 22nd September. Huge thanks to everyone who hosted a Coffee Morning or supported this campaign, one of our largest

fundraising events of the year.

We also look forward to welcoming our community to both our Hospices (Blanchardstown 1st December, Raheny 8th December) for our traditional, in-person Tree of Life ceremonies.

Thank you for your continued support, which we greatly appreciate. It is wonderful to know that our community is here for us, so that we can be here for you.



Fintan Fagan
Chief Executive Officer,
St Francis Hospice Dublin



A connection that will live on

St Francis Hospice Dublin, works closely with our community and the community has always shown deep appreciation for the role we play in North Dublin city and county. Our work has touched the lives of more than 250,000 patients, and their loved ones, over the last three decades.

Our care improves the quality of life of patients and their loved ones when living with a life-limiting or life-threatening illness. It ensures patients can live as full and independent lives as possible, for as long as possible. This care is provided either in patients' own homes or in hospice either as an out-patient or in-patient.

For us as a community, it is so important that we strive together to ensure that St Francis Hospice is there for those in need and that our services remain available at no charge to the patients and families in our care.

If you would like to leave a legacy that will live on and keep you connected with your community, please consider leaving a gift in your will to support the work of St Francis Hospice Dublin. You can learn more by visiting www.sfh.ie/wills-legacies.

Connecting with the Community: Palliative Care eLearning for Secondary Students

As an educator and a nurse with more than two decades experience in palliative care, Barbara Sweeney is passionate about helping people understand what hospices are really like and how they can help people. During visits to patients' homes as a community palliative care nurse, Barbara often heard people say they wish they had contacted the hospice sooner, but they had been afraid to. She knew something needed to be done to change people's fearful concept of hospices.

So, in 2012, when Santa Sabina, her former secondary school in Sutton, invited her to give a talk to the students about her work as a hospice nurse, she jumped at the opportunity. Unexpectedly, in the Q&A portion of the talk, the students' questions were less about careers in nursing and more about hospice and palliative care.

Barbara's reflections on the students' interest in finding out more about hospices, combined with her own experiences as a nurse, led to her development of the St Francis Hospice Dublin Secondary School Outreach Programme. Over the next several years, Barbara and her hospice colleagues delivered education sessions to thousands of students in schools within St Francis Hospice's catchment area of North Dublin.

Barbara commented, "It's so important that young adults understand what palliative care is and the benefits it can bring to people experiencing a wide range of illnesses and conditions. As members of our community, they are our future patients and family members. There could even be future healthcare colleagues or hospice volunteers among them. Mostly, we want to ensure that they are not afraid, that they understand the life and vitality of the place, as staff and volunteers help people to live as well as possible within the realities of their illness."

When the Covid-19 pandemic paused the schools initiative, Barbara spotted an

Barbara Sweeney,
Head of Education,
St Francis Hospice Dublin

opportunity to continue it in another format. She applied for and was awarded a Fellowship with the All Ireland Institute for Hospice and Palliative Care (AIIHPC) to develop the school outreach programme as an eLearning package.



Students of Santa Sabina with Barbara Sweeney from St Francis Hospice and Yvonne McCahill, (Communications, AIIHPC) at the official launch of the eLearning package. (See QR code to left)

Although Barbara had vast experience designing and delivering eLearning programmes, she sensed that animation, which was unfamiliar territory for her, would be the right approach for this project.

"The AIIHPC were brilliant, supporting me with mentoring and all the tools I needed. It was a steep learning curve for me, creating an animation, and as a result I have gained a new skill set that I can bring to other aspects of my work with the Education Team in St Francis Hospice."

For Barbara, one special aspect of creating the animation was partnering with her Mam, Eileen, who recorded her personal experiences of attending St Francis Hospice's Palliative Day Services. Eileen hopes that sharing her lived experiences will encourage other people to access hospice services.

Transition Year students of Santa Sabina school piloted the programme in spring 2022, providing vital feedback. Barbara was delighted to see the Secondary Schools Initiative come full circle in this way, from her own school days in Santa Sabina, to her very first talk there with students about palliative care, to the rollout of the eLearning programme.

The eLearning package is available, free of charge, to all secondary schools on the island of Ireland through the AIIHPC's Palliative Hub (<https://thepalliativehub.com/st-francis-hospice-schools-project-what-is-palliative-care/>) It consists of an introductory video, Barbara's animation, pre- and post-learning questionnaires, a support pack for teachers, and a list of further resources.



Congratulations and thanks to all who entered our Core Values Poetry Competition. The 38 longlisted poems have been framed and displayed throughout our Raheny and Blanchardstown Hospices. We are delighted to share the winning poem in the Adult category, which echoes this issue's theme of Connection.

CONNECTION

A circle of sunlight floats on the sea at Old Head and I wonder if this disc brightens your hospital floor. It was you who first brought me west, to these white beaches, rolls of mountains.

Then a ping in my pocket a text from my sister-visiting Dad, his room is sunny. And I know we are connected by years, light, water.

To view the videos on this page, please visit our YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdXUlk3tIBCjlbGmWzhWFQQ>



Connections

Sarah Jane Seymour's kitchen table is piled high with framed photos and loose snapshots, and an iPad full of images – pictures that speak thousands of words about her late mother, Mary. Sarah Jane, her brother Barry Leonard, and his daughter Emily, age 12, have gathered to tell Mary's story of care in St Francis Hospice for a video. Sarah Jane recalls, "Mum was my favourite person, our favourite person, and the kind of person that you would absolutely want to grow up to be. She was incredibly kind ... beyond kind, the most selfless person you could ever meet. Incredibly funny and witty and the most loving Mum."

Mary spent the last months of her life living in St Francis Hospice Blanchardstown. "Living" is very much how her family describes that time. Barry explains, "I've never said she died in the hospice. I mean, it happens to be where she passed away, but it was very much where she lived." The family celebrated many birthdays and holidays together, using the special family rooms available in the in-patient unit for their larger gatherings.

Mary's own room provided ample space and privacy for her children and grandchildren, who popped in for regular visits. Emily recalls how she and her brother, Charlie, played Connect 4 and played hide and seek with their "Mimi", as Mary was known to them.

Mary's partner, Eamon, enjoyed bringing her dog, Bowie, on visits. Bowie would snuggle with Mary in her bed, bringing great comfort and joy for them both. Sarah Jane's own newly adopted pup, Fella, also accompanied her on visits to Mary in the hospice. "That was another amazing thing [about St Francis Hospice], Mum benefited so much from seeing the dogs."

Sarah Jane valued the special mother-daughter time they were able to spend together, with "girlie pamper nights" and watching Mary's favourite films together during sleepovers on the pull-out bed in Mary's hospice room. "It was quality time that you couldn't have had anywhere else." The family's photos, gathered on Sarah Jane's kitchen table – which she tells us was Mary's kitchen table, and that we are in fact hearing Mary's story in the house that belonged to her – tell the stories of many happy visits together in the homelike environment of St Francis Hospice.

The Leonard/Seymour family have generously shared their memories of Mary and her care in St Francis Hospice, to help others understand how beneficial and family-focused hospice care is for people. You can scan the QR code to watch their video.



Community Palliative Care

Our Community Palliative Care Team looked after 1,608 individuals and their families in their own homes and nursing homes in 2021. This is a 10% increase in patient numbers in the last year alone, and a 27% increase since 2018.

Behind each of these numbers are people and their stories, and recently we were fortunate to capture Alan Bradley's story on video as part of Palliative Care Week 2022.

Alan tells us how St Francis Hospice's services have supported him by helping with symptom management as well as his psychological wellbeing during his experience of living with illness.

He encourages everyone in a similar position to avail of hospice services to help them live as well as possible.

Volunteers Returning

"I have been volunteering in St Francis Hospice once a week since 2006 as a complementary therapist. My Hospice day was an integral part of my week and I looked forward to it so much. Then Covid happened. Hospice Day Care was closed. I was devastated."

As I was unable to see any patients, I was asked to help out in a visitors support role, meeting relatives of patients and asking them Covid related questions to ensure the safety of patients and staff. I was delighted to be able to help in this new role for as long as was necessary. Finally, the hospice's day services opened again. I was thrilled to be able to return to my original role and give complementary therapy treatments to the patients. It is such an honour and joy to be a volunteer in St Francis Hospice working with the patients and such dedicated, caring staff."

Marie Moloney, Volunteer

During the Covid-19 pandemic, more than 50 of our volunteers, like Marie, changed or adapted their usual roles in order to provide services that were newly required or needed to be done in a different way than before. It is wonderful to see them returning to their usual roles.



Flexibility of Services

Angela Weldon found great benefit earlier this year from attending the EMPOWER Programme run by our Occupational Therapy team. You can hear about her experiences in this video (scan the QR code to view).

When her EMPOWER sessions ended, our hospice team worked with Angela to see how St Francis Hospice could continue to support her. A weekly complementary therapy treatment is proving to be just what Angela needs to help manage her symptoms. If her needs should change over time, our team will be there to provide care and support for Angela and her family.

A Special Family “Storey”

When you are in the presence of the Storey family, you experience high levels of three things: activity (mainly thanks to the three grandchildren), straightforward talking (including a healthy dose of gallows humour), and love. Martin Storey, his children and grandchildren, are clearly devoted to each other, and enjoy each other’s company.

Martin and his 9-year-old grandson, Carter, have always been especially close. From the time Carter started school, they shared a weekly ritual of a Luas ride into town, a bite to eat, and a treat for Carter in the shops. These days, the ritual has changed to visiting the hospice restaurant for a treat, but the closeness and the chats between the pair remain as strong and lively as ever.

Martin, 58, has called St Francis Hospice Blanchardstown his home since April 2022, when the heart failure he has lived with for 21 years became more advanced, requiring specialist palliative care.

The transition to in-patient hospice care took time for Martin to adapt to, but after several long stints in hospital where visitors were not permitted, he greatly appreciates the relaxed, homelike feel of the hospice. “Staff work around you and what you want,” he explains. In addition, Martin says he now feels “as healthy as I’ve been in years. I feel this well because I am here.”

Martin is a jovial person, and he delights at joking with the staff and volunteers he meets every day. In spite of his lighthearted appearance, he appreciates the importance of being completely honest with his grandchildren about his condition, especially Carter, the eldest of the three.

Carter has experienced loss already in his young life. His other granddad, Joseph, died at home this past February, under the care of St Francis

Hospice’s Community Palliative Care Team. When Martin was referred to St Francis Hospice Blanchardstown, Carter wanted to know, “Does this mean you are going to die, too?” Always honest with his grandson, Martin replied, “Yes, but not as fast. We don’t know when.”

The Hospice Social Work team supports families to manage the challenges that illness and loss can bring. This includes how to talk to children about the changes in their loved one. Fidelma Beirne from the hospice’s Social Work team, is providing support to Martin and the rest of the family, as they learn how to live with the reality of Martin’s condition. She says, “Martin is absolutely right to be honest with his grandchildren and not to hide the truth from them. Children understand their world in different ways as they grow and develop, and the work we do with the family is aimed at meeting the needs of each individual member at each moment in time.”

This past summer, Carter decided he wanted to give back to St Francis Hospice, in honour of both his granddads. He created his own “Marathon in a Month” fundraiser and began collecting donations from family, friends, and neighbours.

Even though some of the summer days slipped by and the month flew in, Carter was determined to finish his challenge. With support from his dad, James, and aunt, Louise, he gave a great push in the last four days of the month to complete his amazing 42 kilometre target.

So what does Martin think gave Carter the motivation to finish the tough challenge he had set himself? “Because it was for me, and in memory of his other granddad,” he says, visibly moved, and rightfully proud of his grandson.

Thank you, Carter, from all in St Francis Hospice. You are truly a Hospice Hero!



Bewley’s Big Coffee Morning Social for Hospice 30th Anniversary

This year we celebrated the 30th Anniversary of Bewley’s Big Coffee Morning Social for Hospice which has, over the years, witnessed so many warm creative gatherings within the community to raise funds for St. Francis Hospice.

It was a privilege to mark this occasion in Bewley’s Café with the launch by our brilliant Ambassador Brendan Gleeson and to truly acknowledge the very generous sponsorship and partnership with Bewley’s, in particular Paddy and Veronica Campbell and the Bewley’s staff. The strength of this long standing partnership is underpinned by the generosity of community with its numerous hosts who hold Coffee Morning Socials every year or attend the Hospice Coffee Mornings.

We were delighted to celebrate the very welcome return of this event at both hospices this year. The loss of that hugely important connection with community during the pandemic was very difficult for us all. It was so uplifting to see the hospices come alive once again with the chat and laughter of patients, family members and guests from throughout the community. A great morning was had by all. Here’s to the next thirty years!



Fintan Fagan, CEO,
Linda Ledwidge, Coffee Morning Host,
and Actor Brendan Gleeson

The Annual Car Draw is back!

Tickets for this popular fundraiser can be purchased for €10 from the hospice now by phoning 01-8327535, online at www.sfh.ie, or by using the QR Code on this page. You can also buy tickets through our brilliant volunteers at the Blanchardstown Shopping Centre from the 21st November to the 11th December. A great stocking filler for Christmas!

The Car Draw, supported by the Blanchardstown Centre Management, will be held at the Centre on the 26th January 2023. Tickets are for sale up to the 13th January 2023. Best of luck and thank you for your support.

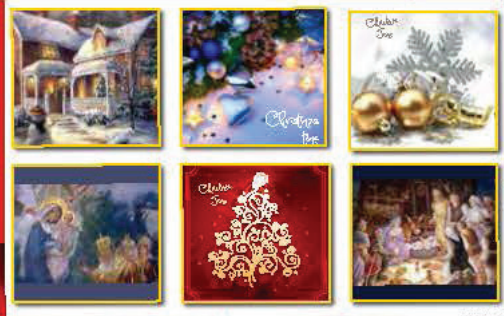


Connect with us for our Christmas Appeal



Send a gift of decorations to family and friends, or make it a gift for yourself

Send your Christmas greetings at home and across the miles by using hospice Christmas Cards



Box of 12 with 2 Cards of each image
€10



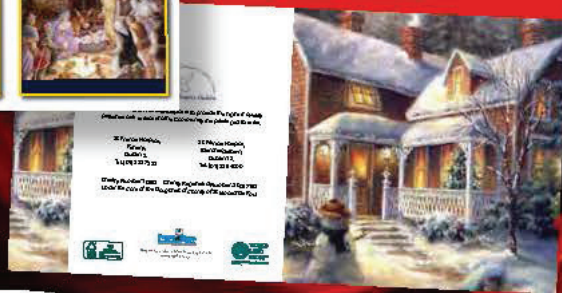
Gold/Silver Angels
€4



A Star to Guide Your Way
€6



Wings of Love and Hope
€6



Purchase on www.sfh.ie or by phoning 01 832 7535



Remember a loved one by dedicating a light on the hospice Christmas tree - €6 per light

St Francis Hospice is proud to have achieved Triple Lock certification with the Charities Institute Ireland. This means we meet the Triple Lock Standard of transparent reporting, good fundraising and governance. Triple Lock status echoes our core values of Excellence and Respect, as it demonstrates the openness, transparency and integrity that our beneficiaries and donors deserve.



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