

Autumn/Winter 2023 Issue 6

HOSPICE CONNECTION

Your link to us and the care that you support

NEWS In this issue



**Meeting our
Community's Needs:
New Outpatient
& Day Service**



**Seán Graham's
experience of a
"Five Star Hospice"**



**Enter our new
Car Draw!**

Dignity | Respect | Compassion | Collaboration | Excellence | Kindness



St. Francis Hospice Dublin

Community Connections



Welcome to the Autumn/Winter issue of Hospice Connection.

Inside this issue we invite you to read and watch videos of many stories that illustrate the links between St Francis Hospice and the community we are privileged to serve.

St Francis Hospice grew from humble roots with the constant support of our community in North Dublin and the surrounding counties. Now, as the hospice

approaches its 35th anniversary, our staff and volunteers care for nearly 2,000 patients and their families and friends each year in the community and in our two hospices in Raheny and Blanchardstown.

Thank you to each and every person who contributes their time, makes a donation, or helps raise awareness about the hospice in their community. St Francis Hospice is truly a voluntary organisation of, by and for the community it serves.

Fintan Fagan

Fintan Fagan

Chief Executive Officer,
St Francis Hospice Dublin

So many in our community have been saddened this year with the loss of two very special members of our hospice family.

Sr Anna Kennedy, DC, who led our chaplaincy team for many years before her retirement in 2020, died this past April in St Francis Hospice Blanchardstown.



Br Eustace McSweeney, also a long serving member of our chaplaincy team until last year, when he took "early retirement" at the age of 90, died this September in St Francis Hospice Raheny.



We are grateful for the gifts of their presence, kindness, and support to their colleagues and our patients and families. Sr Anna and Br Eustace are greatly missed by us all.

May they rest in peace.

Any gift or legacy you can leave in your Will is a gift to St Francis Hospice and is also a gift to your local community

When Seán's father Brendan experienced care in St Francis Hospice, he decided to leave a legacy in his Will as a gift to support the hospice. Scan the QR code to hear Seán explain how a legacy in your Will can help St Francis Hospice help our local community.

<https://youtu.be/d7LmgtNguGA>

To learn more about how you can leave a gift in your Will to St Francis Hospice, please visit www.sfh.ie/wills-legacies.



Sunflower Field of Life

This year's Sunflower Field of Life created by the Hoey/Bergin Families was full of surprises! Different varieties of sunflowers both in size and colour were planted over three acres in Ballyboughal. They all bloomed at different stages and regular visitors to the field, including the bees, were treated to a cascade of colour as they moved through the magnificent field of sunflowers! It was such a joy to see people with arms full of their multi-coloured flowers head for home and then send their photos of beautifully arranged flowers in vases. We thank the Hoey/Bergin Families for creating this tranquil space for us all to enjoy. Thank you to those who visited the field, shared your memories, and supported St Francis Hospice. We look forward to welcoming you back to the Sunflower Field of Life next year.

Your Uplifting Response to our Donor Survey

This summer, our Fundraising Team sent out a donor survey to all our supporters because it is important to us that we contact you in the way and frequency that is most comfortable for you. We have been overwhelmed by the response, so thank you to everyone who has been in touch.

Your comments and stories of your connection to St Francis Hospice have touched us all. Here is just a sample of the feedback we received:

I feel connected to St Francis Hospice because it is like a second home, a place where you are an equal. You are never judged but treated with kindness and consideration. It is a place where you are welcome.

It is a very essential and caring service which provides first class care.

The care and kindness my dad received during his illness and indeed the support I got from St Francis Hospice while I was his carer at home.

There's a positive energy in St Francis Hospice that once experienced I always want to be a part of in whatever capacity I can.

Local ... community ... trustworthy organization and the service St Francis Hospice provides ... and I am beyond words to express the wonderful work that goes on there.

I feel strongly about leaving a gift to St Francis Hospice in my will not only because of how they help us in our grief, but to help others in the future.

I'm aware of the great work/help that is done at the hospice and of the peace of mind that is given to those who avail of this service and to their family members.

So supportive when most needed. Empathetic and friendly staff who not only cared for the sick person but took the time to consider the carers also.

I was there once in my work capacity and I was overwhelmed with the place and the staff.

My Mam was looked after by St Francis Hospice. She had a terminal illness which she ended up surviving with for three and a half years (despite a 4-8 month prognosis). St Francis Hospice was there for her throughout, offering support and complementary therapies early on, and eventually helping us to care for her at home where we were lucky to have enough support to keep her there until she died.

We are truly grateful to be part of such a wonderful community. Thank you.

New Service Launched to Meet Our Community's Needs

It often surprises people to learn that the vast majority of St Francis Hospice's patients remain living at home throughout their illness, with specialist support from our Community Palliative Care Team and a new St Francis Hospice service which launched last year.

The Specialist Palliative Care Outpatient and Day Service (OPDS) enables patients living at home to attend St Francis Hospice Raheny or Blanchardstown for individual treatments or group programmes and return home the same day.

The OPDS is patient-centred, dynamic and responsive, enabling people to receive the care they need when they need it. It is the first model of its kind in the country, and replaces the former Outpatients Department and Hospice Day Care services, which were both disrupted during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Each new patient is met by a nurse, physiotherapist and occupational therapist, and together they work out a plan, taking into account the patient's wishes, needs and preferences. The OPDS service offers individual appointments and group programmes to help with a wide range of symptoms.

When a patient finishes a course or treatment, they can be referred for another OPDS programme, referred to the Community Palliative Care Team for home visits, or even discharged from the hospice if their specialist palliative care needs have been met for the moment.

These patients can contact the hospice again if new symptoms develop or their illness progresses.

Two Stories of Support Marian Meehan and Trish O'Rourke have both benefited from attending the St Francis Hospice OPDS. Here are their stories:



“They do different courses. I came down, it was a six week course, it was mostly exercises and breathing. I think if I wouldn't have come down here that time, I think I'd be either very sick, or dead. And all the courses that I've been doing have really made me stronger in myself. I achieved a good few goals that I thought I wasn't able to do.”



“The group was called Exhale, to show you how to breathe. They put so much work in me, building me up again. Without this, I'd be still at home. I'd be afraid to come out. This has made a new life for me.”

Volunteers:

Community Members Supporting Other Community Members

Like all of St Francis Hospice's services, OPDS is enriched by the support of many volunteers, including Eileen Mills (artist), Catherine Moran (physiotherapy assistant), and Nóirín Boland (driver).



Catherine Moran assists the physiotherapists who run Exhale, a 6-week programme to help with breathlessness. Her role includes setting up the equipment in the circuit of 6 exercise stations, greeting patients as they arrive, and helping the physiotherapists to monitor patients' oxygen levels

during the exercises. Her 20 years working as a healthcare assistant in Holles Street Hospital means she brings many skills and experiences to her volunteer role.

On a personal level, Catherine sees her volunteering as a way of honouring her late Mam, who sadly died during the early days of the Covid-19 pandemic. Catherine loves seeing the improvement in patients from the first week to the last, and says it's a joy to be around people who are so full of life and there is lots of laughter and good craic in the sessions.



Nóirín Boland drives patients to and from their OPDS appointments in St Francis Hospice Blanchardstown. She says, "On that journey, we chat about everything and anything, from whatever is current at the time, be it sport or Dancing with the Stars, or whatever. I hope that on that journey their mind is taken away from whatever medical issues they have and they enjoy the journey as much as I do."

Eileen Mills joined St Francis Hospice Raheny as an art volunteer in 2019. When Covid-19 disrupted services, she happily redeployed to help in fundraising and also did home visits to patients. She was delighted to return to offering art sessions to patients when the OPDS opened last year. Eileen loves meeting people and helping them select an image to paint or draw. She says even people who have never painted before can find a way to make their own marks.



A “Five Star” Hospice Experience

When you meet Seán Graham, you immediately understand the deep and enduring love he feels for his father, Brendan, who received end of life care in St Francis Hospice Blanchardstown in 2021. Their close bond, and Seán and his family's devoted care of his Dad during his arduous cancer treatments, made the decision to access hospice care a difficult one. Seán and his sister Maria were wracked with guilt and wondered whether this was the right course to take in their Dad's care.

As we sip our coffee in the Blanchardstown hospice restaurant, Seán describes the experience of his Dad's first 48 hours of hospice care and the relief they felt at knowing they had made the right decision. “The care was five star, the dignity, love, respect and compassion shown to Dad was beyond anything we could have imagined.”

Brendan was 87 and had spent several months in and out of hospital while he was being treated for cancer. Seán tells me that prior to his Dad's diagnosis, he was fit and active, spending much time with his children and grandchildren and enjoying life to the full.

During his hospice stay, Brendan enjoyed visits from his family and many friends who dropped in to see him. Seán fondly recalls the walks they took in the hospice gardens, meals in the hospice restaurant with visitors, and how much his Dad enjoyed a glass of wine with his dinner each day, followed by a Bailey's coffee. It's a reminder of how the simple pleasures can mean so much.

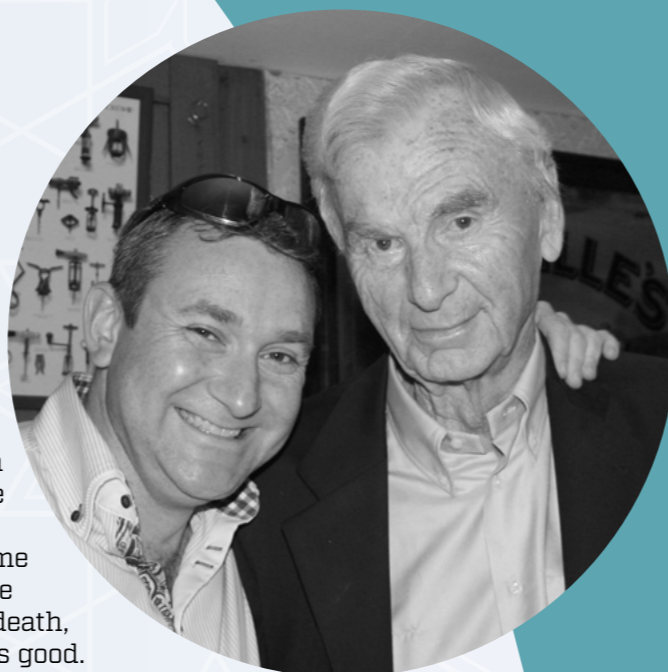


Donna Reddy,
Communications
Manager

Our meeting takes place nearly two years after Brendan's three-week stay in St Francis Hospice Blanchardstown. It is Seán's first time back to the hospice since his father's death, and he says it feels good.

“We have such wonderful memories of Dad's time here, even though it was here we said goodbye to Dad, it was a tremendous experience in the saddest of circumstances but the way we experienced the care here was a source of great consolation.”

Following our meeting in the restaurant and Seán's sharing of his story, he kindly filmed a video with us to try and help others understand what the experience of in-patient care in St Francis Hospice is like for both patients and families. We invite you to view the video and hear Seán's story.



Bewley's Big Coffee Morning Social for Hospice 2023

This year's campaign was launched once again from Bewley's Café in Grafton Street on the 2nd August. On the day there was a great gathering of Hospices from throughout the country, including St Francis Hospice, to celebrate this deep partnership with the Campbell Family, Bewley's Managing Director Jason Doyle and staff. The campaign was launched by actor Domhnall Gleeson, our Ambassador for this year's Coffee Morning Social. Domhnall is, and continues to be, an excellent advocate for hospice and media coverage for the campaign was far and wide in early August. We were delighted to celebrate the day with two of our super hosts, Carol Collins and Dympna Pyne, huge supporters of Coffee Morning over the years.



Domhnall Gleeson, Super Hosts Group which includes Dympna and Carol.

Drive into 2024 in a Toyota Yaris Platinum Hybrid!



Model shown is for display purposes only

Last year's Car Draw was a huge success raising over €128,000 for hospice care. Thanks to Denis Mahony Motors and their generous support of this year's car we are back and look forward to promoting ticket sales for a beautiful Toyota Yaris Platinum Hybrid. Along with the Car we will have two cash prizes of €2,000, €1,000 and five Blanchardstown Centre Shopping Vouchers valued at €200 each. Tickets cost €10. Attached is a tear-away slip if you wish to order tickets. These tickets make great stocking fillers for Christmas. Tickets may also be purchased using the QR Code or calling the hospice on **01-8327535/01-8294000**.

Tickets Sales will commence from the Hospice on the 1st October and our wonderful volunteers in the Blanchardstown Shopping Centre will see tickets from the 20th November to the 11th December. We are deeply grateful to the staff at Crystal Jewellers and the Management Team led by Joe Gavin at the Blanchardstown Shopping Centre for their brilliant support of the Car Draw.

The Car Draw will take place on the 25th January 2024. 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

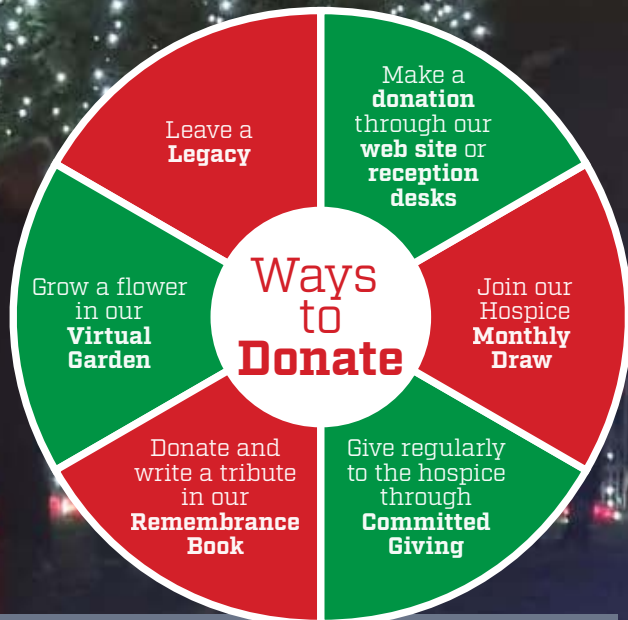


Wings of Love and Hope
€6

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

Please join us for the Tree of Life ceremonies in St Francis Hospice Blanchardstown on Thursday 7th December and St Francis Hospice Raheny on Thursday 14th December.

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



St Francis Hospice is proud to have maintained 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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