

Spring / Summer 2022 Issue 3

# HOSPICE CONNECTION

Your link to us and the care that you support

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HAPPINESS  
IN HER  
RETIREMENT**



Dignity | Respect | Compassion | Collaboration | Excellence | Kindness



*St. Francis Hospice Dublin*

# Community Support: The Heart of Hospice Care

**As Spring begins and we dare to hope that the worst days of the Covid-19 pandemic are behind us, it is a good time to pause and reflect on the past two years.**



you rallied around us with donations and personal fundraising events. When we put out a call for equipment needed from time to time, you responded in your droves.

Your random acts of kindness such as gifts of flowers and treats, cards and messages, lifted the spirits of patients, staff and volunteers alike.



As you will read inside this issue, there were many challenges to overcome, including restructuring some of our services and keeping everyone safe by changing how some things are done. Some important elements at the heart of our care did not change, though, like the person-centred, holistic care delivered by our teams in the hospice setting and in patients' homes. Guided as ever by our core values, we continued to provide high quality specialist palliative care to our patients and their families. In 2021, we looked after 1,944 patients, a 9% increase on the previous year.



We were

delighted to receive a gift recently of this beautiful piece of art which is now brightening the walls of our Blanchardstown in-patient unit. Roseanne Mooney, who is a pallet knife artist from Glasnevin, is pictured with her mother, Mary Healy, RIP, who was cared for in St Francis Hospice Blanchardstown recently.

Roseanne describes her motivation for donating the artwork:

*"The care and consideration given to my mother on a daily basis has been fantastic. The staff and doctors made my mother and indeed all our family reassured that she is getting the best care possible. In appreciation of the fantastic work being carried out at the hospice every day, and the care and dignity offered to the patients, I am honoured to donate one of my paintings 'Autumn is Calling Leaves are Falling'."*

Thank you for your continued support, we appreciate it very much. St Francis Hospice is truly of, by and for the community of North Dublin and surrounding counties. We couldn't do what we do without you! We look forward to continued development of our services to meet the changing and growing needs of the people in our community.

For all of us in St Francis Hospice, the support we received from you, our wonderful community, during the pandemic, made all the difference. When fundraising events were cancelled or changed to virtual events,

**Fintan Fagan**  
Chief Executive Officer,  
St Francis Hospice Dublin



# Sanctuary: Ann Brophy's Story

**Ann Brophy tells about the kindness, respect and patient-centred care she received in St Francis Hospice.**

Ann Brophy's life was turned upside down with a diagnosis of breast cancer in September 2020. After the initial shock and trying to process the news, there followed surgery, months of chemotherapy, hospital appointments, not to mention a severe bout of Covid pneumonia. Then, in the summer of 2021, Ann found a place of sanctuary in St Francis Hospice.

*Ann recalls, "Initially, when I heard the word hospice, I was petrified, absolutely petrified. I nearly thought the Grim Reaper would be at the door waiting on me, you know. It was just dreadful."*

*But after arriving in the hospice, she says, "I went from feeling terrified to feeling elated in a couple of seconds. The nurse was so kind, and loving, and asking me did I need help and would I like to meet other people."*

Ann has always been a writer, and as she began to write about her illness journey, she wondered whether her positive experience of the care she received in the hospice could be beneficial to others who might share her initial fears.

*She wished to share messages such as this, "Hospice life is a life where you feel cared for, supported and most importantly respected. That is my experience, and other patients I spoke to felt the same way. You feel supported by the people that surround you. As soon as I entered my room I relaxed."*

As Ann shared her written story with staff and volunteers, the idea emerged that video might be the best way to share with the wider community Ann's message of hope when it comes to hospice care. Ann has a background in amateur dramatics, so she was more than willing to face the cameras!



Ann's video has been viewed more than 20,000 times to date, so her message is getting out to people, and this makes her very happy.



**You can view Ann's video by scanning this QR code or searching for "St Francis Hospice Dublin" on YouTube.**

Ann would like to reassure anyone who is entering hospice care that,

*"They're entering into a sanctuary, really, because that's what it is, it's a sanctuary where you're respected, and you're loved, and everything is patient-centred, so you're at the core of everything that happens."*

*"Everyone should take the opportunity with both hands, because it really will make your life so much easier."*

## Plant seeds for the future

**Spring is the season of new beginnings, it seems like everywhere is reawakening after a long Winter. It is a time when farmers and gardeners plant seeds for growth later in the year. Why not plant seeds of your own, by leaving a gift in your Will to support the work of St Francis Hospice Dublin into the future.**

**We have seen a 58% increase in the demand for our services in the last 8 years and we project there will be another 30% increase by the end of the decade. It is largely due to the generosity of our community that we have been able to expand to meet this growing need.**

**If you would like to learn more about leaving a gift to St Francis Hospice Dublin in your Will, please contact Eimear Kellett on 086 066 8675 or [ekellett@sfh.ie](mailto:ekellett@sfh.ie).**





# Care and Core Values:

The more things changed,  
the more they stayed the  
same during Covid-19

Two years since all our lives were disrupted by Covid-19, we wanted to share with you a glimpse of the many changes we have made in St Francis Hospice. Of course, some important elements at the heart of our care have not changed: the quality of palliative care delivered, our commitment to our core values, and our wonderful relationship with the people of our community, who continue to support St Francis Hospice in so many innovative ways.

## Volunteers

For safety reasons, our 300+ volunteers were asked to stay home during the initial lockdown in 2020. Gradually, they have been returning either to their former roles or to new ones. It is wonderful for both staff and patients to see our lovely volunteers again.

Even while at home, our volunteers supported the hospice by sharing social media stories from the hospice's pages, stocking items from the hospice shop in their homes to sell to friends and neighbours, and sending messages of support to the staff who were working on site.

## Visitors

In keeping with our core values, especially kindness and compassion, we strove to enable family members to visit and spend precious time with their loved ones in our in-patient units.

Several of our volunteers attended special training to take up a new volunteering role, assisting visitors with their PPE and Covid-19 screening prior to each visit.

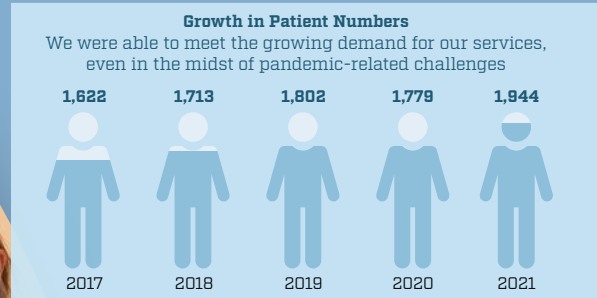


## Support from our Community

We were bowled over by your response to our appeals and campaigns throughout the pandemic. When we asked, you answered! Your countless messages of support on social media lifted our spirits and renewed our energy. Thank you to our wonderful community for your generosity, innovation, and kindness.



## Patient Care



Our teams continued to care for patients and their families and friends throughout the pandemic. Sometimes the care took a different form, such as a phone call or video link instead of a visit, but the quality of care and professionalism of our teams remained the same.

By continuing to focus on person-centred care and using values-led decision making, our teams found innovative ways to safely deliver the vital care that our patients and families needed.

### Bereavement and Family Support

Grieving during unusual times, such as the pandemic, often means that people need additional support. Demand for bereavement services increased in 2020 and 2021. Our Social Workers and Bereavement Support Volunteers showed great flexibility in adapting to telephone sessions when face to face support was not possible.

Our Services of Remembrance and Bereavement Information Evenings were converted to video and we sent links to bereaved family members, along with support materials to read.

To help support teenagers and young adults, the social work team published a book, ***Finding Your Way Through Grief***.

With kind support from Amazon Web Services, the book is available free of charge from [www.sfh.ie/online-shop](http://www.sfh.ie/online-shop)



# The Value of the Listening Ear

## Our Volunteer Bereavement Support Service

When Covid-19 turned the world upside down in 2020, Clodagh Golden was a few months away from completing her training to become part of St Francis Hospice's Volunteer Bereavement Support Service (VBSS). She says that finishing the training on-line demanded adaptability and a "leap of faith", but along with her 10 fellow trainees, she made the leap and became a fully trained bereavement support volunteer.

Clodagh's cohort of trainees was groundbreaking in other ways; they brought an evening VBSS service to our Blanchardstown hospice for the first time. Previously, people who were experiencing bereavement through St Francis Hospice's services would have been offered limited day time appointments in Blanchardstown or invited to attend the evening VBSS in Raheny.

The VBSS has been part of St Francis Hospice's services since its early days and is a listening service rather than counselling. Most bereaved people do not require professional counselling, but often benefit from having a safe, confidential space to talk to someone with specialist knowledge and skills, such as the VBSS volunteers.

As Clodagh explains, *"I firmly believe that time is one of the greatest gifts that one person can give to another. One cannot underestimate the powerful benefits of giving a bereaved and distressed person the opportunity to talk and be really listened to in a safe, supportive environment, without any judgement and to let them*

*know they are not alone as they journey through their grief."*

There are currently 20 specially trained VBSS volunteers like Clodagh, working in St Francis Hospice Raheny and Blanchardstown. In 2021, they supported nearly 200 bereaved people through both face to face and telephone support.

The VBSS volunteers receive professional supervision by the hospice's social work team, and Clodagh says this collaboration is key to the success of the VBSS, *"The sharing of knowledge, experience and trust is vital for the wellbeing of the whole service and ultimately the clients of the VBSS."*

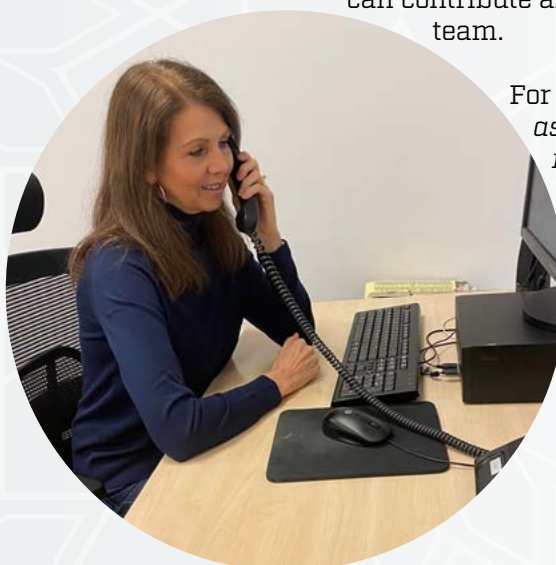
In addition, the training process is on-going, with regular group and personal supervision meetings, where knowledge, expertise and experiences are shared between social workers and volunteers. The opportunities to attend talks and workshops are vital to continuing professional development.

Covid-19 brought about an increase in the number of people seeking help in their grief, so being able to provide support remotely by telephone and Zoom meetings was essential. When face to face sessions resumed, special measures such as social distancing and use of PPE were put in place to protect both the volunteers and the clients.

Clodagh generally meets with two clients each Tuesday night, usually by phone. After each 1-hour session, she updates the client's file. A social worker is always available if the volunteers have any special concerns or questions.

Overall, Clodagh says the VBSS experience has lived up to her expectations. She appreciates the hospice's values-led approach and feels that each volunteer is respected for what they can contribute and are valued as part of a team.

For Clodagh, *"The most rewarding aspect of being part of the VBSS is being in the privileged position of listening to and being present for a bereaved person as they tell their story and hopefully helping them to ultimately be able to integrate their grief into their lives going forward."*



If you have raised funds for St Francis Hospice through our annual Sunflower and Christmas Bell collection days, church gate collections, mite boxes, or Coffee Morning, there is a very good chance that you have had the pleasure of hearing Margaret Atkinson's warm and cheerful voice at the other end of the phone.

Margaret joined the Fundraising Team 17 years ago and in that time she has created and maintained wonderful bridges between the Hospice and so many of our volunteers and supporters throughout the community. It is with mixed emotions that we announce Margaret's well-earned retirement at the end of March; we wish her much happiness, and she will be missed.

Margaret began her career with St. Francis Hospice as a Mite (Collection) Box Co-ordinator recruiting and working with 23 volunteers for the placement of Mite Boxes throughout North Dublin City and County.

As hospice services evolved so did Margaret's role, extending into the organisation of Church Gate Collections and two Annual Collections: Sunflower Days and Christmas Bells. This involved the nurturing of many excellent working relationships with 26 Shopping Centre Managers, 200 Collectors, 50 Collection Co-ordinators and numerous Parish Secretaries across North Dublin City and County. Members of the Fundraising Team generally get involved in all aspects of fundraising and Margaret was no exception to this. Her annual "ring around" to our brilliant Coffee Morning Hosts was one of the many key factors to its success and her assistance in the setup of Hospice Coffee Mornings was always welcomed.

On a daily basis Margaret's work is clearly at the heart of the community. The warmth and kindness of her personality, her excellent communication skills and her powers of persuasion have helped to embed lasting relationships between St Francis Hospice and the community we serve.

Margaret would like to thank all the brilliant Mite Box Co-ordinators, Collection Co-ordinators, Collectors, Centre Managers, Parish Secretaries, Coffee Morning hosts and hospice colleagues that she has worked with over the years and who made her role so hugely successful. Margaret has requested to leave St Francis Hospice "quietly" and if you wish to give her a call please do so at St Francis Hospice Blanchardstown.

Margaret will be missed by all at St Francis Hospice, within the community and by her Fundraising colleagues who have always greatly appreciated her flexibility, thoughtfulness and kindness. We thank Margaret for her years of absolute dedication to the mission of St Francis Hospice, and we wish her good health and happiness in her retirement.



### **We've updated our Privacy Policy - Your privacy matters**

We have updated our privacy policies to reflect changes in the way we process and use your data. We review and update our privacy policy periodically to ensure the policy is reflective of our current practices. Please take the time to read and review the updated privacy policy by visiting [www.sfh.ie/data-policy](http://www.sfh.ie/data-policy). If you have any questions about this policy or our practices relating to your data you can contact us by emailing [dataprotection@sfh.ie](mailto:dataprotection@sfh.ie).



# How We Can Stay Connected



**Walk and Remember**  
at our  
Memorial Walk  
in **March**

Consider a  
**Legacy**  
in **your Will**

Donate to  
**Sunflower Days**  
in **June**

Host a **Hospice Coffee Morning**  
in **September**

**Christmas Appeal**  
Sponsor a  
light in  
**December**

Look for our  
**Collection Units**  
in shopping  
centres

Place a  
**Collection Box**  
in work  
or home

Hold your  
**Own Event**

Nominate the  
Hospice as your  
**Corporate Charity Partner**

Purchase or sell  
**Hospice Merchandise**

Fundraise  
with your  
**School**

Engage  
with us on  
**Social Media**

If any of these activities interests you, please contact the Fundraising Team on **01 832 7535**.

**Currently we need to raise €4.67m annually** to maintain our high quality palliative care services and continue to develop our services to meet the needs of our Community.

Would you prefer to receive this newsletter by email? Contact **fundraising@sfh.ie**.



## Hold your own Community Event



Community Events have always been an important source of funds to help us develop our services and support those in our community who need us most.

Now that Covid-19 restrictions are easing, people in the community can support us once again through their own fundraising events.

If you would like to organise your own event, please contact Bernadette Gillis on **01 829 4000** or **bgillis@sfh.ie**.

