

Spring / Summer 2023

Issue 5

# HOSPICE CONNECTION

Your link to us and the care that you support

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St. Francis Hospice Dublin



# Community Connections

The story of St Francis Hospice Dublin has reached an exciting moment in time. This spring, we have lodged a planning permission application for the development of a new, 24 single room in-patient unit for our Raheny hospice.



thanks to community, corporate and government support, we cleared the final bank loans, a remarkable achievement in just 12 years.

St Francis Hospice was born 34 years ago, with a mission to provide high quality specialist palliative care for the people of North Dublin and surrounding counties. With the unwavering support of our community, our hospice services have flourished and grown.

As we enter this new phase of growth together, the immortal words of Helen Keller remind me that,

**“Alone we can do so little, Together we can do so much”**

Thank you for your continued support.

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

This development will provide more privacy and dignity for the patients and families in our care, and will help us to meet the specialist palliative care needs of our growing and ageing community.

On pages 4 & 5, you can find more information about our plans, and how you can help. We invite you to read Aedin's story of the care she, her late husband, Frank, and their two children received from St Francis Hospice Raheny a number of years ago.

The anticipated cost of the build is substantial, and much of this will need to be fundraised. We have faced large sums in the past; the cost of building St Francis Hospice Blanchardstown between 2009 and 2011 was €24.5m. Last December,

## Leaving a Lasting Legacy for Your Community

The commitment and support of the people of North Dublin to St Francis Hospice has resulted in a service which represents the true spirit of hospice - a community reaching out to comfort and care for those of its members who are living with a life-limiting illness.

With the redevelopment of our Raheny in-patient unit, there is a real and tangible opportunity for those considering leaving a gift to St. Francis Hospice to leave a lasting legacy for your community.

Making a Will is the only way to ensure that your money and assets will be shared according to your wishes after your death, and provides certainty that your estate is distributed precisely as you wish. It is also an opportunity to leave a gift in your Will to a charity of your choice, such as St Francis Hospice. Should you wish to include a gift to St Francis Hospice Dublin in your Will, your solicitor will be able to advise you on the wording required.

# Your Stories are Ours and Our Stories are Yours

In our last issue of Hospice Connection, we asked you to let us know your stories of why you support St Francis Hospice. We were bowled over by your response, and the stories you shared with us.

Also last year, we started a series of Meet the Team videos, to let our staff members and volunteers tell their stories of what it's like to be part of the St Francis Hospice team. (You can visit the St Francis Hospice Dublin YouTube channel to view all the videos.)

Above, we bring you a blend of your stories and our stories, all of which celebrate the compassionate, high standard of care that, thanks to the collaboration between all of us, St Francis Hospice is able to provide to our community of North Dublin and surrounding counties. If you would like to share your story of why you support St Francis Hospice, please email it to [communications@sfh.ie](mailto:communications@sfh.ie).



# Aedín's Story

Whenever anyone mentions St Francis Hospice my first response is always, "They saved my family." That might seem like an odd thing to say, but when you read our story, you will understand how important the support of the hospice was for me and my family.

My husband, Frank, was a patient there 8 years ago. I remember his first few minutes, arriving anxious and upset and being met by compassion and professionalism. He focused on the room layout, to gain some control I think, and in what seemed like seconds a team of carers re-arranged the whole room to his liking, every bit of furniture moved.

One of the nurses knelt down beside his chair, took his hand and said, "We're here for you Frank." It was so simple and so kind. The hospice meets you exactly where you are, emotionally and physically, and holds you in place.

Frank, individually, and we as a family, used every service the hospice offered. There were nurses' visits at home before his admission, I started having conversations with Niamh Finucane from the Social Work department about our children and how best to talk to them about what was happening. After his admission Frank was very keen to have lots of physiotherapy, where he worked very hard, and occupational therapy, for him that was painting. We have some treasured pieces that he completed.

When a loved one dies, the hospice doesn't go away.

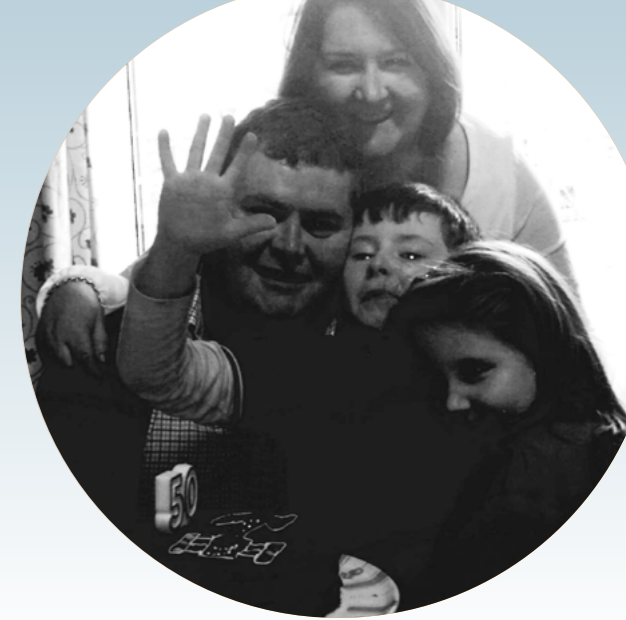
They stayed in contact with me for as long as I needed, and myself and my two

## The hospice meets you exactly where you are, emotionally and physically, and holds you in place.

children regularly went back to speak to Niamh and work through some feelings. When I talk about being saved after Frank's death, I particularly remember her contribution to that and we will always be grateful to her.

We were fortunate to receive a single room, not available to everyone at the existing hospice in Raheny. Frank was a young man, with young children, and having his own room allowed us private family

time. I felt our children could be



themselves and I didn't worry about disturbing other patients. So we could have movie nights, play games, listen to music, do homework and take naps. A little bit of normality in an abnormal time.

I'm delighted that the new hospice development plan has all single, en-suite rooms planned. It's a huge fundraising task but I feel the whole Dublin community is so proud of the work the hospice does that whether it's buying a €3 key ring, raising €50 at a coffee morning or €500 at a pub quiz, we can point at the hospice and say, "I helped build that."

Aedín Gillespie

## Growing to Meet Our Community's Needs



St Francis Hospice Dublin celebrated our 34th anniversary in February 2023 by preparing to lodge planning permission for our next major development: a 24 single bed in-patient unit for our Raheny hospice.

The new in-patient unit will provide privacy, dignity, and higher standards of infection control, as well as much-needed room for family members and friends. It will also increase our bed capacity in Raheny from 19 to 24 beds, an important development as we strive to meet the needs of our growing community.

Our existing in-patient unit in Raheny was built in 1995, entirely funded by donations. The facilities were state of the art in their day, but standards and needs change over time. In particular, the Covid-19 pandemic demonstrated the challenges

of providing high quality care in our three 4-bedded rooms in Raheny.

Those who donated toward the build of our original in-patient unit will be pleased to know that it will go on serving our community when it is eventually re-purposed to house our expanding community palliative care and outpatients and day services teams. About 2 in every 3 of our patients are enabled to remain at home throughout their illness, with the support of these vital services.

The cost of the new build and fit-out is estimated at €29.8m, and we are launching a special fundraising initiative, *Living Today*, for our wonderful community of North Dublin and surrounding counties to get behind. Please visit our web site to find out more: <https://www.sfh.ie/living-today>.



# Bereavement Volunteer Programme Grows

Sometimes when people experience bereavement and loss the world can become a very confusing, strange and hostile place. The St Francis Hospice Dublin Volunteer Bereavement Support Service (VBSS) offers a safe, confidential space for bereaved people to share their experiences.

Being met with kindness and compassion enables even the most wounded and vulnerable of those bereaved, to open up and share their grief. Our volunteers companion them during a time when they need to talk about their loss, identify the aspects of their grief that they are struggling with, and together find a way for the bereaved person to carry their loss and engage in living their life.

We have a wonderful team of specially trained bereavement volunteers, and last year they offered 980 appointments to 262 different clients. This is in addition to the bereavement support provided by our hospice social workers.



Even so, there are growing waiting lists of people who have been bereaved and are requesting support. This is due to two factors: the rising numbers of patients and families under the hospice's care, and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, where increased isolation impacted on the experience of illness, caring and bereavement in a way that contributed to people's level of distress.

With thanks to a philanthropic grant from the Cadbury Foundation, we are currently recruiting 18 new bereavement volunteers to expand our service. They will start their 60-hour training programme in April, and once qualified, they will begin to see clients, with ongoing support from the hospice's social work team.

Treasa Meehan kindly shared her experience of 13 years as a VBSS volunteer in a recent Meet the Team video:



The Volunteer Bereavement Support Service of St Francis Hospice Dublin was honoured to be shortlisted for a **Volunteer Ireland Award (Small Group)** in 2022.

# A Win/Win Hospice Car Draw

One day last December, Colin O'Shea and his wife were driving past St Francis Hospice Raheny and spotted the sign outside advertising our Car Draw. As luck would have it, they had just won €10, the price of a car draw ticket, on a scratch card! Remembering the wonderful care Colin's Mam had received in the hospice a number of years ago, it felt like the perfect way to spend their winnings. Colin bought a ticket at the reception desk in his wife's name.

A few weeks later, on New Year's Eve, Colin decided he would like to have his own name in the hat for the draw, so he visited reception in St Francis Hospice again and bought a couple of tickets for good measure.

By the time the day of the draw came around, Colin's busy life with his three young children had put the draw right out of his mind. His wife had recently shown him an ad on St Francis Hospice's social media seeking new volunteers, and the morning of the draw, Colin had sent an email to enquire about becoming a volunteer.

That evening, when Colin spotted a missed call from St Francis Hospice on his phone, he assumed it was a follow-up call about his volunteering enquiry. Much to his surprise, it was a member of the St Francis Hospice Fundraising Team ringing to let him know the good news that his ticket had been the first one pulled from the drum. Colin remarked, "I couldn't believe it when Katrina told me I won the car! Amazing, delighted ... can't believe it."

The Hospice Car Draw was a win/win, as it raised more than €128,000 to support the care that St Francis Hospice delivers to members of our community in North Dublin and surrounding counties. A huge thank you to everyone who entered the draw, and congratulations to all our winners.

Look out for next year's bigger and better draw in the autumn. Meantime, you can always enter our Hospice Monthly Draw, which provides a steady income to ensure we have the funds there to provide the highest quality palliative care service possible for our community.



# Join Our Spring Memorial Walk

*"Mom was my favourite person and the kind of person that you would want to grow up to be. She was incredibly kind, beyond kind, the most selfless person you could ever meet. Incredibly funny, beautiful inside and out and the most loving Mom. This March/April I will participate in the Hospice 5K Spring Memorial Walk with my family and my dog Fella because it's a beautiful way to remember Mom, to be out walking together, sharing stories about Mom and all the while raising funds for St Francis Hospice. We are forever indebted to St Francis Hospice for the wonderful care they gave to our beautiful Mom and this is a wonderful way to pay tribute to her and to show our support for this cause that is so close to our hearts."* Sarah Jane Seymour



I want to make a donation to ensure St Francis Hospice Dublin can always be there when it is needed

**Enclosed is my gift of:**  
 €25  €50  €100  Other: € \_\_\_\_\_

**Gift Method:**  
 Cash or cheque for € \_\_\_\_\_ enclosed

**OR**

**Card Number:**

**Expiry Date:**     **CVV:**

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**OR**

**Make your gift online at: [www.sfh.ie](http://www.sfh.ie) or call 01 832 7535**

**Full Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

By giving monthly you safeguard our future, enabling us to plan and expand our care, knowing that we have the income to do so.

**Please charge my credit / debit card the following amount EVERY MONTH:**  
 €10  €21\*  €30\*  Other: € \_\_\_\_\_

**St. Francis Hospice Dublin**  
 Dignity | Respect | Compassion | Collaboration | Excellence | Kindness

Charity Number: CHY10568  
 Charity Regulator Authority Number: 20027193

**Commencing with the first payment on:-**  
 1  3  6  12

\* By donating €21 or more a month St Francis Hospice can claim a tax refund on your donation



# Your Support Makes a Difference



Together we can ensure that St. Francis Hospice Dublin is here to provide specialist palliative care for the people of north Dublin and surrounding counties

## How We Can Stay Connected





**Walk and Remember**  
during our  
Memorial Walk in  
**March and April**

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**



Watch out for our  
**Collection Boxes**  
in stores or  
place a box  
at 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** or **01 829 4000**.

**In 2023 we need to raise €4.5m** to maintain our high quality palliative care services and to progress with major and minor projects at both hospices.



### 5k Spring Memorial Walk

Supported by Eileen Dunne

**Calling all Families,  
Friends and pets!**

Walk somewhere very special to your loved one **DURING** the Month of **MARCH / APRIL** and raise funds for St. Francis Hospice

REGISTRATION  
**€25**



Would you prefer to receive this newsletter by email? Contact [fundraising@sfh.ie](mailto:fundraising@sfh.ie).



**St Francis Hospice**  
Station Road  
Raheny, Dublin 5  
T: **01 832 7535**

**St Francis Hospice**  
Blanchardstown  
Dublin 15  
T: **01 829 4000**

Web:  
[www.sfh.ie](http://www.sfh.ie)  
Email:  
[fundraising@sfh.ie](mailto:fundraising@sfh.ie)

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