

# SPEENHELPING HOSPICES

Grainne Suter

Well, we have all been through quite an eventful time over the last few months! We were very concerned about our ability to fundraise as all events were cancelled. But despite all we have, with your support, raised over £7,835. This is truly wonderful and we are very relieved to have come through lockdown with a healthier bank balance than expected.

All the committee have been involved in the fundraisers but special mention needs to be made to Ann James, Maureen Laing and Christine Davies for producing the face masks. This initiative raised £4,400 - and that's a lot of masks! Our thanks also to Jeanne Hansford and Gill Biffa, who dusted down their sewing machines when demand was at its highest. When we had run out of customers in the village, advertising in Hallmark opened up a new source of custom in Lacey Green and Loosley Row. People in Ireland, Scotland, Staffordshire and Lancashire as well as Berkshire, Bedfordshire and Bristol are now suitably attired to go on public transport, visit the GP surgery and shop safely. Many thanks also to those of you who threw in the extra odd £5 and £10 notes. Much appreciated! We will continue to make masks whilst there is a demand. Please call 07778 803260 if you want to place an order.

Recognising the challenge we were facing, Joanna Brownridge, a very well-known landscape artist, donated one of her paintings to SHH for us to raffle. Joanna won first and second place in the Buckinghamshire Art Society People's Choice Vote Spring 2019 and Artist of the Year 2019 West Wycombe Art Group. Joanna donated one of the winning paintings for our fundraising raffle. "Mist" was

won by Liz Dawson who used to live in Turnip End. The framed print went to Valetta Brown. The tickets were £25 each. All ticket purchasers received a signed A3 size print of the picture signed by the artist, produced by well-known photographer and jazz player Martin Hart. This initiative raised £3,125. Thank you to Joanna and Martin. Some people who had bought tickets for the Spring Lunch donated their ticket money when the event was cancelled, thus taking us to a grand total of £7,835 for this year.

We are so grateful for your support, as we know that you will also have been supporting your own pet charities during this period. All charities are facing funding challenges, but hospices get so little government funding and are hugely dependent on voluntary contributions.

The act of fundraising normally gets the attention, the impact that it has on individual and family lives is often unknown. So, on the opposite page we are very grateful to local family Lauren and David for their very poignant article. Sharing their experience gives us an insight into how Helen House for Children supports families. This helps us all to understand why we in SHH need to do what we do and how you, by your contribution, are enabling a quality of life for adults and children with life limiting conditions.

## Future events

Planning events at this point is difficult however, we will run the Christmas Market on the 14th November and we will be out carol singing in December. Hopefully, we can arrange a musical event in the near future.



Selling beautifully made masks.



Grainne Suter and artist Joanna Brownridge viewing MIST, Photo by Martin Hart.

## And just to remind you of our purpose...

SHH is a small charity run by a group of committed women from Speen and North Dean to fundraise for four local hospices - Florence Nightingale, Rennie Grove, South Bucks Hospice and Helen House, the hospice for children in Oxford. The hospices provide a range of palliative and end-of-life care services to people in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and south Bedfordshire. The hospices receive limited funds and are increasingly reliant on local support from communities like ours to continue to provide the specialist care of inpatient and day hospice services. We keep overheads down to an absolute minimum to ensure that the money raised goes directly to the charities.

# HELEN & DOUGLAS HOUSE

*One of the charities supported by Speen Helping Hospices*

The day your child is born should be one of the happiest of your life and the days, weeks and months that follow full of absolute joy. Sadly, our reality was somewhat different and not what we had been planning for the past 10 months.



*Playing in the garden after a delicious Father's Day lunch*

When our second son, Finley, was placed upon me, I instantly knew something wasn't right. I could tell from the way he looked and behaved that something was wrong and was no way prepared for our little world to come crashing down around us like it did. To our complete shock we were told that our beautiful boy had been born with a rare, life-limiting genetic disorder known as Schinzel-Giedeon Syndrome. As a result, Finley has a number of medical issues including sight and hearing impairments, seizures, skull and body deformities and is fed through a gastrostomy.

Myself and my husband David have been caring for Finley since birth and are still getting used to a very different way of life. Fortunately for us we are able to spend time at Helen and Douglas House in Oxford. The children's hospice

provides us with much needed family respite several times a year. When there, Finley is cared for by a team of amazing nurses and doctors in the and caring and peaceful environment. This means that myself, David and our eldest son Danny are able to relax, enjoy home cooked meals, catch up on much needed sleep and most

importantly spend quality time together without the daily worry and pressures of caring for Finley.

As a charity Helen and Dougal House rely heavily on donations and public support. We would be devastated and at a complete loss if this tranquil little haven was no more. Myself and my family are so grateful to everyone who has helped to donate and raise money for this incredible charity. Never in a million years did we expect to find ourselves in this situation but with the support of Helen House we are able to manage Finley's condition and enjoy what time we have with him.

Please help my family and other families who face every parent's worst nightmare by continuing to give generously.

*Lauren & David*