



well wishers

Raising funds to make a difference



Walsall Healthcare
NHS Trust

Charity Newsletter Winter 2025 Edition

Welcome to the winter edition of our Well Wishers newsletter – keeping you up to date on Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust’s charity activities.

The charity has enjoyed another busy few months and has continued to build partnerships in the community and the borough’s business world.

Once again, generous supporters and fundraisers have helped us make a difference to the people who use our services in the hospital and community.

Remember, there are lots of ways YOU can get involved!

To find out more contact the team on 01922 656643 or wht.fundraising@nhs.net

Tuned in to a better experience

Better patient experience is being channelled across five wards at the Manor Hospital – thanks to a charity-funded project.

Well Wishers has bought 30 new televisions for Wards 1, 2, 3, 4 and 29.

They have been installed in all the bays and the charity funded the full installation included new wiring, brackets and ariels.

The project came about because patients get frustrated if TVs are broken or faulty – as can often happen in a busy hospital setting.

Jason Brown was admitted to Ward 29 after suffering a stroke.

He said: “The TV helps to keep me entertained. The days can be quite long, so it helps to break it up a bit.”

Amarachukwu Ezennia, Ward Sister added: “It has made a massive difference having the TVs on the bays. We have a lot of patients, and it can be a good distraction for them if they are in pain.

“As Nurses, it also helps us with patients who can be in a state of confusion and want to keep coming out of bed which for some does not help their symptoms.

“Thank you so much to Well Wishers for funding these for us. Whether it’s just £1 given, or more, we are so appreciative as it helps to keep our patients safe and happy.”



Donate

Fundraise

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Legacies

Events

Let there be lights

Patients, visitors, volunteers and staff at Walsall Manor Hospital enjoyed a TREEmendous seasonal treat when its Christmas lights were switched on as part of a packed Festive Friday of yuletide cheer.

Inspirational amputee Tommy Brown, 13, did the honours, joined by the borough's Mayor and Mayoress following an uplifting performance from Great Barr Brass Band, singing sensation Shannon Harvey and Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust's Choir. Stephanie Cartwright, Group Director of Place (Walsall and Wolverhampton) at Walsall Healthcare, welcomed everyone to the switch-on and thanked the charity for organising the event. The Mayor, Councillor Anthony Harris, said: "Well Wishers is one of my chosen charities and it's a pleasure to support a cause that clearly shows the difference made to the patients who use the services of Walsall Healthcare."



Tommy, said he "loved" pressing the switch to light up the Christmas tree.

Tommy, who attends Streetly Academy, lost both his legs from the knee down and his right arm just below the elbow, all due to meningitis as a baby. He enjoys training sessions with former British lightweight boxing champion Martin Gethin, local hero and Well Wishers patron.

The lights switch-on was part of the Trust's Festive Fridays

Georgie Westley, Fundraising Manager, said: "Our Festive Fridays have been running a few years now and the atmosphere is always perfect for that pre-Christmas build up.

"The lights switch-on was a lovely event and marked the start of a hectic, but rewarding Christmas build up."

Santa's elves stocked up his sleigh with presents for a visit on Christmas Day when he popped in to see patients on the Children's Ward.

The charity also provides a gift for the first baby boy and first baby girl born on 25 December. And every patient in our care, whether in the hospital or community on Christmas Day, also received a little gift from the charity.

Saddlers' winning visit

Players from Walsall Football Club spread Christmas cheer to patients and staff at the Manor Hospital – with manager Mat Sadler declaring the visit an "honour and a privilege".

The Saddlers squad proved they are top of the league for bringing smiles to patients as well as topping League Two after arriving armed with presents to hand out to poorly children.

Players visited the Children's Ward, Neonatal Unit, Wards 9, 10, 11 and 12 and Discharge Lounge on their visit, organised by Well Wishers.

"We look forward to these visits and it's an honour and a privilege for us to bring some cheer to patients and staff here," said Mat.

"It's one of the proudest parts of the job and the players really enjoy it, and if we help pass the time a bit quicker for the patients then it's great."

For patient Sheila Parsons, recovering from a broken hip, the visit reminded her of ex-Saddlers striker and assistant manager Richard O'Kelly, who she and his sisters went on holiday to Margate with decades ago.

"It was wonderful to see the players and for them taking the time to chat with us. They were really friendly," said Sheila, from Great Barr.

Walsall defender Rico Browne said: "This is the first time I've been on one of these visits and it was good to see people on their different journeys."



Reet Basra, six, couldn't wait to play Hungry Hippos, Connect 4 and Jenga with the players – including Walsall winger Albert Adomah, who was just as competitive!

"I've had to show them all how to play," she said.

Mohammed Malik enjoyed a game of table football with Douglas James-Taylor before going for appendix surgery.

The nine year old beat the Walsall striker and said: "He needs to do better." And Douglas added: "That's what Mat Sadler tells us!"

On the Neonatal Unit, Bobby and Narinder Khatkar were thrilled at the players' visit.

"The players were very friendly and interested in our baby son," said Narinder. "It's good of them to visit."

Georgie Westley, Fundraising Manager, said: "We are so grateful to the team for bringing a smile to our patients.

"Their visit brings joy to staff, patients, families and visitors."



Grieving couple's cuddle cot donation

A couple whose baby boy was born sleeping have been fundraising in his memory to support other families who use the bereavement suite at Walsall Manor Hospital.



Katie Perry and Liam Riley-Stewart lost their precious son Layton on 9 July this year but were able to spend time with him in the Snowdrop Room within the suite.

They have bought a special cuddle cot in little Layton's memory and handed it over to Laura Atkinson, Specialist Bereavement Midwife, and Georgie Westley, Fundraising Manager at Walsall Healthcare. Cuddle cots keep babies' bodies at a cooler temperature meaning they can spend more time with their parents after they have passed away.

Katie said she and Liam had cherished the time they were able to spend with their son in this way.

"The support we had from Midwives and all staff at that time was amazing. We can't praise them highly enough. They were so compassionate and considerate. Every time anyone came into our room on the bereavement suite, they acknowledged Layton and talked about him with us. They were respectful and mindful and that means a lot when you've lost your baby."



Liam, 23, who works at South Staffs Water, said the support was just as important for him as a grieving father.

"As Katie says, everyone was just in shock at what had happened. You don't expect everything to be OK one minute then a nightmare the next. Plus Katie had to have surgery and I could have lost her too so it was such a stressful and sad time all round."

The couple appreciated being able to use the newly refurbished bereavement suite at the hospital which is soundproofed and has calming wall vinyls throughout its two rooms as well as televisions.

"We needed to be able to spend as long as we needed to with him," added Katie, 27. "These memories we made are important for us to share with our daughter Lyla, who's one."

The couple held raffles and were supported in their fundraising by donations from generous local businesses.

Bereavement Midwife Laura said: "This is a lovely Walsall family who are sharing their story as well as taking the time to consider others through their fundraising."

"Layton will always be cherished and remembered and it's important to talk about him and other babies born sleeping or lost during pregnancy to help us break the taboo that can exist around this difficult topic."

The Trust's Well Wishers charity funded the wall vinyls and TVs and added other touches to both bereavement rooms, thanks to donations made by the public.

Special delivery a real tonic

Toys, games and puzzles brought plenty of smiles to children and young people across the hospital thanks to the Amazon Loss Prevention Team's kindness.

The Sutton Coldfield-based team came into the hospital – organised via Well Wishers – to make the bumper donation and visit the areas that will benefit.

Loss Prevention Managers Ben Coxhead, Nina Graham, Barrie Warburton and Clare Pritchard were given a tour of the Children's Ward, Paediatric Assessment Unit and Paediatric Emergency Department and handed out boxes full of goodies to surprise the children there.

Ben said: "We got these donations through our Fulfilment Centre, which services the local area and looks for local charities to support.

"I personally wanted to do this as it is something quite close to home for me. My partner is currently having chemotherapy treatment here and the staff have been great, so I wanted to give something back to say thank you."

"I am also the engagement champion at Amazon, so it has also been good to get my colleagues outside of work and show them the difference donations can make.

He added: "We feel very fulfilled to have done this; it's nice to see the smiles on children's faces and the reaction of their family and the staff too.

"We have really loved visiting the different areas and we are excited to see what we can do next and if there are any other ways in which we can help."

Skylar, aged seven received a jixelz puzzle game and teddy bear.

Her mum Bethany said: "It's really nice how they are bringing toys for the children in hospital, it's great for the kids."

Tambwe, aged 23-months loved his tractor toy and octopus teddy.

His mum Neema and aunt Marceline said: "Tambwe has been in and out of hospital since he was born so it was really lovely of the Amazon team to come and do this; it felt really welcoming."



Celebrating and appreciating charity supporters and volunteers

Volunteers and charity supporters were thrilled to have their dedication and enthusiasm recognised at a joint awards event.

More than 20 received accolades in Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust's Volunteers and Charity Awards ceremony with winners across a number of categories including Volunteer of the Year, Special Recognition Award, Charity Recognition Award and Inspiring Others Award.

Guests heard many stories of people's selflessness and how they repeatedly go the extra mile to help others.

Sir David Nicholson, KCB CBE, Chair of Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust Board, described the award winners as: "The beating heart of Walsall's NHS" and urged them to be proud of the invaluable contribution they have made to Walsall Manor Hospital and its Community Services.

Lisa Carroll, Chief Nursing Officer said: "We're delighted to see our unsung heroes take centre stage so we can celebrate their dedication, commitment and enthusiasm which positively impact our patients and staff."



Delighted Mike Coffey, who was one of the Volunteer Contribution Award winners said: "This was so unexpected, and I don't make a fuss about these things but it's nice to be thanked like this."

Supporting Staff charity award winner Andy Tams was also over the moon but added: "I have a great team and I'm lucky enough to work with people who want to help us make things happen."

Georgie Westley, Fundraising Manager, said: "What a wonderful night. For our Well Wishers charity, it was so lovely to see some amazing people receive awards for all the support they give us."

"This event was all about them and making sure they realise how valued they are and how important their support is to the charity."

Garry Perry, Associate Director – Patient Voice, said: "Our volunteers don't stop to think about the enormous difference they make every day to our patients and our teams within Walsall Healthcare. So, to be able to acknowledge them in this way was so rewarding for us all."

"They were the centre of attention for once and deservedly so."



VOLUNTEER AND CHARITY AWARDS 2024



New promotional partnership

Businesses now have an opportunity to showcase their services while supporting Well Wishers charity thanks to a new promotional partnership.

Well Wishers has developed a new corporate support pack where businesses can sign up to one of three packages available.

The money made from these will be used to improve the health and wellbeing of patients across hospital and community services, including Goscote Hospice, Fair Oaks Hospice, Hollybank House and the Palliative Care Centre.

Nicola Patel, Director of Sales and Alana Weston, Sales Manager from Village Hotel Birmingham Walsall, were among the first to sign up. They said:

"We signed up to this package because we thought it was a good opportunity to get our business out there as we know how much footfall the hospital gets and how many staff work here. We are also only five minutes away from the hospital."

"It's a win win outcome for us as not only does it support our business, but we are helping patients in the hospital and community which is such a rewarding feeling."

Other businesses that have signed up are:

Walsh Funerals & Memorials

Cotton Candy Travel

Maaya Care

Allsopp & Associates dental practice

Georgie Westley, Fundraising Manager, added: "This pack is such a brilliant way for businesses to promote themselves whilst helping our charity. We have already received great feedback from businesses who have signed up and we are looking forward to collaborating with many more."

Full details of all the packages available can be found on Well Wishers' website.



KO prize for Well Wishers

Charity was the winner as big-hearted boxers helped raise a knockout £2,500 for Walsall Healthcare's Complex Dementia & Delirium Team.

Around 200 people packed out Rushall Labour Club for the seventh annual charity boxing event, with all proceeds from ticket sales and an on-the-night raffle going to Well Wishers.

A highlight included amputee Tommy Brown, from Beechdale, "beating" former British lightweight boxing champion Martin Gethin, Patron of Well Wishers, who came out of retirement to return to the ring after a seven-year absence.

Radiographer Humza Mahfooz, 25, the only Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust employee on the bill, showed his skills honed from two years with Fearless – a boxing club in Palfrey – to beat Ben Anderson by a unanimous decision.

In the other bouts, all contested over three rounds of one minute, Taoi Halls drew with Billy Harman, Ben Cooper beat Richard Morley, Dale Follows beat Craig Timmins – both to unanimous verdicts – Jules Hunt got the better of Richard Lappage, and Tony Deakin pipped Andy Gilkes to a split decision, over five rounds.

Boxing fanatic Joanne Smith, 55, a Clinical Support Worker who has worked for Walsall Healthcare for 20 years, was 'ring girl' for the first time.

"It was absolutely fantastic – I loved it, and what a charity Well Wishers is!" said Joanne. "It raises money for good causes."

Martin said: "It was a brilliant night and Tommy did amazingly. The crowd was really supportive and all the boxers got behind each other."



Patients living with dementia who are being cared for at Walsall Manor Hospital will benefit from the boxing match proceeds.

The £2,500 raised will be used to buy a variety of items to occupy and engage patients such as iPads, busy boards and fidget widgets.

Nicky Thomas, from Green Square Accord (GSA) which is commissioned by the Black Country Integrated Care Board to provide personalised dementia care and support, explained how important these items can be.

"No-one chooses to be in hospital. But for patients with dementia these feelings can be amplified and this increases their confusion and fear.

"Our team focuses on supporting patients to feel safe and reassured by getting to know more about their likes and dislikes, working with their families or carers to build up a picture of who that patient is.

"We can then engage with them around the things that are important to them – whether that's a particular sport they enjoy, music, their past working life, their grandchildren, or other precious memories. They are so much more than their dementia diagnosis and their identity matters.

"Items such as busy boards help calm anxiety too and this makes a big difference. We'd ideally like to build up a good collection of items that we can repeatedly use and we're really grateful to everyone who has supported this boxing event to raise money to help our patients in this way."

GSA works with the Trust's Complex Dementia & Delirium Team