

The Kite



Spring/Summer 2017

P.6 Read all about the Toadhall Mummies

Also in this issue:

P.2-3 Welcome by Yvonne Gilligan

P.8 £35,000 and counting from Superfast IT



Text MOMS17 £5 to support our Mothers

www.edwardstrust.org.uk

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Welcome to the Spring / Summer edition of The Kite, Edward's Trust newsletter.

I am honoured to be writing my first introductory note as Chief Executive and having the opportunity to highlight the incredible successes of last year. Like many years, 2016 was a successful year for the Trust, a challenging one supporting over 600 families and delivering over 5000 one to one counselling sessions to children, young people and parents including wellbeing and mindfulness sessions.

In addition to the thousands of appointments delivered at Calthorpe Road, the team have supported children through our school's outreach programme, organised and delivered special activities including fishing trips, football

tournaments, support groups, craft afternoons and a Christmas party that welcomed over 300 families. Our parents and young people were also supported by the team with four residential retreats delivered; in addition to a Remembrance Time event that welcomed over 200 people to reflect and remember their loved ones during the Christmas period. Countless support groups were held at the Trust including a 'Knit and Natter' cross stitch workshop, a dads support group, a sudden loss group (for mums who are coping after the sudden death of their partner and father to their children), a road traffic accident loss group (supporting people who have lost a child following a road accident) and many more. A huge well done to all involved; from the volunteers who help support our activities; to the fundraisers taking part in marathons and drumathons; raising money for us to deliver such impressive activities and to the long serving and very loyal team at Edward's Trust who continually go above and beyond to give our families hope.

As a small charity created 28 years ago by Peter and Hilary Dent, the parents of Edward who died at seven years old; I am incredibly privileged to be part of such an amazing organisation that continues to support bereaved families across the West Midlands. This year has already started with some significant successes including the relaunch of The Friends of Edward's Trust group, the launch of our new website, a new text messaging reminder system and a change to our Trustee board. Long standing trustee Neil Thorogood was appointed as Chair of Trustees and is supported by Cheryl Pidler who recently became Vice Chair with the support of our new Honorary President, our founder Peter Dent.

March also provided a double celebration as we toasted 28 years in service by thanking all of our supporters and welcoming new ones, including The Birmingham Post and Mail who ran a week long campaign to raise awareness of our charity to continue to rebuild lives

following the death of a child or parent. A campaign, that complimented our own Mother's Day appeal to attract donations to ensure the Trust can continue to work with families for another 28 years and more.

We hope you enjoy reading The Kite and continue to support Edward's Trust. Without your generosity, Edward's Trust would not be able to continue to support the many families facing bereavement across the region and on behalf of them and our dedicated team of staff, trustees, volunteers and patrons we want to say thank you.

Warmest Regards

Yvonne

Yvonne

In 2016, with your support we;

- raised just over £500,000 to support over 600 families
- delivered 2532 one to one counselling appointments to children and young people
- delivered 2801 one to one counselling appointments to parents
- delivered 336 'wellbeing' therapy sessions for stress and anxiety reduction in bereavement
- delivered a family Christmas Party for 300 family members
- delivered 4 Bereavement Retreats

New Appointments:



Honorary President
– Peter Dent



Chair of Trustees
– Neil Thorogood



Vice Chair
of Trustees
– Cheryl Pidler

Volunteering – Priceless not Worthless

“We can’t put a price on our invaluable volunteers, their support is beyond any monetary value.”



Lucy Goodway with Haines Watts limbering up for the 10k

Lucy Goodway was appointed as the new ‘Engagement and Volunteering Coordinator’ in January 2017. Her role will provide additional support for our existing volunteers, as well as appointing new recruits.

To kick start the process, Lucy relaunched our Friends of Edward’s Trust Group (FOET) on 18th February. This provided a really positive start to the year as we welcomed new faces along with sterling support from our long serving volunteers. Coffee, cake and plenty of conversation created a warm, supportive

bond between the people in the room providing a social network of likeminded individuals with similar stories and of course a fantastic bank of volunteers to support the work we do. Amazing what a cup of coffee and a slice of cake can do. Since then the volunteers, along with Lucy, have created a WhatsApp group to continue the conversations and it’s now a daily thing with more people wanting to take part.

Technology, apps, social media platforms, and websites are now the communication channels of choice, so it’s only natural Edward’s Trust get involved and use them too – **so keep an eye out on our new website www.edwardstrust.org.uk for new volunteering opportunities.**

More than just coffee and cake

Our volunteers do enjoy the social side of what they do, but of course they do immeasurable work for us also; representing Edward’s Trust at external events, organising and hosting events including a very successful Raffle and Awareness Stall that took place in February at the Warwickshire Golf & Country Club, which raised a record £1200 in two days. A big thank you to Richard Page, David Christie and Sarah Bradshaw for all their hard work at the event.



Richard Page with supporter Dean Lake and Patron David Christie

But it doesn’t just stop at events, our amazing and priceless volunteers support us in many ways, including helping us out administratively and getting this newsletter out to all of our supporters. So if you fancy some typing or some letter posting, but don’t quite like being the face of Edward’s Trust at events – we certainly welcome any offer of support!

Now for the sporty ones amongst you, we understand not everyone wants to bake cakes, stand on raffle stalls,



take part in corporate events on our behalf (thanks Pete for going along to Eversheds' Quiz and Curry Night) but we do know there's a few of you who like to get your pulses racing for charity. Lucy is receiving a number of emails about taking part in challenge events from abseiling to cycling to running, so if lacing up your trainers is more your thing – then let us know by visiting our website www.edwardstrust.org.uk and registering.

At Work

Does your workplace provide volunteering opportunities? Lucy has been contacted by a number of organisations who wish to support us, with a huge shout out to Unity Trust Bank and their four superheroes Sarah, Ushma, Emma and Gail who came in on Wed 15th March to tidy up our garden (especially after Storm Doris!). If you want to find out more about getting your team mates involved then drop Lucy a line by emailing lucy.goodway@edwardstrust.org.uk

A busy time for Lucy and all the volunteers, but very productive and positive and moving forward!

We love our Volunteers!



Peter Barrett and Sara Packer flying the kite for Edward's Trust at an external event

Get involved with Edward's Trust by coming along to one of our events, bring your friends and family:

JUNE

4 June – Sutton Fun Run

JULY

10 July – Annual Golf Day – Warwickshire

SEPTEMBER

16 September – Birmingham Abseil

24 September – The Birmingham Velo

OCTOBER

15 October – Half and Full Marathon, Birmingham

NOVEMBER

12 November – Children's Remembrance Time

DECEMBER

1 December – Children's and Families Christmas Party

9 December – Adults Remembrance Time

See our website for more events by visiting www.edwardstrust.org.uk

After a Storm, followed a Rainbow... ...for these three incredible mummies.

In October 2015, the lives of Rachel, Emily, Lucy and Victoria would change forever. Four incredibly brave mums embarked on an unknown journey of togetherness, a three day retreat to share their heart-breaking stories of baby loss and begin a new chapter in their lives with the support of Edward's Trust.

Four mums all with very similar stories of pain and loss shared three days together, supported by Helen and Sandra who were not only there to ensure Rachel, Emily, Victoria and Lucy were looked after emotionally, but physically too. Three days and two nights of planned activities for the mums were arranged including group activities of mindfulness, group counselling sessions, group craft and social activities to reduce feelings of isolation and social anxiety, complementary therapy sessions including reiki, aromatherapy and reflexology to reduce physiological symptoms of grief including insomnia and anxiety.

Nestled between green fields and blue skies as far as the eye could see, a little cottage in Church Stretton served as the temporary home from home for four bereaved mums, a much needed time away from the noise, the paper work, additional family stresses and time to concentrate on their wellbeing.

Rachel, mum to Ashton who was born sleeping and Victoria mum to Freddie who closed his eyes at five days old were both familiar faces at Edward's Trust and both accessed one to one counselling, but had never met each other. Emily, mum to Roman who was also born sleeping knew Edward's Trust through her partner and was invited to attend a Retreat and Lucy, mum to Jack, who was also born sleeping was invited to attend following a recommendation by SANDS.



Victoria and Reuben

"I was anxious, I didn't know who would be there or what would happen at the Retreat" Victoria

Not knowing who would be there, what they would be doing or how they would cope, each mum was slightly nervous about attending a RETREAT. When most people think of a retreat, and hear the words countryside cottage, they'd think "how lucky!". Not these women – the thought of sharing their pain again with a stranger was pretty scary – regardless of the setting! Sandra and

Helen knew better, delivering retreats has become their speciality and they knew before the mums arrived the benefits of the getaway. An opportunity to share their experiences with others, to create a peer group with other mums who have experienced heartbreak like no other and to create a bond that goes beyond friendships. A Retreat aims to increase self-esteem, give mums (or dads) a safe, friendly environment to discuss everything about their child loss, the family home, their relationships, their work schedules and their feelings without judgement around the kitchen table to break down the barriers of isolation.

"It was a relief to speak to others who just knew how I was feeling, knew the right words to say and when to say them. I finally felt like I wasn't going mad. Everyone else means well, but they don't get it!" Emily



Emily and Eevee-Mae

The bereaved mums soon got chatting, sharing their experiences, their babies names,

their feelings of grief and more. Tasked with activities of sharing, talking, walking, eating, crafting and relaxing, the goals and objectives of an Edward's Trust specialist retreat were being achieved. Emily, Lucy, Rachel and Victoria were relaxing over the few days – they were bonding, they were finding solace in each other's stories. On their last day, Helen and Sandra took the mums to the local stream and gave them a task; to write a single word on two pebbles; one word that represented something to let go of, and to throw the pebble into the stream and one word to take away from the Retreat...

HOPE

Not only did these women find each other, but they found hope. Victoria admits she wrote 'HOPE' on her pebble to keep, and left the RETREAT with hope in her heart that she would remember Freddie daily but would find the strength to try for another baby. A few months later, Victoria found out she was pregnant with Reuben, who after an anxious and worrisome pregnancy was born a healthy little boy. Victoria's very own 'rainbow baby', a baby she sees as the hope she wished for at the stream that day at the Retreat.



Rachel and Kitty

“The Retreat was empowering, to be with other mums who just got it was really powerful. I'm so grateful to Edward's Trust for creating such an amazing bond between us all” Rachel

Rachel, who had found it so hard to be around mums in public and see children and babies also wrote HOPE on her pebble to keep. She always knew she wanted a family and wanted to be a mother and thanks Edward's Trust for supporting her emotionally, mentally and physically at the Retreat. Through counselling and wellbeing therapy Rachel went on to have her 'rainbow baby' Kitty.

“After leaving the Retreat, I genuinely felt like a weight had been lifted. I felt refreshed, uplifted and positive for the future. I got a sense of hope.” Victoria

The Retreat, which aims to bring together parents with similar stories to empower each other and reduce feelings of isolation certainly did so. The mums who had found more than just hope, but also belonging, created a social group outside of Edward's Trust and called themselves the Toadhall Mummies after the name of the cottage they stayed at.

Following lots of text messages, WhatsApp group messages and curry nights, the mums with the support of each other, felt strong enough to try for another baby. The support the mothers gave each other through their subsequent pregnancies was invaluable and only a mother who has survived a baby loss could understand.

“It was scary to be pregnant again. I was terrified. Every day and every week was a milestone and a worry. Roman was born full term, so there was no magic week for me to carry to. But when Eevee-Mae was born on my birthday in January I had to pinch myself to make sure she was here, she was well and taking her home a week later I could sigh a sense of relief. An actual baby we got to take home. A baby who we see was hand-picked for earth by her brother in heaven.” Emily

It is a joy to see all four mums in a happier place than when they walked through the doors in Church Stretton, but we also understand that not a day goes by where their smiles for their beautiful rainbow babies don't hide their loss.

Thank you for sharing your stories.



£35,000 and counting...

Superfast IT provides over £8,000 worth of complimentary IT and support services for Edward's Trust every year and without their generosity, we wouldn't be able to support the many families we do.

"The wonderful work undertaken by **Edward's Trust** continues to touch the lives of many in the West Midlands;

I was personally touched by the work they do and we are incredibly humbled to support such an inspiring organisation that supports so many families." James Cash, Managing Director, **Superfast IT**.



Edward's Trust provide holistic family bereavement services; including one-to-one counselling, support groups, specialist retreats, children's social activities, a wellbeing service and supports over 600 local families every year.

This would not be possible without the incredible generosity of our corporate supporters like **Superfast IT**.

A whopping £35,000 and counting

In March 2011, **Superfast IT** chose **Edward's Trust** as their charity of the year and have continued to support us ever since providing over £35,000 worth of IT services during that time.

Why?

Director and Founder James Cash, attended a corporate showcase some time back, and as a father himself was incredibly moved by the work we do. Hearing first hand from a bereaved father, James felt compelled to support us, a local charity that relies almost entirely on voluntary donations.

The money saved as a result of having complimentary services from Superfast IT, has allowed Edward's Trust to redirect its funds to where they are needed most –supporting bereaved families.

£35,000 goes a long way and could pay for various services, including:

- 700 one to one counselling sessions
- or
- 14 Residential Retreats – supporting up to 84 parents

With Superfast IT's generous support over the years, Edward's Trust has been able to help rebuild hundreds of lives shattered by grief in the West Midlands.

If your organisation would like to get involved and support Edward's Trust either through services donated in kind, volunteering or fundraising, please contact

Stephanie Bradbury by emailing stephanie.bradbury@edwardstrust.org.uk