

inspire

Your supporter magazine



**Special
Edition**



June 2020


**The
Children's Trust**
For children with brain injury

Welcome



to inspire!

Special Edition

A personal message from Dalton Leong, Chief Executive Officer

First and foremost, I hope that you and your loved ones are keeping safe and well. This is a

difficult time for everyone, and perhaps the most challenging in our 36-year history as a charity. But one thing remains the same: the highly complex needs of the children, who rely on our specialist care, education and support.

Our team is demonstrating resilience in keeping our services running. Staff are putting in extra hours and going beyond what's usually asked of them. I am so proud of all of them and very grateful too.

Safety is paramount; our social distancing and isolation practices go over and above official guidance. Personal protective equipment (PPE) has been hard to find and costs more, so donations of PPE from the community have helped us hugely. Familiar faces hidden behind surgical masks has been unsettling for some children. To help explain, and put minds at rest, we also put masks on teddy bears and dolls.

With many fundraising events being cancelled, your support has been more important than ever before. We launched our special appeal in March with great success so far.

All of your fundraising efforts are truly appreciated, and raise smiles and spirits too. Thank you so much.



Dalton Leong,
Chief Executive Officer

Toy dolls wearing face masks are helping children understand that masks aren't something to be afraid of.



- **Coronavirus** – this issue shares our news at the time of going to print. Please visit our website for the most recent news and updates [thechildrenstrust.org.uk](https://www.thechildrenstrust.org.uk)

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🖱 [thechildrenstrust.org.uk](https://www.thechildrenstrust.org.uk)



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Registered charity number 288018



Keep calm and carry on

The coronavirus outbreak, social distancing and PPE have provided big obstacles to our usual ways of interacting with the children we care for. But our team has risen to the challenge and adapted to provide play in a new way.



Keren Holding, our Leisure and Activities Co-ordinator, says: "I am still based on site, supporting the Play Team to provide a sense of familiarity in this strange and uncertain time.

We are working together to make sure there is a constant schedule of fun activities and resources for the children".

For example, all of the young people in Oak House enjoyed a game of bingo recently, playing from the doorways of their bedrooms so social distancing guidelines were met.

Lots of people have been turning to baking and it's no different here, the children love making cakes and biscuits. There's even an early morning session in Oak House – 'Wake Up, Shake Up' – where everyone 'meets' in their doorways to do exercise to music and to see each other.

In touch with sensory stories

Something that brings together fun, communication skills and learning are sensory stories – where each action in a story is

accompanied by a sensory stimulus. These sensory props give meaning to abstract descriptive words such as sticky, cold and shiny.

For example, take the children's classic story *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* by Michael Rosen. As the family goes through the grass, the story teller can brush pompoms or grass over the knees of the listener. And when they reach the cave, the storyteller can use torches to look around the room, look at faces in the mirror and track lights. And so much more!

The benefits of sensory stories

- Increases vocabulary, and develops creative writing skills
- Encourages listening skills and develops attention span
- Promotes imaginative play and self-expression.

Children can use the props to re-enact the story, and may then use the props to develop their own stories. Enjoy the magic of sensory stories with your children or grandchildren – find a story at thechildrenstrust.org.uk/sensory-stories



Good neighbours

We are so incredibly grateful to everyone who supports, donates, volunteers or takes part in fundraising events. Your amazing efforts make our work for the children possible.



In recent months, we've been overwhelmed by the special kindness shown by our local supporters. You've pulled together to care for us, as we care for the children here at Tadworth during these difficult times. Here are just a few examples.

Super supermarkets

Morrisons at Bell Street Reigate, has been delivering groceries and other supplies to our door. It's not only convenient but also means our team members don't need to venture off site. They've also donated 100 Easter eggs.

Asda at Burgh Heath has given our staff priority shopping slots with all other key workers. They have given us arts and crafts materials for the children too.

Sharing and caring

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is essential for our frontline team who care for

the most vulnerable children. So it's vital that we have adequate supplies of PPE and lots of **local supporters and companies** have stepped up to help.

At the last count, we've had 18,983 items donated, and more has been given to us since then. Some of these included multiple items of PPE, such as boxes of gloves – we're so grateful.

Toyota Croydon lent a courtesy car to one of our doctors so that they didn't need to use public transport, we've had coffee from **Costa Coffee** and **Starbucks**, six Kindle Fire Tablets, plus Easter eggs, food and toiletries from **Dons Local Action Group** – plus lots of supporters have donated Easter eggs, toiletries and snacks to keep our staff going.



Children know that there are friendly faces behind the masks

Thank you for thinking about us.

Open for learning

When the Government called for school closures on 20 March this year, they set out some exceptions: schools for children with ‘vulnerable needs including those who have a social worker and those with Education, Health and Care Plans’ should remain open.

As pupils at The Children’s Trust School and Tadworth Tots Nursery have complex education, health, therapy and care needs, we remained open for all day and residential pupils. Although coronavirus didn’t force us to close our doors, we contacted all parents and carers immediately, to agree a clear and safe way forward.



A ‘Blue Tadworth Bear’ on a door shows that a child is in isolation

Day pupils

All pupils, except six children who needed to shield at home, came in on a daily basis. They continued to be taught by teachers and supported by our therapists, health and care teams in our school building. For

one pupil we made arrangements to completely shield her in a room on her own, with two members of staff. We also admitted children from outside The Children’s Trust whose nurseries were closed due to coronavirus.

Residential pupils

All residential pupils remained on site, as they live here in our purpose-built Houses. To ensure social distancing was possible we decided that

the children should remain in their Houses and we brought the teaching to them! Teachers were allocated to each House and planned with the wider team about how to continue to deliver the support the children needed. Everyone in the team – education, health, therapy, care and play – really came together to support all young people, including those who required shielding.



Music teacher Scott with Indy.

Virtual learning

Any child who was not able to come to the school or was being shielded was still included in our lessons through virtual learning. Thanks to your donations, we were able to purchase new laptops and tablets to give everyone access to education and activities.

Children who were shielding at home joined in too, with a virtual ‘hello’ session set up by our Virtual Learning and Welfare Lead Officer. It wasn’t all work, our brilliant specialist teachers organised yoga and music sessions. At a time when we were all feeling a little unsettled, it was good to look after mental health and emotional well-being too.

Did you know?

Our School is one of the only special schools in the UK that provides education, therapy and care exclusively for children and young people with profound and multiple learning difficulties and complex health needs.



The best for Finn



Finn is 14 years old and is a full time residential pupil at The Children's Trust School.

At just seven months old, Finn was diagnosed as having a mitochondrial disease, a chronic, genetic disorder. It means the mitochondria in his cells, which produce the energy he needs, aren't working properly.

"I knew something wasn't quite right about a month after he was born," explains mum Debbie. "I couldn't say what it was, mother's instinct I guess, even though he was my first born." After the diagnosis his doctors advised that Finn would probably not make it to his first birthday."

"We were told Finn would probably not make it to his first birthday"

"Finn was generally a very smiley happy baby, but we did have episodes of screaming and him not sleeping, which would then lead to some very nasty seizures." As Finn began to grow, so too did his needs. "Life was hard," said Debbie, "we were just taking one day at a time."



Finn with his sister Maisie and mum, Debbie. All of these photos were taken before the lockdown.

Finn defied the doctors' initial diagnosis and, when he was four years old, the family grew as younger sister Maisie was born. "I can't put into words how special the bond between them is, it's just amazing! But it became incredibly difficult having to be housebound when Finn was home, and it started to have an effect on Maisie."

As he got older, Finn became increasingly unhappy at home. "He needed a lot of



Finn on his birthday



Finn at the Earth Song music workshop

stimulation, and enjoyed being sociable,” explains Debbie, “but it would take us two hours to get out the house just to go for a walk. And the more he grew the more I just couldn’t manage.”

Then Debbie was introduced to Short Breaks at The Children’s Trust. “Starting respite at The Children’s Trust completely changed our lives! I was able to spend quality time with Maisie and do things most take for granted, because I knew that Finn was being cared for properly.”

Finn attended The Children’s Trust in this way for a few years, but life soon became unmanageable for the family once more. As a teenager Finn was so unhappy and, because he wasn’t a little boy any more, Debbie found it too hard to move and lift him.

Finn then became a full time residential pupil at The Children’s Trust School. “The change in Finn is so overwhelming, it has opened up a world I never thought he would have. He has the life he should, like any other 14-year-old boy. All the staff are so wonderful and I honestly don’t know where we would be today without The Children’s Trust School.”

We’re doing our level best to make sure Finn’s progress continues during the coronavirus crisis.

When the UK lockdown happened in March, Debbie knew that the safety of Finn and the other children on site was paramount – and her regular visits to see Finn should stop.

Though we helped Debbie see and talk to Finn on video, she would have just loved to



Finn with his sister Maisie



be there in person to give him a cuddle. Debbie said, at the time; “It’s heartbreaking not to visit Finn, and I struggle with it daily, but I feel it would be completely unfair to risk the health of any of the children and staff on site. Especially as the staff are all going to such great measures in order to keep our children safe.”

Debbie is 100% confident that Finn is in the best place and in the best hands – because our promise is to help children like Finn live the best life possible.

What is mitochondrial disease?

Mitochondria are found in our cells and supply the energy that cells need to function. Mitochondrial disease happens when mitochondria do not produce enough energy, or don’t work at all. It can affect cells in any part of the body, like the brain, heart and kidney, and people react in different ways depending on which cells are affected.

Celebrity Ambassadors show their support

David's virtual storytime



David Walliams regularly visits the charity but, along with friends and family of the children, the coronavirus crisis put visits on hold. So on April 27 David dropped in via video link to read *Windy Mindy* from his book *The World's Worst Children*. He brought some much-needed cheer to brighten their spirits and gave them the opportunity to ask him about life during lockdown.

David's supporting our special appeal too. Join him and donate at thechildrenstrust.org.uk/urgent-appeal

Nicholas' special broadcast



You may know Nicholas Owen as a journalist and broadcaster. But at The Children's Trust, Nicholas is one of the team, giving his time as a volunteer driver. Though he had to self-isolate during the crisis, Nicholas sent a personal message of encouragement in a video for staff. What a team player!

Harry and Izzy drum up support

Our new ambassadors McFly's Harry Judd and author, Izzy Judd have thrown themselves into fundraising. Harry ran an online draw and 3 quizzes and selected 10 lucky people at random to each have an online drum lesson or chat on a video call and also asked his bandmates to help. Izzy highlighted our work by creating an online video of a mindfulness memory book to help families.



Harry and Izzy at our Ball last November with Haydn, who received rehabilitation at The Children's Trust

So far this wonderful couple has raised £7,177 which was match-funded as part of our special appeal.

Elaine and children sing a rainbow



Elaine Paige has been a wonderful ambassador for almost 40 years. As a regular visitor, Elaine knows about the uplifting power of music to our children. So she had a fantastic idea! Elaine has recorded a special cover of 'Sing a Rainbow', with all proceeds going to help our charity. She said: "I have recorded the song with the children on video call and mobile phones, which has been great fun." Look out for the single's release this summer.

Online shopping takes off



Our 18 charity shops raise hundreds of thousands of pounds every year but we had to close their doors for 12 weeks. We used this time to keep our eBay shop brimming with clothes and collectables, gifts and games, and lots more. So if you can't get to our high street shops (which will start to reopen from 15 June), you'll find plenty to browse and buy in our eBay store.

You can also support us by donating a percentage of the profit of any items you sell on eBay to the charity. When listing your item, simply confirm the percentage of the sale price you wish to donate and select The Children's Trust as your charity. Thank you!

Find us on eBay: charity.ebay.co.uk/charity/the-childrens-trust/137526



Turn clutter into cash

Ziffit is a free online service that instantly values your books, games, DVDs and CDs, using your phone as a barcode scanner. You can get trade value for each item which you can pass on to us as a donation. Find out more at ziffit.com, or simply download the app.

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Respecting your privacy



We hold information about our supporters – such as your name and address, so that we can keep you up to date, by sending you this magazine for example.

We want to make sure we're respecting your privacy, and we have updated our privacy notice which explains how we look after and use your data. Please check you're familiar with it by visiting thechildrenstrust.org.uk/privacy-policy. If you would like to change the way we contact you, or would like to hear less or more from us, please contact supportercare@thechildrenstrust.org.uk

How a donation could help

£25

£25 helps to buy 39 protective face masks to keep children and staff safe during these times.

£50

£50 goes towards arts, crafts and sensory items to entertain the children whilst they're unable to do their usual daily activities.

£75

£75 helps to buy electronic tablets to enable virtual classes to take place and keep families connected.

Staying apart but pulling together



One positive thing to come out of these difficult times is the importance of staying in touch with each other. Just as families up and down the UK are using technology to chat, play quizzes and share pictures, it's vital to our family too – here at The Children's Trust.

Children are having virtual lessons while shielding in their bedrooms. They also have video calls with their parents and siblings, so that they can still see and hear each other.

Most of our office-based staff are working safely from home, and meet virtually. We even held our professional showcase event, for medical, education and management professionals, on a live video stream.

Virtually unstoppable!

Supporters have not let restrictions get in the way of their determination to fundraise for us with virtual events taking over.

With people spending more time at home, many gardens are looking glorious right now. Two supporter groups arranged virtual 'open gardens' to raise money for our special appeal. They took pictures and videos, and asked people to donate to take a virtual tour.

Supporter Anthony Drexler has taken his pub quiz online. Over 300 people tuned in for the fun quiz and raised over £2,000. Cheers everyone!

Follow us on Facebook to tune into our quizzes and activities for all age groups.

[facebook.com/childrenstrust](https://www.facebook.com/childrenstrust)

LAUGH WITH US:

check out our website for news of upcoming Children's Trust Chortle's in association with The Comedy Store



2.6 Challenge

Two numbers, endless possibilities

When the London Marathon was postponed, the 2.6 Challenge was created! People dreamed up fundraising activities based around the numbers 2.6 and 26. Thank you to everyone who took part, you've raised over £30,000. Here are some of the ways you helped.



Our ambassador, radio and TV presenter Jenni Falconer, has completed the London Marathon many times. But this year she took part in our 2.6 challenge instead!



We helped Sam with his recovery, now he's helping us



Mamma mia... that's a lot of pasta! Ali Lee rolls 2.6 metres of dough



The Parker household cycles 2.6 miles – big thumbs up!

We need you to Step Forward!



Last year we had an amazing response to our Step Forward event – where we asked you, our supporters to keep fit and have fun, taking as many steps as you can!

Now it's time to join us for Step Forward 2020...

This challenge is open to anyone and everyone, at home or during your daily exercise. You can take part as a household, as a socially distanced small gathering, or virtually challenge your workmates and school friends. It's not only steps that you can take, all physical activities can count to your target. Whether it's running, cooking or gardening. You could even compete against friends and family to get things competitive! Just make sure you heed government guidelines ... and have fun! The event runs from 20 June - 12 July.

Step 1 – choose your activity

Step 2 - register here

thechildrenstrust.org.uk/stepforward

Step 3 – take as many steps as you can

Step 4 – raise vital funds for children with brain injury



Step Forward for the 40,000 children who acquire a brain injury each year.

How will you Step Forward?

COMING SOON!



Get ready for our biggest ever virtual step challenge!

Register your interest now by emailing:
challenges@thechildrenstrust.org.uk





Thank you from us all!



In March, we launched our special appeal, asking our amazing supporters to help us through these unprecedented times. A group of generous supporters stepped in and promised to match fund donations of up to £30,000. The Hartz Family Foundation pledged £50,000 to be matched through The Big Give too.

Thanks to you all, we've raised an incredible £623,394 so far.



**£623,394
raised
so far!**

Left to right: Rachel Horton, Health Play Technician, Rachel and Diana painting, Amelie at our nursery



Left to right: Mia, Mollie (with mum, Ceri) and Arthur

