

### Inside

⑦ Little Teddie's big wins

A day in the life of a physiotherapist

⑦ Inspirational Zac



### Welcome



Welcome to our Spring edition of *inspire*, which is packed full of the amazing work you're helping to make possible.

In the following pages you'll read about some of the expert, innovative rehabilitation we deliver, not only at Tadworth, but all over the country. And you'll see the life-changing impact it makes for children facing huge challenges after a brain injury.

You'll hear how Teddie was only a few months old when he came to us for specialist treatment. After acquiring a brain injury, he was experiencing more than 100 seizures a day. It is truly remarkable how he responded in our care.

And 20-year-old Zac tells us in his own words about the huge difference The Children's Trust has made to his life and his future.

We hear from some team members, including music therapists who play a crucial role in supporting children whose lives have been affected by brain injury. Savannah, one of our physiotherapists, also describes the specialist support she delivers for children. Every time you donate or raise money for our charity, you're helping to make all of this possible, and I want to say a big thank you.

Over the last few months, the dedication of our team has been officially recognised too. Ofsted rated The Children's Trust School as 'Outstanding'. And the charity was given an 'Innovation' accolade at the NeuroRehab of the Year Awards.

*inspire* shows that when we all pull together, we can do amazing things for children with brain injury. Thank you so much for your continuing support.

Best wishes,

Sue Augus

Sue Angus Supporter Care Administrator

P.S. Playing our Weekly Lottery is another way you can support us. For just £1 you'll have the chance to win £25,000! Play now. Visit **lottery.thechildrenstrust.org.uk** or call **0330 123 1475**.



Scan to donate

#### On our front cover is Teddie - read his story on page 6.

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### **Supporting Jack's recovery**

After feeling unwell for days with a fever, earache and headache, Jack went downhill fast. "If we had not taken Jack to A&E, and if the medical staff had not acted so quickly, it might have been too late," said Charlotte, Jack's mum.

Jack was diagnosed with a rare form of bacterial meningitis which resulted in a brain injury. After being discharged back home, Jack struggled with the effects of his brain injury. He experienced mental fatigue which was having a negative effect on his wellbeing and schoolwork. "We felt there was nowhere to turn for support," said Charlotte.



On her experience with our Community Team, Jack's mum, Charlotte said, "I'm not sure where we would be now without them."

Jack was referred to our Community Rehabilitation Team. "They explained very clearly what had happened to Jack's brain. We felt reassured that everything we were experiencing was to be expected," said Charlotte. "It was like a door opened and we could seek appropriate help."



#### Did you know?

Children don't always come to our rehabilitation centre in Surrey. We offer rehabilitation in their community. And our Virtual Brain Injury Team offers remote support. It means we can reach even more children and families who need us.

Our team met with staff from Jack's school so that his school day could be adapted. And we signposted Jack's family to further support within their community.

Six months on, Jack's parents now organise his school day and his social life. They make sure he doesn't get too tired, but can still take part in his clubs and see his friends.

Charlotte said: "Every time I have had contact with anyone at The Children's Trust, it has felt like a reassuring hug that you cannot see. I am not sure where we would be now without them."

### Every year 40,000 children in the UK acquire a brain injury.

Please help us continue to support children across the UK with a donation today, or by setting up a smaller, regular gift – thechildrenstrust.org.uk/donate Thank you.

### Tune in to music therapy





Have you ever listened to a song and been transported back to a moment in time? That's because the power of music taps into multiple areas of the brain that control emotions, memory, movement and communication.

It is why music therapy plays a crucial role in supporting children whose lives have been affected by injury, illness or disability.

#### What is music therapy?

Just as physiotherapy exercises the body, music is a workout for the brain. The brain has powerful networks and pathways that are strengthened and stimulated by music. Our dedicated music therapists use music in many ways, including musical improvisation, songwriting, singing, listening to music and more.

#### How does it help children?

Music can act as a cue or stimulus. For a child learning to walk again, music can encourage them to relearn a regular, stepping pattern. For a child learning to talk again, vocalisation to songs is a way to practice sounds that can lead on to words.

As well as having a powerful effect on the connections in the brain, playing favourite songs helps children feel relaxed and comfortable as they rebuild their abilities.

#### What do you do differently?

At The Children's Trust, music therapists work with other specialists in our multidisciplinary teams to provide holistic support.

Music therapy can work hand in hand with physiotherapy. Practising coordination and movement by playing the drums can be much more exciting and motivating than standalone exercises.

We've created 'sing and sign' sessions where children connect with their favourite songs and learn Makaton sign language alongside the lyrics. Children love making music together and it's fun to express themselves through signs.

Children also use EyeMusic assistive technology to control music and colour through infrared sensors that can be trained on different parts of the body. So they can use their hands, feet, fingers and head to put on a light and sound show!

#### Does music therapy work?

Over the last year, we've supported 128 children and young people with music therapy. One of them is three-year-old Millie who had a stroke that left her with a brain injury.

At first Millie could only sit up with support and make very few sounds. We created a personalised 16-week programme focused on Millie's love of music and hobbies.

- Intensive support combined music therapy with speech and language therapy, physiotherapy and hydrotherapy.
- Songs were used in sessions to encourage Millie to move to the beat and make sounds.

Millie started regaining skills that she had lost as a result of the brain injury. Her mum Alice said: "Hearing Millie say Mummy and Daddy again was truly special."

#### Making our mark!

The Children's Trust School has achieved the coveted 'Music Mark School' designation. It recognises our commitment to providing exceptional music education.





Indy taking the lead in her music therapy session

Ofsted has rated our School as 'Outstanding' and said that we 'excel at getting to know pupils' interests and talents, often finding innovative ways to nurture and develop these.' Ofsted noted that our pupils benefit from a strong focus on accessible art and music, in lessons and in therapy.



Finn learning a new skill by playing the keyboard as part of his therapy

#### Note from a therapist

"It makes us proud to see the positive changes music therapy has on wellbeing, knowing that we have helped to support that young person on their journey." Sophie Dawson, Music Therapist, The Children's Trust

### Little wins, big impact

After brain surgery stopped his seizures, Teddie came here to start building his future.

Teddie and his mum Laura enjoying a rehab session!

Teddie was nine days old when he started having seizures. His parents Laura and Dominic rushed him to hospital. A scan revealed that Teddie had Polymicrogyria which meant the surface of his brain had too many folds in it.

They asked how Polymicrogyria would affect Teddie. But they soon saw how it took its toll on their little boy. At one point Teddie had up to 100 seizures per day and was on six different medications.

The hospital team decided Teddie needed surgery to help stop his seizures. When he

#### **About Polymicrogyria**

The surface of the brain normally has many ridges or folds, called gyri. Polymicrogyria is a condition where the brain develops too many folds. It can cause seizures, delayed development, crossed eyes, problems with speech and swallowing and muscle weakness or paralysis. was just six months old, Teddie underwent a hemispherectomy to disconnect the left-hand side of his brain.

Surgery came with risks and his parents were relieved that Teddie, though weak, could move his right-hand side except for his hand. But Teddie had missed out on so much before the surgery too, and his development had been delayed. **He couldn't sit up, crawl or hold things. He had lost the right-peripheral vision in both eyes.** 

Back at home, it was tough. Though Teddie received physiotherapy sessions locally, it wasn't enough. So the family came to us for the specialist support they desperately needed.

Here at The Children's Trust, Teddie has a weekly timetable of multiple therapies including physiotherapy, occupational therapy, play therapy and speech and language therapy. **Now he is starting to make little wins, that are such big achievements after everything he has been through.** 

#### Little win #1 – holding his own drink

Our occupational therapists worked with Teddie to use his right hand again. "When he was thirsty, I was having to stop and ask him if he needed a drink, but now I can have it in his pram and he can do it himself," said Laura.

#### Little win #2 – picking up his biscuit

Occupational therapy has helped Teddie in more ways. "One of his goals was to put his biscuits on the table and for him to pick them up. I tried for ages to get him to do it and then in the last couple of weeks, he's started doing it!" Laura told us.

### Little win #3 - sitting, standing and taking steps

Before physiotherapy Teddie would sit for a few seconds and fall. Our physiotherapists have helped him to sit unaided, stand strongly enough to play with a toy at the same time, and to use a walking frame to take small steps.

#### Little win #4 - communicating

Teddie hasn't said words yet, but our speech and language therapists are helping him to make different noises. "They say 'ready, steady...' and he has to make any noise for 'go!", Laura explained.

"The tiny little things he's doing are massive for us. He's really doing us proud." Laura, Teddie's mum

#### What next?

Now we're helping the family to prepare to go home. Our team has referred Teddie to a centre for children with special needs in their local area so that his therapy can continue. We're also working with a pre-school to help Teddie start attending one morning a week with one-to-one support.

### Win-win for everyone

When a child is supported by The Children's Trust, their family is too. Laura stayed with Teddie in Maple House – first in his room, and then in the parents' accommodation on site.



Teddie practicing his motor skills with his occupational therapist.

Laura said: "When Teddie goes to bed I can go over to the parents' accommodation and I know he's well looked after by the nursing and care staff. It means I'm getting a little break.

"I haven't been able to leave Dominic on his own with Teddie before because he has epilepsy. But here, he has the staff around and they're both safe. That's a really big thing for me.

"I'm taking time off work to care for Teddie. The Psychology Team at The Children's Trust have been helping me plan my next steps, as well as Teddie's."

### Please donate to help more children like Teddie

Teddie has made incredible progress! But we can only continue to make a difference with your fantastic help.



thechildrenstrust.org.uk/donate

### **Time well spent**

We are hugely grateful to receive the support of over 1,000 volunteers who give around 4,000 hours of their time to support us every month. They make a real difference to the lives of children with brain injury.

#### **Spotlight on volunteer Phil**

Phil became a volunteer when he retired. "I thoroughly enjoy contributing one day a week to this wonderful organisation. I wouldn't still be doing so after more than 13 years if I didn't," he said.



He told us his highlights have included shadowing a therapy team as they supported young children in the pool; following a typical day in our school; and interviewing the mother of a young person to write an article for our inhouse publication.



**Drivers** – take children to medical appointments, trips and outings

**Shops** – support managers to run our charity shops and raise funds

**Onsite** – help with fundraising, and in our rehabilitation centre and school

**Events** – act as marshalls, run fundraising stalls and hand out flyers

We truly appreciate Phil's kindness and loyalty. Now he's been recognised by the community too. He received a Reigate and Banstead Volunteer Award for voluntary service locally. He said: "I was completely taken aback, not to mention absolutely delighted."



Former BBC News Presenter, Nicholas Owen, has donated hours of his time supporting us, said: "Being a volunteer driver for the last five years has been immensely satisfying, with so many opportunities to meet young people, nurses, carers, and quite often parents too. A terrific way to really understand what The Children's Trust does."

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#### **Introducing our trustees**

Did you know that our trustees are volunteers too? They give their time freely and have a legal responsibility to make sure that our charity is doing what we were set up to do.

Our nine trustees sit on a Board which meets six times a year. Each one has an area of expertise which they bring to the table. Recently we have welcomed four new trustees.



Steve Flanagan – Chair of Trustees Steve brings decades of leadership and transformation

experience within the NHS, third and private sectors.

He said: "I will draw on my experiences, and those of my trustee colleagues, to lead the organisation towards a secure and exciting future with children with brain injury and neurodisability at its heart."



Christine Brookes – Trustee, Whistleblowing Champion and EDI Steering Group Christine has spearheaded initiatives to inform and transform

organisational decision-making, continuous improvement practices and influence.

She said: "I will use my expertise and experiences to help bring people together to drive forward our exceptional resources and services which are crucial for giving children every opportunity to thrive."



Rory Litherland – Trustee and Whistleblowing Champion With more than 20 years' experience in the HR sector, Rory specialises

in change management and delivering a strategic and progressive approach to improving business management.

He said: "My experience, knowledge and commitment to the wellbeing of children and young people will help me make a valuable contribution to the charity and the children and families it supports."



#### Marian Ridley – Trustee

Marian is a knowledgeable healthcare leader, consultant and strategic adviser, with experience in a number of trustee

and non-executive roles focused upon children and young people.

She said: "I look forward to working with the board, executive team, staff and stakeholders at this important time in the charity's evolution to shape and ensure its future success."

#### Like to volunteer?

Whatever your skills and experience, and however how much time you can offer, there could be an opportunity for you! Get in touch with our Volunteering team at volunteering@thechildrenstrust.org.uk or call us on 01737 365038.

### Side-by-side at Christmas



Christmas is a wonderful time of year for children everywhere. But as Kelly told supporters in our recent Christmas Appeal, it can feel lonely for children – like her son Matthew – whose neurodisability makes it hard for him to play and socialise. And it's isolating for parents like Kelly too.

We'd like to say a big 'thank you' to everyone who supported our Christmas Appeal. The funds raised will go to support our services, like parent and child group Taddies and Tadworth Tots nursery. It's where Kelly and Matthew finally felt that they belonged. "It showed me what a magical place The Children's Trust can be for children with neurodisability and for their families," Kelly said. As well as gifting much-needed donations, supporters also sent us special Christmas messages on a paper figure. We linked these together to create a giant paper chain for The Children's Trust Christmas tree and show our families onsite how many supporters are thinking of them this year!

Together we're making a huge difference. Thank you!



"Thanks to supporters like you, we've found a safe, welcoming place where we can be ourselves." Kelly

ら 01737 364 349

### **Snow much fun!**

Schools, youth groups and football teams across the county took part in our annual Elf Run. Together, with the children and young people from The Children's Trust, they have raised over £16,000!



Elves from Micklefield School in Reigate

#### **Elf Run 'rules'**

- Put on your elf hat
- 2 Choose a time and distance
- 3 Ready...set... run!

Funds raised £16,000+



Our very own Elf Run around the grounds of The Children's Trust!

## Would you consider doing something very special?

Leaving a gift in your Will to our work would make a life-changing difference to the lives of children with brain injury, long into the future.

We know Wills are personal. Family and friends will always come first. There is also a chance to remember causes you care about. Any amount you may consider leaving us would represent a very special legacy.

And you can now have a Will written or updated for FREE, with our Free Will offer. For more information visit – **thechildrenstrust.org.uk/something-special** 

FREE WILLS NETWORK





"Why I'm leaving a gift in my Will." Jan, long-standing supporter

"I've seen how these very special people [at The Children's Trust] turn lives around. I'm leaving a gift in my Will to make sure this exceptional charity can continue long into the future."

### Day in the life





Savannah Salsone, Specialist Physiotherapist in our Community Rehabilitation Team, gives us an insight into her working day.

As a physiotherapist in our community team, Savannah works with children in a variety of locations, such as their home, school, or at our specialist centre in Tadworth. She creates a bespoke programme for each child depending on their goals, and what matters to them most.

inspire asked Savannah to tell us more:

When I arrive at work the first thing I do is... get equipment and toys prepared for my sessions. I often use walking frames, parallel bars, therapy benches and gym balls. Because I work with children, equipment needs to make sessions fun and engaging, as well as helping them physically. **During the morning I...** travel to see the young people for sessions. These may involve working on one very specific goal like learning to walk or run, or on a variety of things including strength, speed, stamina and balance.

I base my physiotherapy sessions on what matters to the child. As I work with them on a one-to-one basis, I enjoy getting parents involved so that they can carry on with the therapy afterwards.

At lunch I... try to get outside for some fresh air and socialise with the team if I'm at Tadworth. Movement is important to me, so I try to do some stretches or take a walk.

Recently I've been using the hydrotherapy pool over lunch times to have aquatic therapy sessions with the young people. It's exciting to see how they can maximise their ability in the hydrotherapy pool. The water supports their weight, the warmth often helps to soothe pain, and working against the resistance of the water helps build strength.

The young people really enjoy these sessions, especially when I make it a full sensory experience by turning on the lights and music in the hydrotherapy pool.



Lights, music, action! The hydrotherapy pool

#### Why physiotherapy after brain injury?

It aims to improve children's wellbeing, comfort and a sense of their own independence. Using repetitive movements and exercises we can help children get back some of the everyday movements they may have lost from their brain injury, or to learn new ways of doing them.

During the afternoon I... am in more sessions. Or I finish my admin tasks which include writing reports, responding to emails and taking telephone calls. I also attend meetings to catch up with the wider multidisciplinary team, speak to parents and organise future sessions. I link in with the young people's community teams for handovers and updates.

#### At the end of working day I make sure...

I write a to-do list and think about what my day looks like tomorrow. I try to reflect on the day and think about what went well and what improvements I can make to my practice.

The best part of my day is... knowing that tomorrow will be completely different. I love working with fabulous young people on a daily basis, and seeing how the work we do in sessions carries over outside of physiotherapy, in areas of their life that matter most to them.



Savannah helps Shakeerah with balance and coordination

"As a children's physiotherapist, no two days are the same and I feel extremely grateful to be able to work with such amazing, resilient young people!" Savannah



Savannah relies on equipment to do her specialist job, whether that's a walking frame for £3,206 or gym balls ranging from £2 - £60. Please could you help with a donation today?

### Scan to donate



thechildrenstrust.org.uk/donate

### Putting you in the picture Lights, camera, action!





Josiah testing out new equipment in his therapy session



Freddie and his bear having a great time

Emeila enjoying the sights at the School party







Lily getting involved in all things tech

Olivia in the festive spirit over Christmas



Zac enjoying a sensory story session in school

Indy having a good time around the grounds of The Children's Trust



### Zac is back!



After his brain injury, Zac had a 1% chance of survival. Now aged 20, he wants to inspire other children and young people who find themselves in a similar situation. Zac shares his amazing story with us.

"I have no memory of what happened at the time. My mum said that my right leg suddenly started shaking and I lost consciousness. She screamed out for help, someone called an ambulance and we were rushed to hospital.

#### What is Arteriovenous Malformation (AVM)?

AVM is a condition where the blood vessels haven't developed as they should. It's thought to be something children are born with. Veins may expand, causing them to split or bleed, leading to a haemorrhage. Usually there are no symptoms until a haemorrhage happens. When we arrived, Mum heard that I'd suffered a bleed on my brain – called a ruptured Arteriovenous Malformation (AVM). I had a seven and a half hour craniotomy to remove the ruptured AVM. They gave me a 1% chance of survival.

After the operation I was in a coma for four weeks. When I came round I was very confused. I couldn't talk, eat or communicate in any way. I could barely move. I stayed in hospital for a few more weeks where I made some small steps in my recovery.

Then I was transferred to The Children's Trust and the real work started! At first, I didn't understand what I was doing there, I had no clue what had happened or the damage that had been caused by the brain injury. I needed round-the-clock care from multiple staff members. I was unable to do anything for myself. My only way of getting around was by wheelchair or hoist. It took an army of people just to get me through the day. I did occupational, speech and language and physiotherapy, all essential steps in my road to recovery. My favourite session was aqua physio because I could move more freely without the worry of falling over. All of these combined were essential steps in my road to recovery.

Over the weeks, I gained more consciousness of my surroundings. My memory was not great, I would often forget the activities I had done. Members of the team helped me to rebuild the skills I had lost.



Zac practices coordination with his therapist

I had my highs and lows but if you stick at something by investing your time and energy then you will eventually see the reward. Growing up I was a healthy and very active kid, playing football for my local team and the Chelsea FC Foundation squad. Being a sportsman was vital to the speed of my recovery.

After four months, I was able to stand to ring the 'going home' bell. When I left The Children's Trust I was still in a wheelchair but was well on the way to achieving my recovery goals. **The staff are truly special and** I will forever be grateful to every person that helped me."

### Zac's amazing return

**2019** Four months' residential rehabilitation at The Children's Trust.

**2020** Back to school, passed all his GCSEs .

**2022** Passed Level 2 Diploma in Engineering & Manufacturing Operation – received Star award for Engineering at college.

**2023** Passed his driving test, had work experience at Red Bull Racing F1 team.

**Today** Studying for T level qualification in Engineering & Manufacturing Operation, plus work placement with a company that supplies top level race teams around the world.

#### Thank you for helping Zac

We can't be there to support young people with brain injury without your support.

Make a difference for more children at thechildrenstrust.org.uk/donate

### **Good news stories**

#### Officially 'Outstanding'

We are thrilled that The Children's Trust School has been recognised as **'Outstanding.'** Inspectors praised the dedication, skill and passion of our staff, and also our caring, child-centred culture. We'd like to thank everyone helping to give the children these opportunities to learn and thrive, including our supporters!



#### Green weddings

We had many new and pre-loved wedding dresses and dress suits that we couldn't display in our own charity shops, due to a lack of space. After speaking with the centre manager at the Belfry Redhill, the idea of a pop-up wedding shop was born. It was a huge success raising an incredible £10,000! We hope to have another sustainable shop in the future and are looking for opportunities.

### AWARDS 2023 SHORTLISTED

#### Winning ways

In October last year, The Children's Trust won an award for **'Innovation'** at the Neuro Rehab of the Year Awards. The awards shine a light on the inspirational and often lifechanging work being done throughout the field of neurorehabilitation. *Bumps Happen* – our remote rehab initiative – was also **'Commended'**.

#### Listen out and call in

Listeners tuning into The Weekly Planet Reigate Podcast will now hear a slot which showcases an unusual item donated for sale in our Reigate shop on Bell Street. Some have intriguing back stories including a carved wooden fruit bowl, a brass Buddha, a cello and a vintage Josephina aroma lamp. If you're in the area, pop in and buy a fascinating piece of the past – and more!

#### Please... help to stock our shops

Our charity shops raise money to support children with brain injury. Could you help by donating items for us to sell? We specifically need adult clothing and accessories. From giving your unwanted Christmas gifts to holding a stock collection event at work, your support can make all the difference. Find your local shop at:

thechildrenstrust.org.uk/shops



### What's coming up?



Our fundraising events offer something for everyone and we'd love to see you over the coming months. You'll have fun and raise vital funds at the same time!

#### **Comedy Night**

#### 28 February 2024

Our Ambassador Adam Hills MBE, presenter of TV show The Last Leg, will host a wonderful night of comedy at the iconic Comedy Store in Leicester Square. Buy tickets

thechildrenstrust.org.uk/events/the-childrenstrust-comedy-night



#### **Surrey Hills Hike**

#### 17 March 2024

Lace up your walking boots for a family friendly walk, with 5-mile or 10-mile options. Our '1K Your Way!' route is fully accessible and suitable for buggies and wheelchairs.

thechildrenstrust.org.uk/events/surrey-hills-hike



Join us for the Surrey Hills Hike

#### Hampton Court Palace Half Marathon 24 March 2024

This flat and picturesque course starts inside the historic venue and finishes in its beautiful gardens. It offers the perfect opportunity to run a personal best, while enjoying the sites. thechildrenstrust.org.uk/events/hampton-court-half

#### London Landmarks Half

#### 7 April 2024

A closed road run and the only half marathon to go through the Cities of London and Westminster. Starts on Pall Mall, finishes by Downing Street and has fabulous views of London's most iconic landmarks.

#### thechildrenstrust.org.uk/events/landmarks



Take on the challenge of London Landmarks

#### Effingham Golf Day 16 May 2024

Our Spring Golf event has a limited number of team places remaining. Coffee and bacon rolls on arrival, 9am shotgun start, 18 holes, two course lunch, individual and team prizes plus an auction and raffle.

thechildrenstrust.org.uk/events

#### Edinburgh Marathon 26 May 2024

The Edinburgh Marathon is Scotland's biggest marathon. The course winds through some of the most beautiful sights in the city, whilst also offering charming views along the East Lothian coastline.

thechildrenstrust.org.uk/events/edinburgh-marathon

For more information about how to get involved visit thechildrenstrust.org.uk/events



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