

Spring 2024



# Life<sup>+</sup>

News from North London Hospice



[northlondonhospice.org](http://northlondonhospice.org)

# You Can Make A Difference



It costs us more than £16m each year to be able to provide these services free-of-charge to patients and their loved ones at a critical time.

## We can only do this with your support

### The ways in which you can support us

#### **Make a one-off or regular donation**

it's quick and easy – can be done online, over the phone, by post or in person

#### **Take part in a challenge**

we have places for marathons, treks, and much more!

#### **Leave a gift in your will**

we can also provide a free will-writing service

#### **Organise your own fundraiser**

whether it's a quiz, bake sale or football tournament, we can support you

#### **Donate in memory**

we can help with funeral collections, and you can buy a leaf on our special Tribute Tree

#### **Connect with our team**

with individuals and organisations that can support us

#### **Give your time**

we really need volunteers

Fundraisers and donors allow North London Hospice to provide vital end-of-life care, services, and support to people diagnosed with a life-limiting illness or condition across Barnet, Enfield, and Haringey.



Scan the QR code to find out more about the different ways that you can support us

Contact the **Fundraising Team** on  
020 84462288 | [fundraising@northlondonhospice.co.uk](mailto:fundraising@northlondonhospice.co.uk)



# Welcome

I don't believe there is any stronger connector between people than the stories we each carry within. Putting words to our experiences and offering them out there for others to hear, hold and absorb creates a special kind of kinship. In their relatability we can see the commonality in human experience, while in their difference we allow in curiosity and empathy. Either way, when we share of ourselves, we realise we are not alone.

When I joined North London Hospice last November, I was briefed that Life Magazine was to be a prime focus. Music to my ears, I relished the opportunity to spend time listening to so many people associated with the charity, to be the scribe to their tales and to produce something which I hope illustrates what a special community this is.

It has been my privilege to be entrusted to bear witness to these stories and I want to thank everyone featured in this edition for their kindness, openness and honesty. These are not easy conversations and these subjects can be raw and difficult to speak about, but in doing so we can draw



from storytelling's greatest asset – that sense that we've been seen; that we are not alone.

In the pages that follow, I hope you see a snapshot of the myriad services, support and people that make North London Hospice what it is. I also hope that in reading, you can feel some of the warmth and heart that has been so forthcoming from everyone since I started working here.

If you would like to reach out to offer feedback, ideas or to share your story, I would be delighted to hear from you.

Please email  
[ckemp@northlondonhospice.co.uk](mailto:ckemp@northlondonhospice.co.uk)

**Caron Kemp,**  
Content Editor,  
North London Hospice

# The Lights of Our Lives

A woman with long, wavy hair and a dark beanie is shown from the chest up, looking off to the side with a gentle expression. She is holding a small, lit tealight candle in her right hand. In the background, a large Christmas tree is decorated with numerous white and blue lights, creating a warm, glowing atmosphere. The scene is set outdoors at night.

“She was my friend who lit up my life with her extraordinary spirit.”

“My mum was the light of my life. Not just a mum but a best friend and she will never be replaced.”

## **“ My best friend Kim lit up my life with our shared love of dog walks. ”**

Jane

Always keen to innovate, there are also moments in our calendar of events that have become so focal and fundamental that they remain steadfast in our year. Billed as a time to reflect on the cherished moments we shared with lost loved ones, Light Up A Life - our annual ceremony of remembrance – is just that.

More than 1,000 people gathered outside North London Hospice Finchley against the backdrop of our memorial tree lit with as many lights; each one sponsored in celebration of someone special. The ceremony included readings from faith leaders and music from the One Voice Choir and London Youth Concert Band, while Ali shared the story of his wife Elisabeth's experience with the hospice.

“Elisabeth was at the hospice for pain management and then she died here,” Ali said. “They treated us like part of the family; even the chef made a special cake for her. The stress of practicalities was alleviated, they helped me manage her care at home and they enabled her to reconcile her faith.”

An English teacher and educator by profession, public speaking was always Elisabeth's territory and Ali was initially unsure about addressing our audience.

“I'm naturally very private but I'm learning to share my feelings more and I want to give others permission to do the same. When you've been part of a double act, it's like suddenly working with a hand behind your back when they're gone. Elisabeth was so honest and principled and always thanked people. I am trying to be more like her and I think she'd say that she wished she knew this version of me.

“Elisabeth had the most warm and caring nature. I can still see her dancing in the kitchen to embarrass our children. She raised confidences and people remembered her. I'll always remember her.”

Our Light Up A Life ceremony is one of our main events and this year raised almost £5,000 to fund end-of-life patient care and family support in our community.

## **“ The light of our lives with his quick wit and kind soul, who brought laughter to our lives daily. ”**

Make memories  
that last a lifetime  
and join our iconic  
walk.



# BIG FUN WALK 2024

Sunday 2 June

- 8.5 mile walk East Finchley to Westminster
- London's most beautiful parks and iconic views
- Free lunch, refreshments and a goody bag

Pricing for adults £20,  
under 16 £15, and under 5s go free.

Register at  
[northlondonhospice.org/events/big-fun-walk-2024/](https://northlondonhospice.org/events/big-fun-walk-2024/)

Scan me



Sign up  
today



# Sole Mates

When Jo decided to take part in Big Fun Walk, she was understandably a little anxious as she had never taken on a sponsored challenge before and was to complete the trail alone.

"I had wanted to get healthier, so being able to raise money for charity at the same time was an added bonus," said Jo. **"I was daunted to begin with but that soon disappeared because the atmosphere was absolutely brilliant."**

Noticing an experienced walker up ahead, Jo seized the opportunity to say hello and the duo spent the next eight miles chatting like they'd known one another for years.

"Dee not only built up my confidence to complete the course, but the conversation seemed to make it go quicker and it definitely made it so much fun."

As well as taking in the sights of London together, they also stopped to help others when needed.

We contacted Dee, who had been trying to locate Jo since their chance meeting. "I think of Jo a lot," Dee said. "She was so lovely and I had tried to make contact too. I hope we can see each other at a Big Fun Walk soon."



"At the top of Primrose Hill someone needed a plaster, so I gave them one and helped get them back on their feet. Everyone was so friendly. People would gather you up along the way."

But while Jo felt an enormous sense of achievement crossing the finish line and raising £450 for the hospice, it was Dee that left a lasting impression.

**"Her support carried me through and she was just a pleasure to meet. I hope she is reading this and knows I am thinking of her."**

# Writing as Therapy

During Tricia's stay at North London Hospice, her laptop or notepad were never far from her grasp. Having kept diaries for most of her life, putting words to experiences had become a need as much as a want. Unable to realise a dream career as a journalist, Tricia did pen her autobiography and has written countless poems charting all her major life experiences, including the grief of losing her husband.

So it made sense to her to return to familiar territory when she faced the uncertainty of a hospice stay.

"It's important to me to express how I feel every day," Tricia said. "I have to get it out of my head. I hope it helps my family understand me better and perhaps it can help someone else going through

similar who feels alone. I am very open about what's happening and appreciate the space to share it."

Having been diagnosed with fibrosis of the liver ten years ago, Tricia spent time at the hospice during a period of deterioration.

**"Before I came here I was scared. I thought you only came to die but it's also about trying to live better. It feels like a hotel where they can't do enough for me and I feel safe here. My children leave me knowing they don't have to worry. I feel surrounded by angels where everyone cares."**

With Tricia's permission, we share one of the poems she finished during her stay.





**I am going to a hospice  
I do not want to go  
I do not like the sound of it  
Please tell them it's a no**

**But when I got inside my room  
A different view I saw  
A warm welcome awaited me  
Like I have never had before**

**I didn't want to come here  
Now I don't want to go  
I feel so safe and cared for  
It shows you just don't know**

**You don't know what awaits you  
Behind each new closed door  
So trust those looking after you  
To guide you on your tour**

**I must close my eyes and rest now  
Tomorrow is another day  
No more thinking of anything  
I will close my eyes and pray**

# That's When Good Neighbours Become Good Friends

Celebrating its fifth year at the hospice, Compassionate Neighbours provides community-led assistance for anyone living with a long term or terminal illness.

Set up to offer friendship, emotional support and a way of staying connected with the world, it has also transformed into its own thriving community, which was never more apparent than at its birthday party held at our Enfield site in December.

While hard to differentiate between volunteers and clients as everyone ate, sang and danced, Tricia and Maggie enjoyed the opportunity to laugh together and engage in their trademark repartee.

"We hit it off straight away because she didn't assume I was a dotty old lady," Maggie said. "We have a similar sense of humour and similar views on things.

"I live on my own and have always been strong and independent, so people assume I'm ok and don't often check. We go out together and talk on the phone and when I am with her I feel like me again."



Having lost his wife two years ago, Andrew's friends encouraged him to volunteer and he now has five community members in his fold.

"I find the interactions very heartening and it takes me out of myself," Andrew said. **"I have formed real friendships and find all my connections such interesting people. Bringing things like this into the community is so important and I'm so impressed by this initiative."**

To find out more about Compassionate Neighbours email [cn@northlondonhospice.co.uk](mailto:cn@northlondonhospice.co.uk)

# Catching The Light

At North London Hospice we have always championed creative therapeutic spaces, and one stalwart in our offering is our Catching the Light photography group. Launched in 2017 and comprising patients, carers and bereaved family members, the group uses the camera as a medium of expression. Members meet at our Enfield site and from time-to-time on photo walks.

Peer-led, with all activities initiated, structured, and executed by members, for members, they have recently delivered their third exhibition, entitled Without Boundaries, with a focus on individual voices. Launched in the presence of Enfield Southgate MP Bambos Charalambous and the Mayor of Haringey, Lester Buxton, Mr Charalambous was so impressed that he purchased a photograph taken by one of our members, Eamon, remarking that "it was a pleasure to attend the wonderful exhibition and to see the fabulous pictures taken by the hospice's photography group."



Photo by Helen Marsden

When Lyn's husband Gerard died in 2019, she found herself picking up the camera he'd used as a group member and taking part herself. Her contribution to the exhibition considered the diversity and fluidity of water.

"Being part of this has been life affirming," Lyn said. "The members keep me afloat when the water feels high. I enjoy the unusual perspective and composition when taking a photograph. I also look for the emotion frozen in that moment in time and what it evokes for me and hopefully others."

The photography group is one of the wellbeing Compassionate Neighbours groups; the volunteer-led support scheme for people who have a life limiting condition who are lonely and/ or socially isolated.

For more information email  
[cn@northlondonhospice.co.uk](mailto:cn@northlondonhospice.co.uk) or  
[NLH.CatchingTheLight@gmail.com](mailto:NLH.CatchingTheLight@gmail.com)



# BIG FUN ART Adventure

Big Fun Art Adventure is North London's debut public art trail that will take over Haringey in August 2024 for eight weeks. At least 30 giant, uniquely decorated owl sculptures and 30 smaller 'owlets', designed by local schools and community groups, will hide in plain sight on the streets, in buildings and in the parks of North London. Together, the parliament of owls will celebrate the vibrancy, culture and creativity that North London has to offer and will give trail goers the opportunity to explore the area in a fun, family-friendly way.

**There are lots of ways you can get involved and support this amazing sculpture trail including:**

- sponsoring an owl
- joining our schools and community groups programme to design your own little owl
- following our posts on social media
- hosting one or more of our schools and community groups' owlet sculptures inside your shop or venue

**For more information visit:**

[bigfunartadventure.org](http://bigfunartadventure.org) or contact Big Fun Art Adventure team at [bigfunartadventure@northlondonhospice.co.uk](mailto:bigfunartadventure@northlondonhospice.co.uk) | 020 8446 2288



North  
London  
Hospice

[www.bigfunartadventure.org](http://www.bigfunartadventure.org)

# Our Shops Get A New Look

Eagle-eyed shoppers on the high street may have noticed that our 17 shops have undergone a bit of a facelift over the past few months. Our stores have lacked investment for several years, so the launch of our new brand and visual identity in 2022 was the ideal opportunity to update our shop fronts too.

For our Head of Communications, Marketing and Digital Paul Jordan, the makeover brings our retail arm in line with the broader look.

**“When we launched our new brand and visual identity, we wanted to provide consistency, but also be bold in our new look to help us stand out from the crowd,”**

he said. “We took time to consult with supporters to create something meaningful for our community. I think that our logo icon, which depicts leaves on a tree, in the same shape as our much-loved Tribute Tree, does this.



Funding for the overhaul came from reserves earmarked for specific projects – an investment for our future to help us stand out on the high street.

**“For years our high street stores required some investment. Our shops faded into the background. Our new branding is a great lever to showcase our hospice at the heart of our community.”**



# Conquering China's Great Wall

When Arthur's wife Ann died at North London Hospice in 2014, he was understandably bereft. Having spent 31 years together, Arthur was struggling both emotionally and practically and found support via our bereavement services and our walk and talk group.

"There was an unspoken permission to share stories about the person you'd lost there," he said. "It was a space where I was allowed to be honest and where I knew people would understand and I wasn't alone. I was also finding domesticity hard to navigate, and I was offered great practical advice."

Remaining engaged with the hospice and seeking adventure, a poster advertising a sponsored group trek of The Great Wall of China was enough impetus for Arthur to take his walking to another level. Voted one of the New Seven Wonders of the World, it stretches for 6,000km, zig-zagging its way across China and snaking across mountains and through valleys.

Despite plans being hampered by Covid and following lots of training – including some tough mountain

walking in the Sierra Nevada – Arthur's challenge was completed in October and has to date raised more than £2,700 for the hospice, which he credits as enabling Ann to spend her final weeks without pain and in comfort and dignity.

A notoriously difficult route, Arthur was taken aback by the size and scope of it all and had to overcome a fall on his second day walking.

**"There were times along the way when you couldn't see other people. The steps were often uneven and in the middle I did wonder how I would power through,"** Arthur said.

"But as a group we relied on each other and helped one another to the end and the reality of what I had achieved didn't fully hit me until I got home."

On his return, Arthur expressed his gratitude to supporters with the words "yiqiange xiexie (a thousand thanks)!" A testament to his appreciation.

"It's been very humbling to see such generosity," Arthur said.



**“I’m usually abashed at asking people for money but put a link on our neighbourhood WhatsApp and received a contribution from someone I didn’t even know. I also had donations from all aspects of my life and people I’d lost contact with. It blew me away.”**

Arthur reflects on what Ann would have said about it all. “I think she’d be very proud of me and tell me how great it is to have raised the money, but she wouldn’t have been keen herself – she didn’t like to walk.”

# Jogging Memories

With twins Aaron and David's Bar Mitzvah fast approaching, the boys knew they wanted to mark this big life event by remembering their dad and North London Hospice. Eliseo's thoughts turned to their coming-of-age ceremony from the moment they were born and as he neared the end of his life, when they were just four years old, wife Zsuzsanna vowed to honour his wishes for it to be a meaningful and special occasion.

**“My husband spent three months at the hospice, on and off, and they made his life easier and more comfortable and offered immense support.”** said

Zsuzsanna. “There was no question that the boys would mark their Bar Mitzvah by taking on a challenge to raise money for the charity that is so close to their hearts. By doing so, they kept their dad’s memory a part of the day and gave something back to the place that was there for us when we needed it.”

So, despite a variable relationship with exercise, the boys donned their trainers and geared up for the Regents Park 5k in October; two weeks before their auspicious day.

**“I am lazy and not a runner, but I was motivated by raising money for the hospice because they gave so much to my dad,”** said David.

“I did prepare albeit not a lot, but it was enough to cross the finish line, which is what matters.” And in doing so, the pair raised a very impressive £1,000.

**“I do cross-country, so I had a head start, but the challenge of it did take me by surprise,”** said Aaron.

“Completing it was a good feeling because we fulfilled our aim and the money is going to a charity that we are connected to.”



# A Marathon Effort

When Bambos Charalambous, MP for Enfield Southgate, visited our Enfield site seven years ago, a speech by a patient moved him.

"She spoke about how the hospice had enabled her to make key end of life decisions," he said. "But she also shared how she'd learnt to focus her time on those who mattered to her, to go on the holidays and welcome support. She had such conviction, it inspired me."

So, when the opportunity to run this year's London Marathon came about, Bambos thought back to that life lesson and laced up his trainers; pledging to raise funds for four local charities, including the hospice.

**"The hospice is loved in the community. Having lost two relatives recently and with a family member under your care, I appreciate how phenomenal specialist end of life care is."**

With 10km under his belt and armed with a training programme, Bambos is committed to enjoying the experience.

"At the beginning my legs ached, I felt dizzy and I'm sure the dog walkers of Broomfield Park were laughing at my strange stride and lack of running gear, but you have to seize opportunities."

Smiling at the thought of running past his office, for Bambos the inspiration to reach the finishing line is the charities.

"I also started running for my mental health and feel so good after a workout, so cannot wait for the feeling as I reach The Mall. Now I need to expand my playlist, otherwise I'll have my favourite track REM's It's The End Of The World As We Know It on a loop."

To sponsor Bambos visit  
[www.givewheel.com/fundraising/2199/london-marathon/](http://www.givewheel.com/fundraising/2199/london-marathon/)

or scan the QR code



# A Taste of Home

Growing up, Lilian could identify the day of the week by the smells emanating from the kitchen. Each distinctive aroma capturing memories from Bukhara (now known as Uzbekistan), her mother Miriam rarely strayed from cooking traditional food from the community in which she grew up. Even the builders' Rich Teas were substituted for home-baked biscuits flavoured with arak and sesame.

"I remember her pouring bags of rice across the counter and flicking away the unclean bits," said Lilian, a tireless fundraiser for the hospice.

**"My entertainment was perching myself next to her in the kitchen and chatting as I watched her cook. She'd tell stories as she worked but never share her recipes; this was her domain."**

Lilian has vivid memories of a house full of guests; her mum whetting their appetites on arrival with Samouseh – a puff pastry filled with meat – while her dad poured everyone the accompanying chilled vodka.

The book can be purchased via [bukhariancookbook.com](http://bukhariancookbook.com) or at North London Hospice's café in Finchley.

**"Every dish was full of her love and energy and despite no formal culinary education, I inherited her passion and even now I cook without distraction to fully enjoy the process and feel that connection with my mum."**

After Miriam died, Lilian began to collate the recipes and in 2017, The Bukharian Cookbook was born. Originally meant as a tribute to her mum and authentic Bukharian cuisine, it is now in its third edition, has received worldwide acclaim, has the seal of approval from Yotam Ottolenghi and has raised considerable funds for North London Hospice.

"I think she'd be proud that her traditions were being kept alive and that it was raising money for good causes.





Lilian has kindly shared her Samouseh recipe with us.

### Samouseh (meat pie)

#### Ingredients:

(for the filling)

2 tbsp sunflower oil  
1 large Spanish onion, finely chopped  
450g minced beef  
Pinch of sugar  
Salt  
Freshly ground black pepper  
(for the pastry)  
500g vegetarian puff pastry, divided in 3 strips  
Plain flour, for rolling  
1 medium egg, beaten

#### Method:

- Heat oil in a large, non-stick frying pan
- Cook onions until soft
- Add beef, sugar and seasoning and simmer and stir until meat is brown and soft
- Cover pan and remove from heat
- Preheat oven to 200C / gas mark 6
- Roll pastry on floured surface and cut each strip into 5 squares
- Roll squares thick enough to hold filling
- Put 1 dessertspoon of filling in centre and fold to make a rectangle
- Pinch edges and trim excess pastry
- Place parcels on baking tray lined with baking parchment and brush with beaten egg
- Bake for around 18 mins or until golden brown, turning half way
- Remove from oven and place on wire rack to cool



# Forever In Our Hearts

This year, North London Hospice is proud to announce our inaugural Forever In Our Hearts appeal. For a donation, you can order a decorative ironwork heart in memory of a loved one.

The hearts will be displayed in the tranquil gardens at West Lodge Park (Cockfosters Road, Hadley Wood, Enfield) in April, where the collective beauty of these tributes can be experienced against the backdrop of the hotel's peaceful grounds.

A special way to commemorate your loved one, these handcrafted pieces can be personalised with a name or message of your choice and following the communal display, are yours to keep forever.

The Forever In Our Hearts garden promises to be a special place and we hope that visiting will offer a moment of comfort and calm this Spring.

There are 500 hearts available and we'd love each one to be a dedication to someone special. Every dedication is a donation to support North London Hospice and for a suggested minimum donation of £43 your tribute to someone special will feature in the installation.

**Hospice staff will be on site to welcome you to the garden on**



**Saturday 6 April 9am – 12pm and Sunday 7 April 9am – 12pm and**

during these times will be available to show you the location of your dedication. The display will remain in place until Friday 12 April for all West Lodge Park visitors and guests to enjoy.

After the event, you will be able to take your heart home, creating a lasting symbol of love and cherished memories.

**Dedications must be made by Friday 15 March.** For more information call fundraising on **020 8446 2288** or visit [www.northlondonhospice.org/foreverhearts](http://www.northlondonhospice.org/foreverhearts)



Scan me



# Remembering The McKennys

Friends and colleagues have come together to pay tribute to two long-standing and committed volunteers who founded the Whetstone branch of our charity shops.

Ros and Mac McKenny began their fundraising efforts when they read about the hospice being built in the local newspaper. Together with their neighbours, they formed the Oakleigh Gardens Support Group and took it upon themselves to host coffee mornings, from which they raised a substantial amount.

The couple then began to sell items from their own garage and soon enough they spearheaded the first hospice shop in the borough of Barnet in 1989, going on to manage two shops and more than 60 volunteers.

Their adopted great nephew Tim described the endeavour as "their life's work and their world for many years."

Lifelong friend and neighbour Carmel was also involved in that first event. **"We all saw it as a good thing that this hospice was being built and wanted to help,"** she said.

"Everyone did their bit but working for the charity quickly became Ros and Mac's baby."



Co-worker Pat remembers Ros taking people under her wing. "One volunteer, we later discovered, was recently widowed and Ros had invited her to come into the shop even if she just sat amongst us and drank tea," she said. "They were both so genuine and the atmosphere was terrific. We hadn't worked together for over 25 years, but Ros always remembered to call me on my birthday."

Elma worked with the pair for more than 20 years, following the death of her husband. "We always had a good relationship," Elma said. "They were great to work for and provided a sense of companionship too. Everyone in the area grew to know them well and would pop in to see their friendly faces."

Mac died in 2016 and Ros last year. A bench is being installed in our gardens in their honour.

# Diary dates

## 6-12 April - Forever In Our Hearts

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## 7 April - London Landmarks Half Marathon

The London Landmarks Half Marathon gives runners the opportunity to explore London like no other, from cultural landmarks to DJs and dancers along the route. The electric atmosphere encourages runners to challenge themselves while their friends and families enjoy the themed cheer stations as spectators. Good luck to all our runners.



## 21 April - London Marathon

If you're only going to do one marathon, then make sure it is this one. With the roaring crowds lining the 26.2-mile route from Greenwich to the Mall, it really is no surprise that the London Marathon is one of the biggest in the world and a once in a lifetime opportunity. If you spot one of our runners along the route, please do cheer them on and we wish everyone good luck for the day.



## May - Free Wills Month

Watch our socials or sign up to our e-newsletter to make sure you receive further information.



## 11 May - Highwood Ash Open Garden

Created over the last 57 years by our Patron Penny Gluckstein MBE, this 3½ acre garden features rolling lawns, two large interconnecting ponds with koi, herbaceous and shrub borders and a modern gravel garden. Further information coming soon.



## 2 June - Big Fun Walk

Make memories that last a lifetime at Big Fun Walk 2024. Connect with old friends and make new ones. Join your neighbours, colleagues, family, or furry friends and be a part of our long-standing and inclusive community of Big Fun Walkers, whilst raising vital funds for North London Hospice. For more information email [bigfunwalk@northlondonhospice.co.uk](mailto:bigfunwalk@northlondonhospice.co.uk)



## 22-30 June - Proms at St Jude's

This music festival in Hampstead Garden Suburb offers concerts, heritage walks and two days dedicated to the written word. The event raises money for North London Hospice and Toynbee Hall. Visit [promsatstjudes.org.uk](http://promsatstjudes.org.uk)



## 17 August – Big Fun Art Adventure Launch

The Big Fun Art Adventure trail will be made up of over 60 decorated owls for you and your friends and family to find. The parliament of owls will swoop into North London on Saturday 17 August and will roost on their plinths until Sunday 13 October so you have plenty of time to discover them all. The owls will be hidden in plain sight, mostly outside on the streets and in green spaces, and the owlets will be nesting in shop windows and indoor venues. Have a look at [bigfunartadventure.org](http://bigfunartadventure.org) for more details.



# Meet The Team

## Liz Perez, Patient Experience and Engagement Manager

With a strong career history in hotel management and event planning, it was when her son suffered a stroke that Liz felt compelled to reassess her priorities. Following his rehabilitation, a neighbour signposted Liz to the hospice and soon enough she was volunteering at our front desk.

**“I was seeking a meaningful role and wanted to give back to my community.”** Liz said.

“Life altering events make you think about what’s really important. I loved it and I worked alongside a particularly amazing lady who showed such kindness to everyone and always knew what to say. I learnt so much from her.”

When a permanent role became available in 2020, Liz seized the opportunity and it evolved with her expertise to become what it is today.

“There are so many transferrable skills from hospitality, but here there’s an opportunity to think with your heart. I see it that the clinicians focus on what the matter is, and I focus on what matters to them. I support patients and their families to make things as easy as they can be.”

Keen to have the patient and carer at the centre of all that we do and to drive the patient voice to continually develop our service, Liz sees her role as focusing on the brilliant basics as well as magic touches.

“For me it comes down to being kind and seeking opportunities to go above and beyond. Being able to make a difference in some way is a privilege and working alongside staff and volunteers who are so inspiring and kind motivates me every day.”



# Music To Our Ears



The annual Proms at St Jude's festival has announced its summer 2024 season. Featuring an array of music, literature, comedy, family events and heritage walks in Hampstead Garden Suburb, the event is a continued supporter of North London Hospice and has raised more than £250,000.

Running from 22 - 30 June, a first-class array of talent will appeal to all music tastes, including three members of the famous Kanneh-Mason family - Sheku, Isata and Braimah - whose 2018 appearance was a complete sell-out.

Alongside this, this year's LitFest will run from 22-23 June and will feature a range of authors discussing their latest publications.

The complete programme of music, walks, comedy and fun activities for children will be available online by the end of February and there will be a printed leaflet available in March.

North London Hospice has been a beneficiary of the two-week summer festival since its inception in 1993 and it is organised almost entirely by local volunteers.

By signing up to become a Friend of Proms at St Jude's you will be entitled a range of benefits, including priority booking. For more information on the festival, their work with the hospice and how to sign up, visit [promsatstjudes.org.uk/](http://promsatstjudes.org.uk/)

# Meet our volunteers

## Elvira

A firm believer in the power of human touch to bring connection and to provide reassurance, Elvira offers Indian head massage on our Inpatient Unit having trained in the complimentary therapy in order to volunteer with us.

Ten years ago, when her mum Maria spent her final days at the hospice, Elvira committed to return. A speech and language therapist by profession, with a keen interest in alternative therapies, Elvira described the desire to offer this service as "a calling burning inside of me." "I'm a spiritual person and since being at the hospice with my mum it was something I needed to do," Elvira said.

"The first patient I saw was in the same room she had been in and that felt like an instant link." A qualified practitioner, Elvira would like to add reiki and massage to her repertoire one day too.

**"When I am practicing, time stands still. I do notice that patients seem less anxious. Most of what we feel is unsaid. Here we can just be present together and feel like we matter, which is so powerful."**

For Elvira, the experience is mutually beneficial.

"Everyone is supportive and I feel my opinions are valued. Everything is so well organised too, which just drives me to give more. I feel a part of the team. You can tell all the staff want to be here and I feel the same. I think my mum would be very proud and this feels like a nod to her and a way of keeping her memory alive."



# Letters

To everyone at North London Hospice.

I arrived not knowing what to expect; not wanting to stay.

The welcome I received was overwhelming and warm, kind and understanding and after a short time I went from not wanting to be there to not wanting to go. You all made me feel welcome and safe. There are no words large enough to thank each and every one of you for your care and kindness throughout my stay. I know I had to move on, such is life. my journey and you all helped me. I will never forget you or the impact you had on my life.

*It has taken me two months to write this note to show my biggest appreciation and acknowledgement to you all. My sister received the very best end-of-life care under your service. As her sister I remember the first day I visited, I was nervous of the unknown, but your volunteers and nurses put me at ease straightaway.*

*The environment of your hospice is like walking into another calming world. A special unexplained feeling I felt every time I walked in. A good feeling it was, weird as every day I would say goodbye to my sister. I appreciate we all choose jobs because that's our personal choice but knowing my sister got the best end-of-life care, certainly enabled my grief journey. The staff (all of them) are super special. I wish every single one of you the best of luck and a huge thank you.*

*My mum was under the care of the Enfield team before she passed in April 2023. Although we had the support of our family, I was her primary carer and often felt that I was looking after her on my own. Mum was assigned a lovely woman called Jane. I don't think Jane will ever understand how much she helped mum by just being a listening ear and letting mum express her thoughts and feelings without judgement. She was kind to mum and explained certain things to her which made mum feel "lighter" as her mind eased. As an extension, this helped me too. The words "thank you" aren't enough. I really appreciate the time, effort and patience Jane displayed. She truly helped mum in her final days and for that I will forever be grateful.*

## North London Hospice

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