

Spring 2025

# Life

North  
London  
Hospice

Stories from North London Hospice



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





# Compassionate Neighbours Celebrates Six Years!

North London Hospice recently hosted a fun celebration to mark the sixth anniversary of our Compassionate Neighbours scheme. Offering volunteer led support to those who are alone or lonely and facing a life-limiting illness, volunteers are trained to support people in their communities who need friendship and company.

“The most valuable gift we have is time.  
We extend our heartfelt gratitude to  
Compassionate Neighbours for their  
generosity, passion and commitment to  
building communities and  
reconnecting people.”

**Bambos Charalambous MP**  
Southgate and Wood Green



Over **500**  
people supported

**350** volunteers  
trained to offer support



# Welcome

Welcome to this edition of Life Magazine, where we recognise the stories, moments and community that make North London Hospice truly special.

As I've worked on putting this issue together, I've been moved time and again by the openness and generosity of everyone I've spoken to. From heartfelt conversations with patients and families, to insightful chats with our staff and volunteers, I've been privileged to witness the depth of care and compassion that defines this hospice.

I hope this edition offers you another window into the many facets of our work. From Jake's special Christmas party, to Javinder and Claire's story of art, friendship and mutual understanding. Hear about our Big Fun Craft, the role of spiritual care and our favourite four-legged friend. You'll read inspiring accounts of patients who've found joy and meaning in unexpected places, and families who've shared how they've been supported during some of their most difficult times.



This issue is more than just a collection of articles - it's a record of our shared journey. To everyone who contributed their time, stories and expertise: thank you. I hope these pages bring you comfort, inspiration and perhaps even a smile. Thank you for being part of our community. Together, we continue to create something extraordinary.

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



# In Minnie's Own Words



Life was full and busy and beautiful. By day I was teaching a class of 20 under-fives at a nursery and by night I was watching my gorgeous daughter Chaya play and grow and become this perfect little person. My passion is turning on the lights in little minds and I was doing just that at home and at work. It was the biggest privilege.

But at the same time, my body was telling me something wasn't right and in March 2023 I had enough. One day after dropping

Chaya at school I drove to my GP and begged to be heard.

You're fast-tracked through the system when they suspect the worst, so the diagnosis of bowel cancer came swiftly, but after major surgery, including having a stoma fitted, I had a brief few weeks where I thought I was cancer free and my regular life could resume. That wasn't to be and once I knew it had already spread, my journey with North London Hospice began. I was just 46.



**My relationship with nurse Pat blossomed immediately. She taught me how to clean my wounds and take care of myself, but more than that, she helped me love my body again after the operation. She empowered me. She was – and is – my angel.**

I know I am not promised another day, but I try and remain positive and though my body is failing me, I look at Chaya's little face and I think of my partner Deniz and with them both, I have my motivation. Some days I am tired of fighting, I cry and I have paralysing fear, but I won't give up. I am already defying the odds, but I just want to see my seven-year-old grow up.

**I couldn't imagine being without Pat and the hospice. I don't think I'd be here chugging along without them. They help me be the best version of myself that I can, put my ducks all in a row for Chaya's future and keep my medicines dancing together so I feel well.**

I used to think a hospice was where you go to die, but to me it's been where I go to live. I know in time they'll play a different role, but I am not ready for that yet.

I just feel so blessed that everyone from the hospice has such a kind spirit and that Pat – who is such an incredible woman full of love and light – is mine.

Chaya and I pray together each night. I was brought up Hindu and am now Christian, so she has a lot of faith. I told her that the Lord calls us all home but one day we'll meet again in heaven and that if He calls me home tomorrow, I want her to know I have lived an extraordinary life, much of it because of her and Deniz.





# Furever Friends



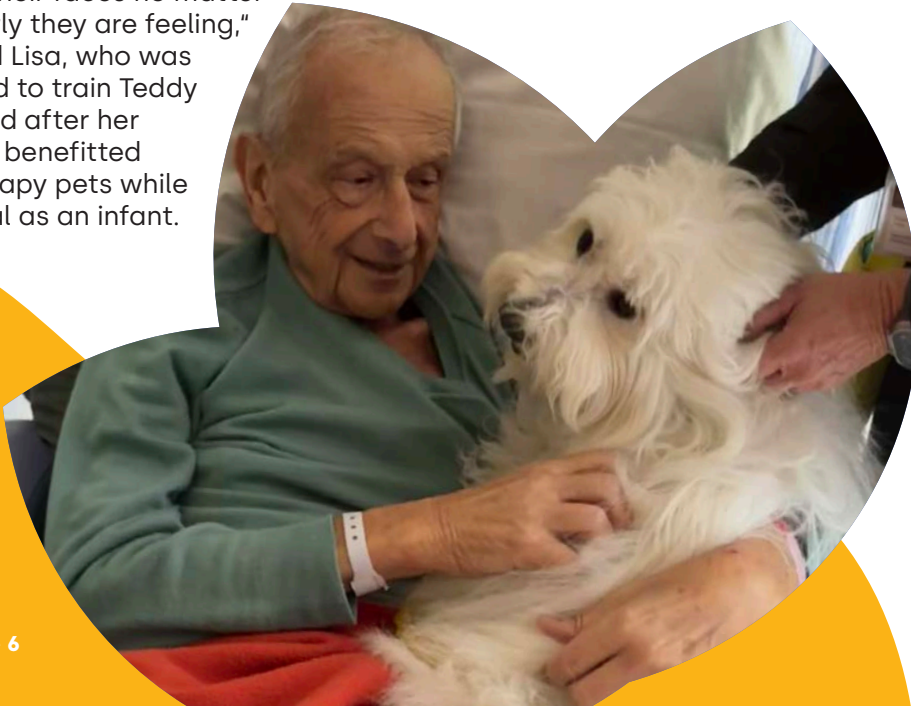
While having favourites is generally discouraged, it's fair to say that our four-legged visitor Teddy has an unparalleled legion of fans at North London Hospice. With the benefits of pet therapy ranging from improvements in wellbeing to increased confidence and greater communication, our specially trained furry friend and his trainer, Lisa, visit our Inpatient Unit once a month.

For two years the cuddly Coton du Tulear has worked in care homes, primary schools, universities and even Gatwick Airport, comforting, distracting and stimulating everyone he meets.

"I have noticed that Teddy helps patients feel calm and brings a smile to their faces no matter how poorly they are feeling," explained Lisa, who was motivated to train Teddy in this field after her daughter benefitted from therapy pets while in hospital as an infant.

**“Coming to the hospice and seeing the joy that Teddy brings to those in need of his visits is truly heartwarming. It’s wonderful that we can give some comfort to people when they’re struggling as I have also experienced that feeling, so it is meaningful to me to give that joy back to others.”**

With Teddy curled up on one of our beds, being stroked by a patient as their demeanour slowly softens, it's fair to say that we agree. Thank you, Lisa and Teddy, for all you bring to our community.





# This is Hospice Care TV Campaign



North London Hospice is proud to be one of over 143 hospices taking part in the This is Hospice Care campaign, a national initiative facilitated by Hospice UK. The campaign aims to raise awareness about the vital role hospices play in communities and to shift public perceptions of hospice care.

The campaign, which launched on 17 February, aims to capture hearts and minds through a powerful TV advert based on real life hospice stories. The goal is to encourage people to consider leaving a gift in their will to support their local hospice, ensuring that these essential services can continue to provide compassionate and specialist care for future generations.

We know that writing your will is one of the most important things you will ever do and that it takes careful consideration. If you'd like to know more about how a gift in your will can help hospice care to live on, or if you would like to request a copy of our legacy information brochure, please visit

[northlondonhospice.org/support-us/leave-a-gift-in-your-will/](http://northlondonhospice.org/support-us/leave-a-gift-in-your-will/)  
call us on **020 8446 2288** or email [fundraising@northlondonhospice.co.uk](mailto:fundraising@northlondonhospice.co.uk)

Please also visit our website to see how we can help you write your will for free.



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# Moments That Matter

The conference room at our Finchley site was transformed into a homage to Christmas and Arsenal in December, as friends and family of our patient Jake came together for an early seasonal celebration.

Spearheaded by Jake's devoted mum Bal and supported by staff and volunteers from across the hospice community, more than 40 people surprised the 22-year-old Gunners superfan with food, music and even a few messages from his footballing heroes.

"Christmas means a lot to Jake, so it felt important to do this and to be able to come together in his honour," Bal explained.

**“I was so pleased that the hospice was able to make this happen and so grateful to everyone involved. It was a beautiful day and people he'd not seen for years were there, while family travelled from miles away to be a part of it.”**

Created as an opportunity for Jake to see his nearest and dearest and feel their support and love, the guests were keen to wax lyrical about him as they feasted on some of Jake's favourite foods together, cooked by our in-house catering team Signature Dining.







Zac, 21, met Jake at a brain injury rehabilitation facility six years ago and they have remained in touch ever since.

"Jake lifted everyone's mood there," he said.

"He's a great friend but so competitive, especially with football."

Ali, who has known Jake since they were at nursery together, grinned as he described his lifelong pal as "the guy," and school friend Romario said Jake has always been "so understanding and the most popular guy and friend he's ever known."

But it was his former footballing teammates who revealed more.

"Jake has always been a better footballer than any of us and he even got a trial at Reading," explained 21-year-old Jameel.

"But his other interest is the girls. He has a reputation as a ladies' man and always gets the girls."

Guests were invited to make a donation and so far, the event has raised more than £1,500 for North London Hospice.

**“We have had so much support from the hospice. You have given us some quality time together, so we were pleased to be able to give something back.”**



# Making A Difference Together

This month sees the return of our virtual fundraiser, Big Fun Craft. Throughout February our creative community are dedicating a minimum of one hour every day to knitting, sewing or crocheting for North London Hospice.

Now in its third year, participants sign up for free and are encouraged to try to raise a minimum of £150 through sponsorship, where possible. There's an online community and newsletters for support, plus in-person workshops, fundraising incentives and prize draws. Items made can be kept, donated to the hospice or gifted to our shops to sell.

For those who can't run or walk, but want to contribute, this is a great way to make a difference, explained volunteer Mary, who runs our Big Fun Craft workshops.

**“It's not about skill so much as giving something a try. Crafting is relaxing. I notice people laughing, forgetting their troubles for a while and supporting one another when we come together.”**



With Mary - who was taught to craft by her mum and made her own wedding dress - showing people how to make bookmarks, pocket hugs and scented drawer bags this year, it's shaping up to be another successful challenge. Over the first two years, Big Fun Craft raised almost £38,000.

“It's such a flexible, inclusive event and so much fun. I love being involved and seeing people realise what they can do, rather than what they can't,” she added.

For more information email [bigfuncraft@northlondonhospice.co.uk](mailto:bigfuncraft@northlondonhospice.co.uk) or visit our website at: [northlondonhospice.org/events/bigfuncraft/](http://northlondonhospice.org/events/bigfuncraft/)



# Thank You, Jane

Our fundraising team raised a festive toast to volunteer Jane, who retired from service to the hospice in December after 12 years of support.

Having initially joined North London Hospice with a desire to support a communal charity and to use her administrative skills, Jane worked as a switchboard operator, in filing and in an admin capacity in a variety of departments.

"I particularly enjoyed working with a wonderful volunteer called Eve," Jane recalled.

"For several years we did all the archiving of patient records, before the EMIS system came in. It was rewarding to have ownership of a job and feel we were making a significant contribution to the running of the hospice."

The other feeling that struck Jane was the sense of togetherness she felt.

"I hadn't realised what a family feel there would be here," she added.

**“Everyone is so welcoming and friendly, and it’s been great to be considered one of the team.”**

While helping with banking, event materials and sponsorship one final time, Jane was reflective about her time with us.

"I remain so grateful for the continuous support and appreciation given to me by all the people I have worked with here," she shared.

**“It’s such a gratifying place to work and you won’t find a more committed and hardworking workforce anywhere. I’d encourage anyone to volunteer with the hospice.”**

**Thank You Jane, for your incredible support over many years.**





# In Search Of Meaning, Belonging, Hope And Peace

Towards the end of life, when things that are no longer important – or perhaps never really were – fall away, only that which is most meaningful remains. In these moments it is my privilege to sit alongside people in my capacity as Spiritual Coordinator and Chaplain at North London Hospice.

While spirituality has connection and overlap with religion, it is at its heart about how someone understands their life, the stories that make sense of who they are, and the value and purpose they attach to their existence. I believe we are all spiritual beings, whatever that means to us individually, and – as an integral part of holistic hospice care – we invite people to explore what can be a tremendous resource to sustain and comfort during life's most challenging moments.

For three years, my role here has been to oversee spiritual care across the organisation, making sure all patients can have their spiritual needs provided for. That may mean tapping into my network, to other faith leaders or to volunteers. I am also a chaplain trained in the Christian tradition, but I am here for anyone regardless of their background.

We know that many of our patients will have suffered spiritual distress and so offering them a chance to discuss what's significant to them is important. Of course, as a multi-faith hospice we welcome people from all faiths and none, and understand how religion can influence a person's sense of self, as well as the rituals that are important. We also see the universal human longings we all have, for belonging, security, acceptance and connection.

Our work is based around listening rather than telling, so it's about getting to know people and tuning into their world rather than imposing our views. Because we are a person-centred hospice, we approach spiritual care in terms of giving everyone permission to express themselves and their needs, being a human witness to their experiences.

Often people have been confronted by some big life questions on their journey already and appreciate conversations that help them draw upon whatever it is that they find comfort and strength in, so enabling them to come to terms with and respond to the problems they are facing.





Sometimes we can pray together, share sacred texts or listen to music. We can activate resources from their faith, and we can explore the inner resources that help sustain and centre us.

I tend to say to people that if there was a fully satisfying and convincing

answer to all the fundamental reckoning, you'd have had it by now. My hope is that together we can instead feel loved, find our meaning and make peace.

**Simon Rowbory**  
Spiritual Care Coordinator



# Harriet Looks Back Over 40 Years



Just as hospice care was gaining traction in the 1980s, St. Columbus Hospital in Hampstead closed its doors, having been the only long-stay hospital in the area for some 100 years. The scarcity of almost anywhere for those with a life-limiting illness to go to receive free treatment galvanised a small working group in 1981 to take action. It was led by Highgate GP, Dr Chris Hindley, and included Harriet Copperman OBE (pictured), who became one of the public faces of the hospice, as they began the long process of establishing the North London Hospice.

**“I worked as a district nurse but was drawn towards palliative care having witnessed a patient die in difficult circumstances without the right support,”** Harriet recalled.

“I had helped to establish another community hospice service in the '70s in the northeast side of London. It was an exciting time as we were treading new ground, and it became clear that there was a gap in this northwest area of London.

By the time I was approached about helping to set up this hospice, my knowledge of the sector had grown further, having been one of three nurses who established the palliative care team at the Royal Free Hospital, Hampstead. I guess I knew the blueprint.”

Despite generous donations and offers of assistance, including £17,000 raised at the inaugural public meeting and the gift of a gold wedding ring, when the hospice began operating in 1984 as a community palliative care service, it looked very different to the hospice we know today.

“We had no premises, but as I lived in a two-bedroom maisonette we used my spare room as an office for five staff,” Harriet explained.

“A year later we decanted to the maisonette downstairs, where the bathroom housed all our nursing equipment which we took to our patients' homes. As a new 24-hour





a day service in the area, we were mostly very well received, and the work was very meaningful to the whole team."

Fundraising efforts included carol concerts, sponsored runs, a beer festival and a flower show, and one 11-year-old school pupil walked 168 miles and raised over £1,000. The Hon. Margaret Thatcher, former MP for Finchley, even hosted a fundraising reception at 10 Downing Street.

So, in 1992 the hospice was able to open its doors on Woodside Avenue, as the first multi-faith hospice in the UK and the go-to establishment for people in Barnet, Enfield and Haringey needing specialist palliative care.

"I look back on that time in my career with immense fondness," admitted Harriet, who was the hospice's Nursing Director for Community Care.

**“It was a great privilege to do the work. The palliative care landscape has changed so much over the years, as has this hospice, but it’s nice to see it continue to serve the community.”**

After working there for 14 years and being awarded an OBE in 1999 for services to the North London Hospice, Harriet remains modest about her considerable contributions.

"I don't claim the award just as my own," she insisted.

"When I interviewed for team members here, I usually went on gut instinct. Yes, people needed experience, but it was also about being attracted to this work. It was self-selecting. I think that is still true in this specialist area. It's the people that make it what it is."



# Through The Lens

## Light Up A Life

Our annual Light Up A Life event took place in November, where around 750 attendees joined us for our ceremony and the switching on of our memorial tree with a thousand lights; each dedicated to someone special. The event raised £4,000 for the hospice.



## Big Festive Fete

In December, we held our first ever Big Festive Fete to celebrate the festive season and the hospice's 40th anniversary. The event brought together 34 stallholders, six music groups and around 300 attendees to raise approximately £4,000 for the hospice.



## Dare Walk

A seven-strong team, including staff from Marlborough Highways, took to the skies in October at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium for breathtaking views, looking over the 46.8 metres to the pitch. They then clipped in, took a deep breath and walked off the side of the stadium, descending 42 metres to the ground. They raised £2,000 for the hospice.





### North London Knits

We were delighted to welcome the North London Knits group to the hospice in September, to sell their specially crafted range of accessories for the hospice in our trademark colours. The group raised more than £3,000 for us this year.



### Skydive

In celebration of North London Hospice's 40th anniversary, we introduced a brand-new Skydive Day as part of our challenge events. We asked supporters to jump on the opportunity to take on a 10,000ft tandem skydive and ten willing participants, including our own CEO and members of staff, raised more than £15,000 across two dates in September and October.





**Join our hospice  
heroes on an  
unforgettable  
London walk.**

**North  
London  
Hospice**

**BIG  
FUN WALK  
2025**

**Sunday 18 May**

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

Join us in celebrating the heroes who make our work possible at our Big Fun Walk on 18 May 2025. This year we are also thrilled to be introducing our 'Little' Fun Walk.

If the full 10-mile walk isn't for you, why not try our brand new 5-mile route? We invite you to dress up as your favourite superhero and walk alongside neighbours, colleagues, family and even furry friends as we are set to make Big Fun Walk 2025 our biggest and best year yet, where everyone is welcome.

**Pricing for adults £25  
under 16 £20 and  
under 5s free.**

**Sign up  
today**

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**Register at**

[northlondonhospice.org/events/big-fun-walk-2025/](https://northlondonhospice.org/events/big-fun-walk-2025/)





# Our Youngest HCA

## On Finding Purpose Through Care

Charlotte knew from a young age that she wanted to work within the healthcare sector and joined North London Hospice three years ago, aged just 19, as a Health Care Assistant. Still as passionate about palliative care as the day she joined us, Charlotte took time to reflect on her career so far.

**“Here at the hospice, we care for the whole person, focusing on comfort, dignity and making the most of every moment. It’s about easing physical pain, providing emotional support and helping families navigate the complexities of grief and loss.**

Some might view this as a sombre task, but I see it as a sacred duty. It’s an honour to walk alongside individuals as they transition from this life to the next. We strive to ensure their final days are filled with peace, love and a sense of serenity.

Beyond physical care, we offer spiritual and emotional support. We listen, we empathise, and we provide a comforting presence.

We create a space where individuals can share their stories, express their fears and find solace in the company of others.

While death is inevitable, the quality of life, even in its final stages, is immeasurable. We work tirelessly to enhance that quality, to alleviate suffering, and to foster a sense of hope.

It’s a privilege to witness the incredible resilience of the human spirit, even in the face of adversity. We learn from our patients, we grow with them, and we are forever changed by their courage and grace.

Hospice care is more than a job, it’s a calling and a deeply humbling experience. It’s about making a difference, one life at a time. It’s about honouring the past, cherishing the present, and embracing the future with hope and compassion.”





# Meet the volunteer – Alex

When 33-year-old Alex saw that our Golders Green shop was on the lookout for more volunteers, it felt serendipitous.

Having been deeply touched by the care his mum received at a different hospice in 2017, and looking for a way to give something back to the community, he relished the opportunity to carve out some time in his week for such an important cause.

"I know first-hand that a hospice can be a transformational space where the care, love and sympathy afforded to the patient and their family can make a powerful difference at the hardest time," Alex explained.

**“I recognised that same support when I started volunteering at the North London Hospice shop, so I feel fortunate to be able to assist.**



**A lot of people have misguided impressions of what hospices are about, so I enjoy talking to customers about what we do and how we can help. I feel passionately that the dignity, respect and comfort you offer changes things in those moments. I try to share that as much as possible.”**

Such is the value Alex places on his role that he found a job to fit around it.

"I work shifts at a pub and made sure when I started there that they knew not to roster me over the two days a week I am at the hospice shop," he shared.





**“If it means missing out on a few hours of pay, so be it. Of course, I will sacrifice that because this is something I feel privileged to be involved in.”**

As well as working behind the till and processing donations, Alex is aware that people are also looking for connection.

“We are the face of the hospice for many in our community and they will often come in keen to share their stories of their own loved ones who have been cared for here,” Alex added.

“Welcoming them with a friendly face and offering a listening ear is so important. Just hearing them and offering empathy is so healing.”

Describing the retail community as “like a family,” Alex is ever grateful.

“There is one gentleman who comes in regularly and now he always greets me with a big hug,” Alex recalled.

“And I refer to my shop manager as Mama Kim, because she has become like a second mum to me, checking in on me and caring.”

But there is one special person front and centre of Alex’s mind every time he volunteers.

**“I read a quote recently that said a person’s life finally fades away when the last person in the world who remembers them also forgets them. This is my way of keeping my mum’s memory alive, of honouring her and of helping to ensure that other people get the support we did when they need it most,”** he said.



# Diary dates

## March – Big Fun Step

Take steps that count this March – for your health, your loved ones and our North London community. Choose your challenge and walk 10K, 12K or 15K steps a day to help us provide vital care to families in Barnet, Enfield and Haringey. Honour the memory of someone special by walking in their name, or simply get outdoors, explore new parks and connect with nature. Join us in supporting your local charity by taking part in Big Fun Step! For more information, email [fundraising@northlondonhospice.co.uk](mailto:fundraising@northlondonhospice.co.uk) or visit [northlondonhospice.org/events/big-fun-step/](http://northlondonhospice.org/events/big-fun-step/)



## 6 April - London Landmarks Half Marathon

The London Landmarks offers runners an extraordinary way to explore London, taking in cultural landmarks, 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.



## 27 April - London Marathon

The inspiring and electric atmosphere amongst some of the world's most famous landmarks is not something that can ever be replicated. 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 and most popular in the world, and a once in a lifetime opportunity for most people.



## 10 May - Highwood Ash Open Garden

Created over the last 57 years by our Honorary President Penny Gluckstein MBE, this 3¼ acre garden features rolling lawns, two large interconnecting ponds with koi, herbaceous and shrub borders and a modern gravel garden. Further information coming soon.





## 18 May – Big and Little Fun Walk

Join us in celebrating the heroes who makes our work possible at Big Fun Walk 2025. This year we are also thrilled to be introducing our 'Little' Fun Walk. If the full 10-mile walk isn't for you, why not try our brand new 5-mile route? Every step you take, you're giving families the gift of support, comfort, and peace when they need it most. For more information visit [northlondonhospice.org/events/big-fun-walk-2025/](https://northlondonhospice.org/events/big-fun-walk-2025/)



## 21 – 28 June – Forever In Our Hearts – Forever Feathers

We are proud to announce our second in-memory event, Forever Feathers. For a donation, you can order a handcrafted decorative steel feather in memory of a loved one. The feathers will be displayed in the tranquil gardens at West Lodge Park (Cockfosters Road, Hadley Wood, Enfield) in June, where the collective beauty of these tributes can be experienced against the backdrop of the hotel's peaceful grounds. Dedications must be made by Monday 19 May. For more information visit [northlondonhospice.org/support-us/forever-feathers/](https://northlondonhospice.org/support-us/forever-feathers/)



## 21-29 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](https://promsatstjudes.org.uk)



## 29 June – Summer Race The Neighbours

This 10km community fun run takes in some of the most scenic parts of East Finchley and Muswell Hill, with spectacular views over London. People from all fitness levels are welcome to participate in this friendly local run, with a pinch of neighbourhood rivalry thrown in for good measure. For more information please email [racetheneighbours@northlondonhospice.co.uk](mailto:racetheneighbours@northlondonhospice.co.uk)



To find out more or register for any of our events, please visit:  
<https://northlondonhospice.org/support-us/our-fundraising-events/>



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# Meet The Team - Tanesia

Even as a little girl, Tanesia was earmarked as the caring one; always looking after both people and animals. And with her mum – Tanesia's 'rock and role-model' – a social worker, it came as no surprise when she embarked on her nursing training at the University of Nottingham.

It was during a stint working on a busy London hospital oncology ward that Tanesia was able to hone in on her career passions. She wanted to be able to sit with patients, to get to know what made them tick, to have time to build trust and offer holistic care. And so, five years ago, she joined the North London Hospice team as a nurse on our Inpatient Unit.

**“I found my calling in palliative care,” she explained. “I get so much satisfaction from my work and find it very rewarding. I try to treat everyone how I would want my own loved ones to be cared for and take comfort in knowing I have made a difference to someone’s end of life experience.”**

Doubtless this dedication and warmth contributed to Tanesia's various promotions, most recently to a six-month secondment as our Inpatient Unit Manager.



“It’s so important to find a place of work that supports and empowers you and I am immensely grateful for this incredible opportunity,” she mused.

**“It’s busy and I’m managing lots of people and pockets of work, but as a team we have great respect for one another, which is key. Overseeing this special space and helping people at their most vulnerable hour is a privilege I never take for granted.”**



# The Art Of Creativity



An exploration of different aspects of the natural world – from birds to figs, garden plants to weather - through art was the latest creative course offered by Compassionate Neighbours to our community at North London Hospice Enfield, home of our Outpatient and Wellbeing Services.

The six-week series of workshops was run by local artist and illustrator Laura McKendry and focused on curiosity, self-expression and the process of creating in an exploratory way. The hugely popular course, which was open to Compassionate Neighbours, community members, carers and patients, used a range of techniques including ink, printmaking, collage, paint and charcoal.

Javinder and Claire met at North London Hospice Enfield and shared an art table as they shaded in their pomegranate pictures, while opening up about their burgeoning friendship.

**“Outside of here people think I am stupid because of my speech impediment caused by my operation, but here I am understood and accepted as I am,” explained Javinder. “I know Claire doesn’t judge me and I can just be myself. It’s nice engaging with different activities and the art is very relaxing.”**

Claire, who is a regular at our music group too, echoed Javinder’s sentiment.

“I can talk about anything here and people know what you’re going through, we have a respect for each other. This place is a lifeline. My husband works full time and so otherwise I’d be home alone,” she said.

Albeit a seasoned teacher, this was Laura’s first piece of work with North London Hospice.

“Facilitating this group has been inspiring to me, watching everyone give things a go and enjoy the process with a playful attitude,” she shared.

**“This isn’t about skill, it’s about artistic expression and I learn with each new group too.”**



# Forever In Our Hearts – Forever Feathers

Following the success of our first Forever In Our Hearts display last year, North London Hospice is proud to announce our second in-memory event, Forever Feathers. For a donation, you can order a handcrafted decorative steel feather in memory of a loved one.

The feathers will be displayed in the peaceful gardens at West Lodge Park (Cockfosters Road, Hadley Wood, Enfield) in June, where the collective beauty of these tributes can be experienced against the backdrop of the hotel's beautiful 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 Feathers garden promises to be a special place and we hope that visiting will offer a moment of comfort and calm this summer, reminding us that our loved ones are always near.

There are 500 feathers 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 on Saturday 21 June 10am – 12.30pm and Sunday 22 June 10am – 12.30pm to show you the location of your dedication. There will also be a sunset reflection evening on Thursday 26 June, with more details to come. The display will remain in place until Saturday 28 June. After the event, you will be able to take your feather home, creating a lasting symbol of love and cherished memories.

**Dedications must be made by  
Monday 19 May.**

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# Letters

My friend Chris was a positive person. He always tried to focus on the bright side, and with his family's help and love, he coped with so much. Chris had a ready laugh, and his smile was always on tap. Chris's local activism and his ideas for the future of Crouch End made him the obvious choice to be my first interviewee, in 1999, for my new column in the Ham and High Broadway. Even as Chris struggled over the years with all his co-morbidities, his activism never ceased. He gave back, gave time, to the NHS and other organisations that had helped him so much, such as the British Lung Foundation: he became their patient representative. I'm so glad I was able to visit Chris at North London Hospice in his final days. I could see how comfortable and calm he was, in his spotlessly clean room. Monika, his wife, was there, and she told me that the care Chris was receiving was superb. "Nothing seems too much trouble," she said. She showed me the bed the hospice had arranged in the room for her overnight stays and told me about the "endless" cups of tea and coffee, even breakfast, the hospice had supplied her with. "They always have time to talk," she added, "and even give me a hug." When I left Chris for the last time, he was smiling and waving. I waved back, and he waved back, and we shouted to each other – just like we sometimes did – and had our last special goodbye.

Jeff



I'm writing to thank everyone that we had contact with who made the passing of our beloved mum as good as it could be. From Chelsey who first visited us, Joanna who supported us when Chelsey was away, Zoe who came at the drop of a hat to give mum various aids and the angel that is Chasa who sat with mum for her last three nights – giving her and us the perfect end. I also wanted to say thanks to the health care assistants, the telephone operators, Maggie and every single person we had contact with. Word cannot express the gratitude we have for North London Hospice. You are all angels, and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

## North London Hospice

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