Irish Embassy Reception

The reception, commemorating the 150th anniversary of The Hospital Saturday Fund, took place at the Irish Embassy in London. Ambassador Martin Fraser hosted the event, during which The Hospital Saturday Fund donated a total of £160,000/€176,000 to thirty-one medical charities and organisations from Ireland and the UK. The occasion was enriched by the presence of Graham Norton, a celebrity supporter of Bantry Hospice, who presented the donations. Lesley Garrett, the Patron of The Hospital Saturday Fund, also participated in presenting to the recipient charities.

Among the beneficiaries, Bantry Hospice will allocate HSF’s grant to their palliative care service in West Cork. The London Irish Centre’s donation will support their Community Wellbeing & Health Navigation Programme. Spinal Injuries Ireland received a grant for their Peer-to-Peer Support Programme and Irish Dogs for the Disabled will use the funds for physiotherapy medical equipment. Cure Leukaemia’s grant will partially fund a Clinical Trials Research Nurse in the Trials Acceleration Programme, facilitating clinical trials at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham. The Teenage Cancer Trust’s grant will aid the Youth Empowerment Programme for the Northeast, and Richard House Hospice’s donation will support respite and palliative care for children with life-limiting illnesses.

Mr Jackson extended gratitude to the Irish Embassy for hosting the reception, considering it a fitting venue given the Fund’s heritage. In 2023, The Hospital Saturday Fund aims to contribute £2.3m/€2.5m in donations and grants to medical charities, hospices, and hospitals across Ireland and the UK. Assistance will also be provided to individuals facing financial difficulties due to illness or disability.
Medical Detection Dogs

Medical Detection Dogs train canines to detect the odour of human diseases, aiming to develop faster, more efficient, and less invasive diagnostics that lead to improved patient outcomes. Dogs, renowned for their sense of smell, have been recognised by doctors for centuries for their potential ability to detect diseases with characteristic odours.

Medical Detection Dogs goes further by applying the science of canine olfaction to benefit people. They train Medical Alert Assistance Dogs to detect minute changes in an individual’s odour triggered by their disease, alerting them to an impending medical event. This proactive approach helps individuals manage complex, life-threatening medical conditions, ultimately enhancing their quality of life.

Orthopaedic Institute

Spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) is a genetic disease occurring in approximately one in every 10,000 live births. This rare neuromuscular disorder results in muscle weakening, wasting, and movement difficulties. In the UK, about 70 babies are born with this condition annually, and around 1 in 40 individuals carry a copy of the altered gene responsible for SMA, though they don’t manifest the condition themselves.

John Randel, Trustee, The Hospital Saturday Fund, met with Debra Alexander, Charity Manager, and Dr Ian Holt from the Orthopaedic Institute. They were presented with a £10,000 cheque towards a study exploring the potential of ‘old’ drugs, proven beneficial in treating other diseases, as either independent or complementary treatment therapies for adult Spinal Muscular Atrophy patients. The aim is to enhance their quality of life.

To find out more visit their website: https://www.orthopaedic-institute.org/.

Welsh Air Ambulance Charitable Trust

Wales Air Ambulance provides vital, round-the-clock, 365-days-a-year advanced medical care to people throughout Wales using helicopter emergency medical services and rapid response vehicles. They operate from four bases located in Cardiff, Llanelli, Welshpool, and Caernarvon.

Mark Davies, Trustee, The Hospital Saturday Fund, presented Hannah Mitchell, Chris Morley, Captain, and Andrew Morris, Helicopter Transfer Practitioner, from Welsh Air Ambulance Charitable Trust with £9,610. This funding is directed towards the acquisition of search and rescue Alpha 900 helmets for doctors and critical care practitioners. These helmets are indispensable for the crew, offering head protection, facilitating communication with crew members and patients, and providing night vision. Each helmet is individually customised, playing a crucial role in the operational capabilities of the air ambulance service.

To find out more visit their website: https://www.walesairambulance.com/.
Charity Update

Doctors in Distress

Doctors in Distress, a suicide prevention charity, was founded by Amandip Sidhu after the death of his brother, Dr Jagdip Sidhu in 2018. While doctors can face health challenges, there is a pervasive sense in the profession that seeking help carries a stigma. Consequently, burnout and suicide rates among doctors surpass those in the general population. Current statistics reveal that in the UK, one doctor takes their own life every three weeks. In 2020 alone, 230 healthcare professionals took their own lives, with female doctors being two and a half times more likely than their male counterparts.

The Hospital Saturday Fund granted £10,000 to the Doctors in Distress Dr1in4 programme for medical students and Nurses2in3. This falls under the programme name Reflective Spaces for both nurses and midwives. These programmes aim to enable young people embarking on a medical career and junior doctors, as well as nurses and midwives, to more fully understand the prevalence of stress and burnout.

Doctors in Distress strives to eliminate the stigma around mental health in the medical profession and shift the mindset of many medical professionals across the UK. This effort comes at a time when public support has declined, but the workload has increased.

To find out more visit their website: https://www.walesairambulance.com

Individual Grant Update

Rae experiences fibromyalgia, PTSD, and dyspraxia, resulting in significant mobility challenges and mental health struggles. An assistance dog could significantly benefit Rae by providing support for PTSD, physical pain, and mobility issues. The trained dog would assist in tasks like dressing and undressing, retrieving medication, and calling for help.

Rae was awarded £900 to contribute to the training of the assistance dog. This funding will play a crucial role in enhancing Rae’s daily life, providing support tailored to her specific needs and improving her overall well-being.

“She is terrific! Camille does medical alerts (informs me when my cortisol levels are rising prior to medical episodes including brain fog, intense pain, and mobility difficulties), steers me away from moving traffic and parks me somewhere safe when I am having brain fog and I am unaware of my surroundings, she helps with dressing and undressing, opens doors for me when my hands are too stiff to do so, fetches medication when I’ve had a fall so that I can get back up again, and so much more. She’s absolutely amazing.”

Jaiden, who is nonverbal due to a genetic disability, relies on a wheelchair and an eye-gazing communication aid for assistance. Unfortunately, Jaiden had been confined indoors for an extended period. His primary caregiver, his grandmother, faces the challenge of cervical kyphosis, and pushing Jaiden in a wheelchair exacerbates the migraines associated with her condition. Given Jaiden’s love for the outdoors and residing in a rural, hilly area, an off-road powerchair became a necessity.

The Hospital Saturday Fund generously awarded Jaiden £1,000 towards a new Trekinetic Chair. This chair has now opened up numerous possibilities, enabling Jaiden to explore a variety of places. Jaiden’s family expressed their gratitude for this invaluable support.

“Yes we have the wheelchair and it’s fantastic, Jaiden is so much happier in it... We have already been out to a few places that we weren’t able to before, this weekend we went to the Hertfordshire Show, which is on hilly, grassy land with gravel paths and we had no issues. I can’t thank you and the charities that helped raise the money enough, I can already see the benefits and we have only had the chair a few weeks.”
Helping your employees with everyday health cost

With HSF Health Plan your employee can get affordable cover which includes HSF Assist, our Employee Assistance Programme, and covers their family at no extra cost.