

The Ladybird news BULLETIN

Grace Kelly
Childhood
Cancer Trust

Issue 1 | Spring/Summer 2024

Registered Charity Number 1167783



Because the children of today all deserve a tomorrow.

HELLO!

Contents



Page 3	Meet Our Team & Making a Difference
Page 4	Latest News
Page 5	Ladybird Ambassadors & Charity Ball
Page 6	Research Update
Page 7	Named Funds & Hall of Fame
Page 8	Community Events
Page 9	Family Support Services
Page 10	Ladybird Loves
Page 11	Podcast Launch
Page 12	Our Events & Contact Us

We are so excited to welcome you to our first ever printed news bulletin! The Grace Kelly Childhood Cancer Trust has a busy few months ahead, and after a jam packed start to 2024, we wanted to share some of our happy news stories with you all.

Everything that you will read in this issue is down to the support and generosity of our community, partners and families. You all make our work possible so that we can continue to work towards a brighter outlook for children facing cancer.

In this issue you will have an opportunity to listen to our first ever podcast episode -

Young Me vs the Big C which has been created in the hope that newly diagnosed children can listen and feel reassured from other's experiences.

From joining a first of its kind Government Taskforce, to an array of exciting challenges and events, we hope you enjoy our first issue of the Ladybird News Bulletin.

Best wishes,
Jen Kelly, CEO



Grace Kelly
Childhood
Cancer Trust

Meet our team...

Sarah, Family Support Lead



How long have you worked for the Trust?

I joined the Trust 2.5 years ago.

What does your role involve?

I am proud to be the Family Support Team Leader for the Charity and have two fabulous Family Support Workers working within the team. I cover the Herefordshire and Worcestershire area and hold a caseload of around 80 families, offering both emotional and practical support, whether that is in the home, hospital or in school. My Team Leader role enables me to lead the service, helping it to grow and evolve to the best it can possibly be, and support the Family Support Workers as they manage their caseloads. That could involve providing a listening ear following a difficult visit, talking through new referrals, and exploring ways to bring our oncology families together so they do not feel alone.

What do you enjoy most about working for the Trust?

I love that we have a whole team approach to supporting the families referred to us but also share the same passion for raising the awareness of childhood cancer and improving outcomes for them. Knowing that I am making a difference to the families I support, when they are going through the worst time of their lives, is incredibly humbling. I feel so proud and privileged to be there by their sides. The children are all incredible, and the smiles and laughs we share whilst playing a game or doing some crafts for example, are priceless.

What are you most excited for this Spring/Summer?

We are working hard to provide more opportunities for our families to come together. We have recently made some positive connections especially within the Gloucestershire area and I am looking forward to seeing where that takes us. We have a summer event currently in the planning stage, which will allow the children to have some fun and games, and for the parents to talk and share experiences, so fingers crossed for some sunny weather!

WHERE YOUR DONATIONS ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE...



213

Hospital, school & home visits with over 1,000 family support contacts made



Launched our long stay support packs for children

Blossom Box 



SINCE JANUARY THIS YEAR

TYACAM



April marked the second Teenage and Young Adult Cancer Awareness Month. It gave charities and the young people we support the opportunity to come together and raise awareness of the unique challenges this age group face when they hear three words that change their lives forever, "You have cancer".

More than 20 charities joined together throughout April to raise awareness of the issues young people face and to support them in sharing their stories.

Around 2,400 young people aged 13-24 are diagnosed with cancer every year.

Follow the campaign at #TYACAM

Blossom Boxes

In March, we were able to deliver our first Blossom Box; a long stay support pack for children and young people that have to endure extended stays in hospital for treatments such as stem cell transplants or long courses of radiotherapy. The personalised boxes contain items which we hope make their hospital room feel more homely and comforting.



Our awareness mission:

At the beginning of March, Government held the first of its kind working group to discuss actions for change to improve outcomes of childhood cancer in the UK. Our CEO proudly attended the Taskforce and presented four key asks to MPs and professionals:

- Printing of our signs and symptoms awareness cards in all Personal Child Health Records (infant red books)
- Creation of a public health campaign
- Improved education for health professionals
- Reduced barriers between primary and secondary care

All 4 asks from our proposal are now agreed action points for a follow up meeting which will be scheduled in due course.



Ladybird **Ambassadors**

We are excited to announce that we have our first Charity Ambassador!

Ewan has been supported by our Family Support Service since receiving his diagnosis of Acute Lymphocytic Leukaemia at the age of 10. Now aged 14 and out of treatment, he wishes to help other young people facing childhood cancer.

He has already featured on our new podcast **Young Me vs the Big C**, where he talks about his struggles with food whilst taking steroids and his ringing the bell extravaganza which was inspired by his favourite band, Queen! He is now planning an exclusive cookery video to inspire young people to get hands on in the kitchen and eat a balanced, nutritious diet once their treatment is complete.



Ewan has recently joined a new theatre group at the Swan Theatre in Worcester, and said: **"I love it! It's amazing. I've definitely got more confident, this is really going to help me be who I am!"**

We are excited to see what Ewan produces next with his theatrical talents as he helps to raise awareness of childhood cancer.

2025 Charity Ball

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

On Saturday 22nd March 2025, we will be hosting our charity ball at **DRPG Studios**.

Our annual ball will be back with a bang! Taking place with up to 350 guests at the amazing DRPG Studios in Hartlebury with the most spectacular entertainment, fun and games for all.

Join DRPG as one of our event sponsors. We have multiple opportunities available from **headline sponsorship** through to a photo booth and photographer package.

Please contact **contact@gkcct.org** for more information or to express an interest in sponsoring our 2025 Charity Ball.

thank you



Research update

On March 11th, members of the Trust visited the Medical School at the University of Birmingham to meet with some of the researchers and clinical leaders who are working to shape a better future for children and young people facing childhood cancers. We were also joined by Sarcoma UK, who we partnered with to co-fund a research project which focuses on immunotherapy treatment for sarcoma patients.

We were welcomed by Professor Jo Parish, Deputy Director of the Institute of Cancer and Genomic Sciences and Amos Burke, Professor of Paediatric Oncology at the University of Birmingham, and an Honorary Consultant Paediatric Oncologist. Both explained their responsibilities in leading the way for impactful research studies which one day will hopefully mean that all children not only survive cancer but face less life impacting side effects from cancer treatments.

Dr Carmela De Santo, who is also based at the medical school in Birmingham, presented a research update to explain what she and her team have discovered so far with their study into the ability to activate key immune cells (iNKT). These cells have the function of inhibiting MDSCs (a special type of white blood cell) which then allows the immune system to target and kill childhood sarcoma. The iNKT cells also have a superior ability to penetrate tissue and directly induce cell death in tumour cells, which could massively improve outcomes for children facing sarcoma cancers.

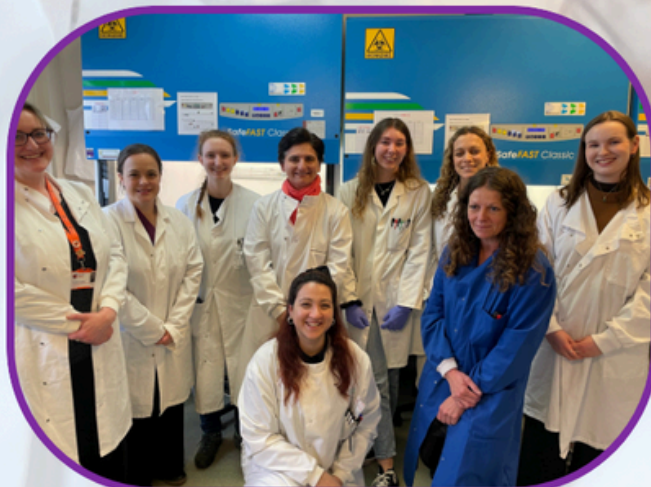
Her presentation was followed by an exclusive visit to her lab where we were able to witness the meticulous work and determination to achieve results for oncology families of the future. Dr Carmela and her team were able to confirm and evidence that from their research studies so far, her team have identified a method to activate the key immune cells which can then be used to target and kill childhood sarcoma. The research team are now in preparation for the next phase of testing in the hope that further discoveries will be made to advance this form of treatment for children of the future.



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SarcomaUK
The bone & soft tissue
cancer charity



Ladybirdheroes

The Grace Kelly Childhood Cancer Trust has special named funds called the **Ladybird Hero Funds** (previously known as Ladybird Legend Funds) which are a way to honour a child by raising money for the Trust in their name. This way children who have gone through their own difficult journey can help other children in a similar situation.

If your child is fighting cancer, is in remission, or has sadly passed away, you may consider fundraising or setting up a named fund to honour their journey.

Your page is set up allowing you to visibly see the donations received and the difference your support is making. It can also be a comfort to see how your child is helping others.

Please do **get in touch** if you have any questions about our Ladybird Hero Funds, we are here to support you every step of the way.



Edward's Fund

visit our website for more details

www.gkcct.org



#Be
More
Frank

Hall of fame



Hilarie



Josh & Grace



Sammy & Eloise

In the community...

Delta Eggs

Over the Easter weekend, Delta Sports hosted a family Easter egg hunt at Inkberrow Primary School, and Cornmeadow Early Years to help raise funds for the Trust. Families were invited to a day of fun, crafts and games for all whilst hunting down the trail of coloured eggs.



Bromsgrove Beer Festival

We are so grateful to have been chosen as this year's charity of the year for the Bromsgrove Beer Festival. Money raised from the annual event will be donated to the Trust to help fund our family support service.

The event dates are: **27th, 28th and 29th June**, Bromsgrove Rugby Club, Fininstall Road, Bromsgrove B60 3DH



> BOOK NOW

Scoot & Scramble

We are delighted that the Snodsbury Scoot and Scramble will be supporting the Trust again this year with their annual event on **23rd June 2024**.



9:45am - the 'scoot' is a 1.2km multi terrain race for children consisting of one lap of a private field.

11am - the 'scramble' is a 10km (ish), mainly off-road race including stretches of footpaths, bridlepaths, meadows and tracks, with multiple gates and styles to navigate.

Race HQ and registration will be at the park in Upton Snodsbury and the team ask participants to allow sufficient time to collect race numbers and take part in the team briefing.

For more information and to book your place, please go to:

www.snodsburyscootandscramble.run

Orchestra Concert

A wonderful evening of music was held at Holy Trinity Church in Stroud in early March.

Thank you so much to Clare Lucas and everyone at **Stroud Symphony Orchestra** for performing and everyone who attended this wonderful event which **raised £611.77** to support our vital services.

thank you



Family support **fun!**

Neil Bates of Droitwich Tennis in the Lido Park, kindly hosted two tennis activity sessions in April for oncology children and their siblings. The sessions have supported children at different stages of their journey to find a new confidence whilst getting fit and meeting other children who have been affected by childhood cancer. **Sarah Tarry, Family Support Lead** said: "It was so lovely to see the children that we support come together for a fun, relaxed session which gave them a confidence boost and opportunity to make new friends. We are so thankful to Neil and his helpers for offering to host such a valuable opportunity to children that may not have ever thought tennis was for them."

Neil will continue to offer coaching sessions on a monthly basis. Please contact our Family Support team if you are an oncology family who would like to take part in future sessions.

✉ support@gkcct.org



Gabby's 5K



DONATE ❤️

My Story

In September 2022 I was diagnosed with Acute Myeloid Leukaemia, a very aggressive form of blood cancer, and spent most of the next 9 months in Birmingham Children's Hospital having chemotherapy and then a stem cell transplant.

When I was poorly, the Grace Kelly Childhood Cancer Trust helped me and my family so much, and they still do. My parents got a grant from them to help with travel expenses, and they loaned out a robot to my school so that I could see, hear and speak to my friends and teachers and feel a bit less lonely. They also had a Family Support Worker get in touch with us, who would visit my sister in her school and me both in hospital and when I got home to talk about how we were feeling or just to play games! She still visits and we both really enjoy the visits, and I can still talk to her about anything.

I would now like to help them to be able to support other families and children that are in this situation. I'm going to run/walk a 5km race. It will involve a lot of hard work because I'm still recovering, but if I can raise lots of money it will be worth it!

LadybirdLOVES..



In February, we launched a new campaign 'Ladybird Loves'. It inspires members of the community to use their hobby, talent or skills to help raise money for the oncology families that we support. It can run for as long or short as they wish and can involve as many or few people they want. This issue we bring you one of our first Ladybird Loves...



Meet Dan! He has been an avid walker for many years, exploring wherever life takes him but in more recent years he has developed a fondness for the rural landscapes across Worcestershire and Gloucestershire. Long distance walks during lockdown were a safe haven and means for keeping fit but he has continued to discover new trails and hidden gems, documenting each walk through his love of photography. Dan has now chosen to turn his love for walking into a fundraising challenge in support of our work for oncology families. He and colleague Attila will be walking the Cotswold Way ULTRA Challenge at the end of June to raise funds for the Trust.



Dan said: "I've witnessed, firsthand, the affect a cancer diagnosis can have on both the individual and family. 4 years ago my dad was diagnosed with bladder cancer.

I've also had some of my closest friends go through the same experiences and the support that has been shared has been nothing but amazing."



Share your Ladybird Loves



> READ MORE

Nick Whale x



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COTSWOLD
WAY
ULTRA
CHALLENGE

We are SO excited to release the first episode of our brand new podcast **'Young Me vs. the Big C'**. Inspired by Radio 5's 'You, Me and the Big C', we hope to help children process their diagnosis by hosting a range of episodes which will cover different aspects of having cancer as a child.

In the first episode, we are joined by 14-year old Ewan who tells us about how steroids affected him, helpful coping strategies and his ringing of the bell extravaganza!!



If you have been affected by childhood cancer and would like to be a guest on **Young Me vs. the Big C** to share your experiences, then email:

 contact@gkcct.org



 SUBSCRIBE

How to donate

Here at the Grace Kelly Childhood Cancer Trust we do not receive any statutory funding which is why your support is so valuable. Our Family Support Service for oncology families spans across Worcestershire, Gloucestershire and Herefordshire but we also support families further afield with our financial support grants and awareness publications.

You can donate online via our website: www.gkcct.org

If you would like to donate by cheque, please make it payable to:

Grace Kelly Childhood Cancer Trust

and post to:
The Piggery, Cowsden Hall Farm,
Cowsden, Upton Snodsbury,
Worcestershire,
WR7 4NZ

thank you

Access support

If you or someone you know is facing childhood cancer and have not yet engaged with our family support team, you can make contact with our **Family Support Service** by emailing support@gkcct.org or by phoning 01905 885777.

We also publish and distribute free publications to ensure adults and children have helpful and digestible **information** about childhood cancer and what to expect upon receiving a diagnosis. You can order our print publications via our website or view them online digitally.

www.gkcct.org



Stay in touch

There is always plenty of news and events here at Ladybird HQ. To make sure you are in the know, join our digital mailing list.

Each month we will send you an email update of the latest news, events and stories from the Grace Kelly Childhood Cancer Trust.

Scan the QR code below to **subscribe** to our mailing list.



If you would like to receive a regular copy of our **printed** quarterly News Bulletin, then please email contact@gkcct.org to register.

Join #TeamLadybird in our 2024 fundraising challenges...



North Quarry car park, Malvern – Sunday 7th July

Join us on this guided walk across the Malvern Hills, one of the smaller AONBs comprising of approximately 105sq.km extending some 20km in length and about 9km at its widest point.



University of Warwick, Coventry – 27th July 2024

Cheltenham Racecourse, Cheltenham – 19th October 2024

The Inflatable 5K is the World's largest and best inflatable 5K obstacle run.



Launching September 2024

Winners announced March 2025

For the Corporate Challenge we supply you with £50, then using your business skills and expertise, grow that £50 into a fantastic donation to the Trust!



For more information visit www.gkcct.org
01905 885777 | contact@gkcct.org

The Piggery, Cowsden Hall Farm, Cowsden,
Upton Snodsbury, Worcestershire WR7 4NZ



SCAN ME



To get involved with our events or fundraisers

