

SUMMER 2020

News

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Always Caring – thanks to you

Since the coronavirus pandemic hit, we have all found our lives changed and impacted in ways we couldn't have imagined. At St Gemma's, we are still supporting patients and families who are facing the toughest of times. We have had to adapt, but the most important thing is that our services are still running. It is your support that makes this possible - thank you.

St Gemma's strapline is Always Caring, and that's what we continue to do. The people of Leeds have supported our vital work for the last 42 years, and now is no exception. We will work together to get through these difficult times and St Gemma's will come out stronger on the other side ready to tackle whatever the future brings.



Year of the Nurse

12 May 2020 was **International Nurses Day** and the **Year of the Nurse**.

At St Gemma's we always celebrate the occasion and recognise the remarkable kindness and professionalism of our healthcare staff, and those who support them – but it seemed even more poignant this year as nursing care faces one of the biggest challenges in a lifetime.

Heather McClelland, St Gemma's Chief Nurse said: *"The pandemic has presented nurses around the world with a huge challenge and brought into sharp focus their essential work. We value the safe, effective and compassionate care our nurses give to thousands of local people each year."*

This year, nurses from across the Hospice came together in the gardens to plant a lilac tree – a lovely way to celebrate the special year, as well as recognising the outstanding work of clinical teams during the pandemic.

Our heartfelt thanks not only to St Gemma's nurses, but also to nurses and key workers across our city, and the whole nation, in other settings including the NHS, community health and nursing homes. We salute you!

St Gemma's currently employs 56 nurses, who work in a variety of roles including our In-Patient Unit, providing vital Day Services and supporting patients in their own homes across Leeds. For more details about our current vacancies, please visit www.st-gemma.co.uk/vacancies

Always caring... thanks to you!

You are amazing! It is down to the generosity of our amazing supporters that we continue to be here for everyone who needs us... each and every day.



“In these difficult times you show us what love and care can achieve.”

These words left on our online Messages of Support page show the difference we can make when we work together.



If you are able to **please make a donation today** at events.st-gemma.co.uk/appeal or PTO to fill in your details...

Acts of kindness go a long way...

We are witnessing acts of kindness each and every day from individual supporters, local businesses, schools and restaurants. From meal deliveries to handmade scrubs, we're so grateful to everyone who is selflessly offering their support to St Gemma's during these unprecedented times. Here are a few examples of the kindness in our community...



#ClapForOurCarers

We're so grateful when we hear from many of you that you've been thinking of the St Gemma's team every Thursday when you clapped for our carers.

Our team had a wonderful surprise when local officers from **West Yorkshire Police**, and a week later a team from **West Yorkshire Fire Brigade**, drove into the Hospice car park to clap and show their support for the St Gemma's team. Our team were very touched by this gesture.

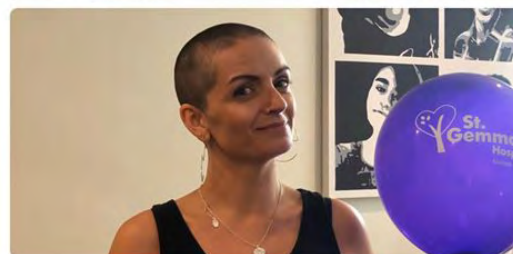
Treats for the team

Our team have been very grateful to everyone who has supplied delicious treats to keep us going during a long, hard shift. We can't possibly thank everyone here, but please know that we are eternally grateful for your kindness.... (and warm chocolate brownies!)



You have come up with so many creative ways to support patient care in these challenging times...

Lynsey: "I shaved my head to raise money for charity. My dad's life ended in St Gemma's just over a year ago and you guys were wonderful."



Richie Mathers, ex-Leeds Rhino: "I was supposed to be running the London Marathon to support St Gemma's in April, but it was postponed.

So I cycled 26 miles instead."

Protecting our team

As you will have heard in the news, there's been a massive increase in demand for protective clothing and equipment. While we've had adequate supplies of masks we were short on scrubs for the medical team at the start of the pandemic.

Dr Hannah Zacharias, Medical Consultant at St Gemma's, initially started the trend of lovingly hand-making scrubs for the medical team. Since then, we've received dozens more, including a batch from a local, elderly lady who is self-isolating but wanted to do 'something useful.'

Now we have a whole range of limited-edition tops, which are a great topic of conversation with patients, especially Hannah's octopus top!



Hannah (centre) in her octopus top!

Isla & Heidi: "We raised £172.50 by selling these handmade rainbows to our neighbours."



Nick Baines aka Peanut, from the Kaiser Chiefs: "I ran 2.6 miles because of the fantastic care they took of my dad in his final months."



A Ray of Sunshine

Staff and patients were treated to an afternoon of music by **Ray Lewis**, the former lead singer of legendary band The Drifters recently. The private performance in the Hospice gardens was shared on Facebook and raised over **£1300**. Ray offered his services for free as a thank you to the Hospice for caring for a relative.

A patient's wife said: "Wonderful afternoon, I got to dance with my husband one last time, a lovely memory thanks a lot."

Heartfelt words

And finally, we received a beautifully handwritten letter and drawing in the post from 9 year old **Emma**, whose grandma was cared for at St Gemma's. She wanted to thank the whole team for 'making a massive difference.' Thank you to you all.



Dear all who are working at St. Gemmas Hospice

Thank you for all that you are doing to help! You making a massive difference as the world learns to cope with Covid 19.

Thank to the Staff in the Office, Sorting out important paperwork, thanks to the Shays and Carolees, Sorting meals and looking after the building and thanks to the Nurses who are looking after patients. St. Gemmas have looked after my Grandma when she got poorly many years ago. She was called Elizabeth. Later in the year I hope to do some fundraising with my nursing. Once again thank you very much!

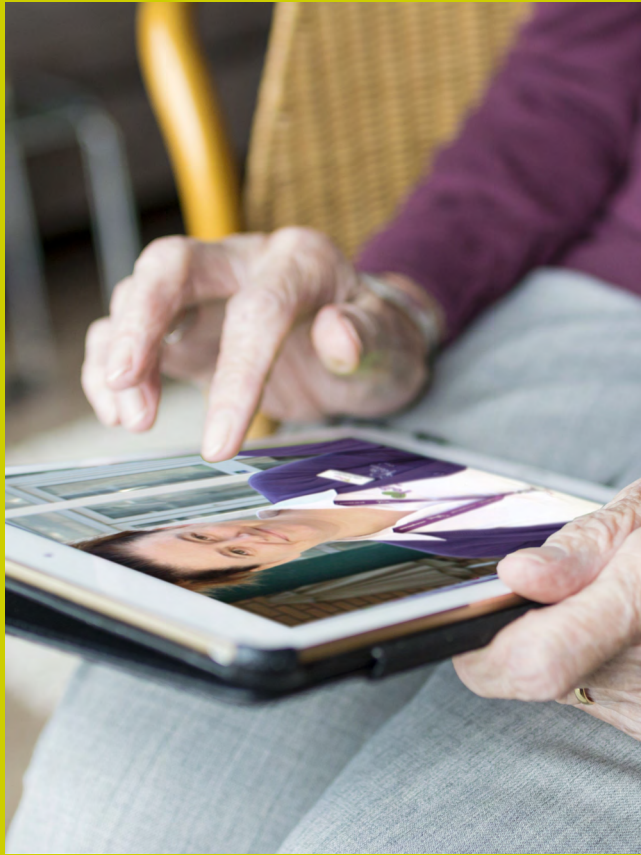
Love from

Emma

Age: 9

Always Caring...

In times of crisis and challenge, it's amazing what can be achieved when a great team works together. In a few short weeks, these are some of the significant things we have implemented to support patients, families and our team during this difficult period:



Across the community...

Our community team of doctors and nurses are continuing to care for people with life-limiting and terminal illness in their own homes.

We've introduced video consultations with patients, which mean patients can receive the tailored advice and support they need via a phone or tablet, often without the need for a home visit.

Reducing the amount of journeys across the city has saved valuable time and enabled us to keep in touch with more patients when they need us most.

Head of Community and Day Services, **Valerie Shaw** explains: 'We have hundreds of patients and family members across Leeds in our care at any one time, so we couldn't just stop working. The team have been working hard to come up with different ways of providing our care, so we can continue to support as many people as possible.'

At the Hospice...

Expert, round-the-clock care on our In-Patient Unit continues. We have also welcomed patients' visitors throughout the pandemic period, albeit with restrictions. This was one of the most difficult things we faced. We've always been proud of our open, welcoming, family environment and limiting this was incredibly hard for our team, and of course patients and their loved ones.

We have done lots of things to minimise the impact of this, including a new 'keeping in touch' service to help patients and their loved ones stay in close contact with each other. We set up a designated, secure email where families can exchange photos, drawings, poems and letters 24 hours a day.

We have also been giving patients and their loved ones matching handmade knitted hearts to help them feel connected. Amanda Henderson, Head of In-Patient Care said: "Having a special keepsake, something to touch and hold, knowing their relative has the matching thing with them is very special. Some patients have said it helps relieve their distress."



For those suffering a loss...

Our Family Support team are running a support line, in collaboration with colleagues at Sue Ryder Wheatfields. This is for anyone who has a family member or friend that is critically ill or who has died from any illness during the coronavirus pandemic period, and is open to anyone across the whole city, regardless of where your loved one was cared for. For more information ring **0113 218 5544** or visit: www.st-gemma.co.uk/covid19-supportline

They have also developed a really useful guide for people planning a funeral at this time. www.st-gemma.co.uk/covid19-funeralguide



Staff on the In-Patient Unit recently helped two patients celebrate their birthdays, despite restrictions to visiting. The team did their best to make these birthdays as special as possible with video calls to family, flowers from the Hospice gardens, cake and even a little lager!

Face masks and restrictions haven't affected my care...



Emma is 45 years old and has two daughters age 11 and 17. She is terminally ill and, at the height of the coronavirus pandemic, has been an in-patient at the Hospice for a week.

We asked her about her experience during these worrying times: "I am absolutely in the right place now, in fact me and the family are relieved to be in your care. The staff cannot do enough. They keep apologising for wearing face masks and the fact there are restrictions to visitors and social distancing. But I understand they need to do that and it doesn't affect my care whatsoever. I'm in a spacious room and the staff help my daughters and mum come to visit whenever they want. The girls can also phone the ward any time to speak to me or one of the nurses to see how I am. I really am as comfortable as I could be and reassured that everything will be ok."



Trusted Trustee

Everyone has been rolling up their sleeves and getting stuck in to do whatever is required. **Debra Fairly**, who was a St Gemma's Trustee until recently, came back to offer her services. She has been trained in the kitchens and Bistro and has been a valued pair of hands keeping staff nourished over recent months.

Raising funds to support patient care...

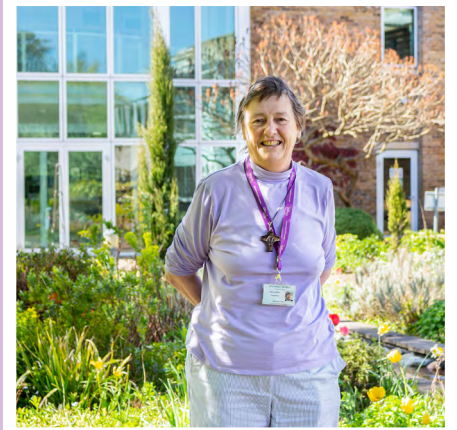
As you may know, we rely on the brilliant community of Leeds to help raise almost 75% of the funds needed to run the Hospice. Unfortunately our charity shops temporarily closed in March and our fundraising events are postponed for the foreseeable future, so we need your support more than ever.

For the latest information on our events, including new dates when we announce them, please keep an eye on [events.st-gemma.co.uk](https://www.st-gemma.co.uk/events)

If you are able to, there are many ways you can still support patient care at the moment:

- **Set up a monthly donation** via our secure website www.st-gemma.co.uk/monthly-donation. Any amount will go a long way towards keeping our regular services running.
- If you're using **Amazon** to buy essentials, shop via **smile.amazon.co.uk**. You can log into your account as usual, choose to support St Gemma's from the charity list, and with each purchase you make we will receive a donation at no cost to you. 
- Sign up for the **Local Hospice Lottery** in support of St Gemma's. You can do this securely online at www.st-gemma.co.uk/hospice-lottery. There's a weekly prize fund of £4,600 and a rollover up to £25,000, all for just £1 per week. 
- If your birthday plans or another special celebration has been cancelled, **set up a Facebook fundraiser** at www.facebook.com/pg/st.g.hospice/fundraisers and ask your loved ones to contribute.

Finally, you can help by letting your friends and family know about the work of St Gemma's. We've been caring for our community in Leeds for over 40 years and together we can care for generations to come.



The kindness of volunteers...

Sheila Miller has been a volunteer at St Gemma's for many years so a lot of you will know her. Every day since the pandemic began, Sheila has been at the Hospice to support staff and patients with a kind, listening ear.

Sheila is also doing a fundraising challenge, walking 26 laps of the Hospice garden each day. Sheila says: "I am doing this to recognise the wonderful work that is being done at the Hospice."

To sponsor Sheila in her challenge, please visit: www.justgiving.com/fundraising/sheila-miller-walk

Vital Volunteers

It was national Volunteers' Week from 1-7 June. We couldn't meet up and have our usual tea parties to collectively thank our amazing team of volunteers. But we did stop to recognise the collective efforts of our 900-strong volunteer army. From Trustees to fundraisers and from bereavement counsellors to van drivers, we are grateful to every one of you for playing an important part in St Gemma's care. We miss you and look forward to welcoming you back soon.

To find out more about volunteering visit: www.st-gemma.co.uk/volunteering, email volunteering@st-gemma.co.uk or call 0113 218 5193.



Other ways to help...

— THE BIG DIY — FAMILY FUN DAY

FOR ST GEMMA'S HOSPICE

With our summer events being cancelled, this does not stop you having all the fun of the fair! You can support St Gemma's and host a Big DIY Family Fun Day in your own back garden.

We have created a pack which includes everything you will need for a fantastic day of family fun with

instructions on how to recreate your family's favourite fairground games at home. Also included are delicious summer recipes from St Gemma's very own staff and volunteers along with bunting to help make you feel like you really are at the fair this summer.

Hold your DIY Family Fun Day anytime between Saturday 18 July and Sunday 30 August. Just ask your family to donate towards taking part in the games and food or simply donate what you would have spent at either our Summer Fete or Big Family Fun Day.

For more info or to request a pack and start planning your DIY Big Family Fun Day please visit our events website or email grace-w@st-gemma.co.uk.

Could your company support St Gemma's?

Recently, companies across Leeds have been getting creative to support patient care, organising everything from online quizzes and raffles to sponsored head shaves!

If your workplace would like to help us continue providing the best possible care to patients and their loved ones throughout this challenging time, whilst bringing your team together (virtually at least!), please get in touch with **Catherine** at catherine-m@st-gemma.co.uk or 0113 218 5537.

We have lots of fundraising ideas and materials to help get you started.

Win £3,000 cash in our Summer Raffle!

Support our new Summer Raffle and help us to continue providing the best possible care to patients and their loved ones during this challenging time. Plus you could win one of these amazing prizes: 1st prize £3,000, 2nd prize £750, 3rd prize BBQ, kindly donated by Pinnacle Group.

Tickets are just £1 each. All stubs must be returned to the Hospice by Friday 21 August and the raffle will be drawn on Tuesday 25 August 2020, just in time for the Bank Holiday!

Buy your tickets online by visiting events.st-gemma.co.uk or call 0113 218 5296

News from the Retail department

Like most shops, we made the difficult decision in March to close our chain of 24 charity shops until further notice. At the time this Newsletter went to print, we still don't know when we will reopen, but we are busy planning so that we can reopen safely when the time comes. We are putting social distancing measures into place as well as deep cleaning our shops and making sure they have all the fantastic stock you would expect.

If you're taking some time to declutter whilst at home, save the items ready to donate to our charity shops in the future (but please don't leave them outside any of our shops). For the latest news on store re-openings and stock collections, please visit: www.st-gemma.co.uk/shops



Sister Mary Sloan – R.I.P.

We are sad to share the news of the death of **Sister Mary Sloan**, one of the founding members of the Hospice. Sister Mary was the first matron at St Gemma's (from 1978 to 1993) and contributed an enormous amount to both the community of Leeds and to shaping Hospice care. **Kerry Jackson**, St Gemma's Chief Executive said: *"Many of our existing staff and volunteers have fond memories of Sister Mary and they remember her for being strong, hard-working and compassionate. She was always keen to hear about life at St Gemma's over the years and was proud to have played a significant part in our history. May she rest in peace."*



Blue Plaque Honour

Thank you to **Leeds Civic Trust** who created this virtual plaque to thank St Gemma's and sent us a commemorative card.

They shared these kind words:

"We thank you for all that you're doing for the city of Leeds during a challenging and difficult time. You are what makes this city special."

You may have seen news stories about charities and even some hospices struggling financially due to the impact of coronavirus on their fundraising. At St Gemma's, we are certainly in uncharted territory and face many challenges and difficult decisions. But thanks to our amazing supporters none of our services are at risk of closure. As a local, independent and vital charity, we always have to plan for unprecedented circumstances to ensure sustainability at times like this. Our team are working hard on plans for future fundraising and we have lots of exciting ideas in the pipeline. Together, we will make sure that we continue to care for patients and their families now and in the future.

Thank you for making St Gemma's care possible.

Make a Will Month

Throughout October, St Gemma's Hospice works with solicitors across Leeds, who all kindly agree to waive their fees for writing your Will, in exchange for you making a donation to the Hospice.

This is a great opportunity to plan for the future and ensure that your wishes are carried out – your gift will also make a huge difference bringing comfort and care to patients and their families in the toughest of times.

The cost of caring for one in five of our patients is covered by gifts left in Wills. There is no obligation as part of this scheme to leave a gift to St Gemma's Hospice in your Will. However, once you have provided for your loved ones, any gift you leave to St Gemma's Hospice – no matter what size – will help to ensure patients and their families are supported for years to come.

Register your interest today at www.st-gemma.co.uk/makeawillmonth or call **Sophia** on **0113 218 5506**.

Together, we can make every day count for patients and their families in the future.

Financial situation:

Set up a monthly gift today... your gift will help families make the most of precious moments. Visit www.st-gemma.co.uk/monthly-donation or call **0113 218 5555**

We really want to communicate with you and keep you posted about news, events and updates from across St Gemma's. We also want to show you how your support benefits local patients and their families. But we respect your decision if you wish to change how we send you information, or choose not to hear from us at all. Ring us on **0113 218 5555**, email supportercare@st-gemma.co.uk or update your preferences online: www.st-gemma.co.uk/mydata