

Newsletter

Winter 2014



THEODORA
Children's Trust
Helping sick and disabled children



Photo: Jessica Mann

The difference we're making

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"Oh the Giggle Doctors are so funny! I met them whilst my Grandson, Alex, was on ward 12 at Birmingham Children's Hospital after his Fontan surgery on his heart back in February this year. They were fantastic! They made Alex laugh so hard, most of the fluid on his lungs came off them overnight and made him feel so much better! They say laughter is the best medicine and this is certainly true of the Giggle Doctors! Thank you for giving Alex, his Mummy and myself (Grandma) lots of laughs!"

Karen B.

"James had a wonderful visit from Dr Jammi and Dr Dotty today. The work you do has been really important for James and our whole family, giving us something fun to think and talk about during an awful time."

Paul B.

"My son, Archie was diagnosed in May 2013 with Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma. We spent many weeks in Addenbrookes Hospital during Archie's intense treatment. The Giggle Doctors were amazing, always put a smile on Archie's face and made his stay there that little bit easier. Archie is now in remission and is doing really well, although he still has a couple of years of chemotherapy left. I just want to send a massive thank you to all the Giggle Doctors for everything they did for Archie."

Lindsey G.

Hello from Charlotte Wilson

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Welcome to the Christmas addition of our newsletter, and my first as Chief Executive of the Theodora Children's Trust. I'm absolutely thrilled to be at the helm of this fantastic charity, which I hold very close to my heart. I'm sure many of you have children, nieces, nephews or grandchildren who have had to visit a hospital at some point. I've certainly seen how difficult it has been for my own son, when he has been in hospital. The work of the Theodora Children's Trust holds such value for me as I know what a difference a Giggle Doctor would have made to my son's experience of hospital, as it has made to Mimi's (see page 3). It's these magical moments that motivate me to continue to work towards our goal of providing Giggle Doctor visits for every sick and disabled child in hospitals, hospices and specialist care.

We need your help to make this goal a reality. You can support these children this Christmas by making a donation (see page 7) or by purchasing our Christmas cards (page 6). Every £10 we receive can help us to send a Giggle Doctor to bring a smile to a child's face. Even better, make a donation *and* spread the word! On page 5 you can read about how important corporate support is to the Theodora Children's Trust. Perhaps your workplace is looking for a new charity to support in 2015. Don't forget to nominate us! What better way to start the New Year than to support a charity dedicated to bringing fun and laughter to those who need it.

Thank you so much for your support.

Charlotte

Mimi's Story

Yvette Clarke got in touch to tell us about how the Giggle Doctors helped her daughter Mimi.

Why was Mimi first admitted to hospital, and how did she feel?

Mimi was first admitted to hospital in June 2013. She had been extremely tired and used to sleep a lot. She then developed a squint and started to vomit in the mornings so we took her to the Opticians, who advised we take her straight to hospital. Mimi was sent for a MRI scan and the results showed a tennis ball-sized tumour in her head.

When did Mimi first meet the Giggle Doctors?

At first we spent a lot of time on ward D2 at Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge. It was there that we first met the Giggle Doctors. Mimi was only 3 and I think she was overwhelmed and confused about being in the hospital. She loved interacting with the Giggle Doctors though; it was a real treat for her.

After Mimi's initial operation in June we were allowed to go home and were out of the hospital for 3 months. However, in September 2013, another MRI scan showed that she had hydrocephalus and that half of the tumour they had removed had grown back! We were devastated and set to start chemotherapy ASAP but were told that first the hydrocephalus had to be sorted out with a shunt.



Photo sent by Yvette Clarke

One of my favourite moments with the Giggle Doctors was on the day of this operation. Mimi and I were waiting for hours on F3 ward. Mimi was nil by mouth and very lethargic. That was, until the Giggle Doctors walked into the playroom and blew some magic bubbles for her! She was running around with the most beautiful big smile on her face. It turned out to be her last moment of fun before everything went wrong. In hindsight this became my most treasured Giggle Doctor moment. Mimi did not respond well after the operation and to this day we still don't know why this happened. She was having seizures and had to go into intensive care for a while.

After her stay in intensive care we were on C2 ward for 8 weeks. We saw the Giggle Doctors quite often there and it was lovely. When Mimi and I saw them go into another room first we would excitedly wait for them to come into our room. Mimi loved the balloon animals and would really giggle. I have a clip of it somewhere. It made me well up as it was like our 'old normal' Mimi was coming through all the misery she went through.

What was Mimi's favourite moment?

Bumping into three Giggle Doctors in the hallway at C2! Mimi loved having her feet smelt by everyone who would want to...her splints got pretty smelly and she kept popping her feet up for the Giggle Doctors to smell and she absolutely loved it!



Photo sent by Yvette Clarke



Photo sent by Yvette Clarke

How did the visits change Mimi's experience of hospital?

At the hospital you live from visit to visit. Doctors, Physios, Nurses etc..but the highlight for Mimi was always the Giggle Doctors, and it was the same for all of us. It helped us to have that little happy laughing moment once in a while, during a very worrying and stressful time.

We still make regular visits to Addenbrooke's Hospital to receive chemotherapy, eye tests, attend endocrine appointments etc. Mimi still goes to the hospital in good spirits; not once has she told me she doesn't want to go. This is thanks to the Theodora Children's Trust and the Giggle Doctors!

Fundraising at work

We are so grateful for all that our supporters do for us. Will you help us to do more? We want to visit every sick or disabled child in hospitals, hospices and specialist care centres.

No matter what your position and no matter where you work, you can help us. We all spend a lot of time with our work colleagues...we're asking you to help us spread the word amongst these people and encourage them to get involved.

There are many ways you can help:

- **Collections** can be a fun and competitive team activity.
- **Coffee mornings and tea parties** are a great way of bringing people together.
- **Cake sales** get people talking to each other (as well as helping people to show off their baking skills)!
- **Sponsored challenges** like walks, runs, treks, cycles and swims are great team building events. We have tons of different events for you and your colleagues to take part in - just take a look at our website: www.theodora.org.uk/events
- **Nominate Theodora Children's Trust as your company charity of the year**



If you'd like more information about fundraising at work please contact Jenny at jennifer.payne@theodora.org or call 020 7713 0044.

Christmas Cards

When sending your Christmas cards this year why not spread more than just festive greetings.

By purchasing a pack of Theodora Christmas cards you could also be helping to give a giggle to a sick or disabled child.

We have 2 fantastic designs to choose from (shown below). Each card comes in a pack of 10 and includes the message “Wishing you a season full of fun and laughter” inside.

Each pack is priced at £4, plus delivery.

**If you would like to make an order, just visit our website:
www.theodora.org.uk/shop**



Give a Giggle: Make a donation

Every £10 can help us send a Giggle Doctor to bring a wonderful, magical smile to a child's face this Christmas.

Please give what you can to help the laughter continue. Every pound really does make a difference.

To donate online by card please visit:

www.theodora.org.uk/donate

Or to donate by cheque please complete the form below:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____ Tel: _____

Email: _____

Under the Data Protection Act, your details will be used only for administrative purposes and will not be sent to third parties.

Please make cheques payable to: Theodora Children's Trust

Please Gift Aid my donation. *giftaid it*

I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for the current tax year that is at least equal to the amount of tax that Theodora Children's Trust will reclaim on my gifts for the current tax year. I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I have given.

Please **do not** send me a thank you letter.

If you **do not** wish to receive our latest news, please tick this box.

Please post this completed form to:

Theodora Children's Trust, 40 Pentonville Road, London, N1 9HF

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Helping sick and disabled children

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