

# YOUR ECHC

News from Edinburgh Children's Hospital Charity

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

Autumn 2023

## The meerkat's out the bag!

Cheeky creatures  
revealed for Edinburgh  
Children's Hospital



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Our Web to Ward gift  
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**Edinburgh  
Children's  
Hospital Charity**  
child first, patient second.



Scottish charity number SC020862

# welcome

from ECHC CEO,  
Roslyn Neely



A very warm welcome to **your ECHC** news. And what a summer it's been. Your ongoing support, your fundraising efforts, and your kind donations have meant that so many children and their families are getting the extra attention and experiences they deserve.

Please read about our groundbreaking pilot which aims to tackle the mental health crisis that children are facing in Scotland today. We believe this isn't right, and with your help, we're going to change it.

We also know that many children who have to stay for prolonged periods in hospital are missing out. They don't have opportunities to engage with the outdoors, with the environment and with nature. But with your help, we're going to change that too. Read about our UK first – yes, we're bringing a meerkat enclosure to the hospital! More about this inside.

Please also read about the heroes we support through your funding. Dina the video-game playing surgeon; four year old superstar patient Rosa; new mums and dads and those who care for newborns at St John's Hospital in Livingston; and Jude and his family who received a special surprise all the way from New York. Without you, none of this would be possible. So please read your newsletter, cover to cover to find out more and give yourself a huge pat on the back for supporting so many children and their families. Thank you!

With very best wishes,

Roslyn



# THE FRASER CENTRE

## The Haven

Children and young people in Scotland are facing a mental health crisis.

ECHC research found that over half (59%) of Scottish families have a child who has experienced a mental health concern at some point in their life. We believe this is not right, and we need to change it.

That's why we are launching our new wellbeing pilot service – The Haven. From Monday 18 September, the service will be piloted at The Fraser Centre in Tranent, East Lothian for two years.

It will offer a therapeutic drop-in space with creative interventions such as art, activities, family support and youth work. Every family will have a 'Pal'; a trained team member who can support them along their child's mental health journey.

It will be modelled on our existing Hospital Hub, which delivers similar interventions to children and families visiting the Royal Hospital for Children and Young People (RHCYP). At its best, it may negate a family's need for future access to medical support, alleviating the pressures on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

Kate is a parent of a 14-year-old who suffers from major depression, suicidal thoughts and anxiety. She said:

*"ECHC's service will be transformational. Any parent of a child with mental health issues would like to wave a magic wand and heal their child completely. But in the absence of that, being able to come alongside others, and just know that you're not alone, will make all the difference."*

There's no more time to wait. Together, we aim to help every child struggling with their mental health.

**If you live within the catchment area for Ross High School, Tranent, and/or are registered with Tranent Medical Practice, please get in touch at [thehaven@echcharity.org](mailto:thehaven@echcharity.org) or call 0131 202 9212.**





# The meerkat's out of the bag

Young patients at the RHCYP will soon be learning important conservation lessons from some very unusual teachers – a mob of meerkats based within the hospital grounds.

That's right – five cheeky and inquisitive meerkats will soon be calling the children's hospital their home, as part of an awe-inspiring distraction and learning experience for children and families.

Our programme will be delivered by a hospital-based zookeeper, giving young patients the chance to learn all about nature, wildlife and the environment. This is the first project of its kind outside of Australia and is only possible thanks to a partnership with our wonderful friends at the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland (RZSS) and Edinburgh Zoo.



Edinburgh Zoo currently delivers a weekly programme of educational activities at the RHCYP, including projects on penguins, pandas and tigers, all of which encourage children to think about their place in the world and the importance of wildlife within it. Roslyn Neely, CEO of ECHC, said:

**"Some children are too unwell or have been in hospital for so long that they don't have the opportunity to engage with the outdoors, or interact with animals."**

## Meet Rosa – fabulous 4-year old and marvellous meerkat model!



Rosa has Down's Syndrome so has visited the children's hospital with related health issues. But last year, her family had an incredibly scary experience when she suddenly became very unwell.

Mum Shelley says, "She was complaining of a sore leg, so on the Wednesday we took her to A&E. By Friday, she was in intensive care, fighting for her life.

"We were given the news that she had Strep A, sepsis and pulmonary embolisms. We were told, 'the focus now is to not let her die tonight.' The reality that we could lose her was terrifying.

"The next few days were a blur but thankfully, she started to stabilise. She was still incredibly unwell, but the infection had plateaued.

"We were in the RHCYP for seven and a half weeks in total. The sheer level of skill from the staff was astonishing; the nurses were fabulous. They read to her and did fancy hairstyles while she was unconscious.

"As she got better, we started to go down to ECHC's Hub. We'd hit a new level of exhaustion, so having somewhere to go to get a cup of tea, draw breath, and have others entertain Rosa was a lifesaver.

"She continues to go from strength to strength. As you can see, she had lots of fun meeting the meerkat mob! We think the meerkats will be an amazing addition to the hospital and a wonderful distraction for families like ours during very long and difficult stays."

"Many of the children who visit the hospital care passionately about nature and the environment. Our programme will allow them to learn from experts while getting up close to the best teachers of all – the meerkats themselves.

"The wellbeing benefits of engaging with animals and using nature in the healing process are well documented, and there's great excitement within the hospital in anticipation of our furry friends arriving."



**Want to help make the meerkats a reality? Help fund this ground-breaking project by scanning the QR code to enter our not-to-be-missed prize draw.**



# Special Delivery

## Introducing our 'web to ward' gift service

Sometimes, being in hospital means that children have to spend weeks or months away from their friends and relatives. It can be a lonely, isolating and difficult time.

Thanks to our new online 'web to ward' gift service, families and friends can show they care by selecting gifts and goodies to be delivered straight to children on the wards.

The first lucky recipient of this snazzy new service was two-year-old Jude (pictured), who was super excited to receive some new cuddly toys without even having to leave his hospital bed, hand-picked in New York City and hand-delivered in Edinburgh less than an hour later!

When Jude's family in the Big Apple heard he was in hospital, they desperately wanted to help.

Our gift service gave them an easy, heartfelt way to show they were thinking of Jude. They logged on, chose and bought a special cuddly panda, super soft sloth, colouring kit and card game to keep him busy – which we packaged up and delivered straight to his bedside.

No matter how near or far someone may be from the RHCYP, our 'web to ward' service means they can still give a child in hospital a much-needed lift.

**If someone you love is currently in hospital or has an inpatient stay soon, why not brighten their day by choosing a cute cuddly toy or an awesome activity pack?**  
[www.echcharity.org/our-gift-service](http://www.echcharity.org/our-gift-service)

## Transforming St John's Maternity Spaces



For soon-to-be and new parents, emotions, excitement and exhaustion levels are high, so being as relaxed and comfortable as possible during time spent in hospital is hugely important.

That's why, working alongside designers Staunch Industries and Louise Kirby, and thanks to supporter donations, we have transformed the maternity spaces at St John's Hospital in Livingston, making them more welcoming to support families' first moments together.

New parents who had given birth at St John's and their birthing partners, staff and a local antenatal group were actively involved in the makeover. They suggested a nature theme with neutral, calming colours and comfortable furniture to give the spaces a cosier, more homely feel.

## Make a Will Month

Could you make a lasting gift to help support children who need to use the hospital in future? October is Make a Will Month, and we've teamed up with Jones Whyte Solicitors to offer a free will writing service to all ECHC supporters. If you would like to be a Future Funder and have a lasting impact for seriously ill children, please email [hello@echcharity.org](mailto:hello@echcharity.org)

## Your Lottery

Feeling lucky? You could win up to **£25,000** every week by playing our brand new Your Lottery! It costs just **£1 per entry** and you could win one of our fabulous weekly cash prizes.

Each week you will have the chance to win up to £25,000 – and there's a 1 in 63 chance of winning, which means there's never been a better time to have a flutter.

Be one of the first to sign up to our new lottery and start planning how to spend your winnings.

**You've got to be in it to win it, so use the QR code and sign up today!**



**These projects would not be possible without your support. To make a donation, visit [www.echcharity.org/donate](http://www.echcharity.org/donate)**



## Spotlight on...

# Dina Fouad, Paediatric Surgeon

Dina Fouad knew she wanted to be a doctor from an early age. But what she didn't know was that her love of video games would help her as a paediatric surgeon. And that, with EHC's funding, made possible by our wonderful supporters, Dina would attend one of the best laparoscopy training courses in the world.

Dina said: "As a child, as well as participating in lots of sports and dancing, I could often be found on my PlayStation. What I didn't realise was that I was developing a skill that would be vital in my surgical career. Keyhole surgery requires a surgeon to carry out delicate procedures inside the body, whilst looking at a screen, and not at their hands.

"I developed a career in laparoscopic surgery; carrying out procedures on seriously ill children without making a large, open incision – instead, using small holes through which we operate all our instruments. But, like all surgeons, in order to gain more advanced skills I needed further training.

"EHC funded me and my colleague to attend a laparoscopic surgery course in Strasbourg – one of the best courses in the world. We learned so much and we're so grateful to the charity's supporters for making this possible.



Dina Fouad,  
Paediatric Surgeon

**"Laparoscopic surgery is minimally invasive, it's less painful for the child, and it enables a speedier recovery, allowing the child to return home much more quickly."**

"I want to thank EHC and its supporters for enabling me to attend this world class surgery course – we can already see the benefits it's bringing to so many children who need our help."

**Want to hone your hand-eye coordination skills while having fun? Who knows, you too might become a paediatric surgeon! Why not sign up for our Save Point gaming marathon? Find out more on page 11.**





## Did you know

## About Our Hospital Hub?

Located in the ground floor Family Support Corridor (next to the Outpatients waiting area), The Hub is our home away from home for families within the RHCYP; a place to go for a break from the wards for distraction, a chance to offload or just a hot cuppa and a biscuit.

The only facility of its kind for families in any UK hospital, The Hub offers holistic activities, therapies and information, as well as a non-clinical space for playing, chatting and chilling

out. It is full to bursting with fun activities like arts and crafts, video consoles, virtual reality, games, toys and even pizza cushions!

Our team is here to help on the good days, the bad days and everything else in between. All ages and stages are welcome: outpatients, inpatients, parents/carers, siblings, grandparents...

The Hub is open **Monday to Friday, 10am-4pm for drop in sessions.**  
**For more info: [hub@echcharity.org](mailto:hub@echcharity.org)**

"The Hub was amazing when Jilly was recovering from major spinal surgery. It's wheelchair accessible so gave her somewhere she could go every day, helping to get her out of her hospital room. She loved making slime, going to a disco party and especially meeting Sylvie the Therapet.

"Jilly has a long way to go and will have follow up hospital visits for many years to come, but knowing The Hub is there so we have somewhere to play, chat and chill out after appointments makes visits so much easier."





## Richard's 200 Mile walk for Aksel

Richard's son Aksel was just shy of his seventh birthday when he was diagnosed with Diffuse Intrinsic Pontine Glioma – an incurable form of brain cancer.

Aksel was flown from Shetland to Aberdeen, before being rushed to the RHCYP, but sadly died just nine weeks after his diagnosis.

Now, Richard has retraced the journey his son took in those final weeks. On what would have been Aksel's 9th birthday, he arrived at the hospital having completed a mighty 200-mile fundraising walk.

Richard says, "When we were told Aksel's diagnosis had no cure, I started walking. It helped to control the panic I felt.

**"We're lucky that we had him. That he was our child."**



"There's been ups, downs and lots of roundabouts along this 200-mile journey, but it's not been as hard as I expected. Aksel kept me going. The music I was listening to reminded me of happy times with him.

"I have no words to describe how it feels to have completed it. I genuinely didn't know if I could make it, but I hope that by doing this in memory of Aksel, it makes an enormous difference to the charity."

**Without incredible people like Richard, we couldn't be there for children when they need us most. If you have an idea for a fundraiser, get in touch and we can help to make your ideas a reality: [hello@echcharity.org](mailto:hello@echcharity.org)**

# Challenge Yourself!

## Events

We have something for everyone! Sign up today to help seriously ill children in hospital. To find out more about any of the below and to get involved, visit [echcharity.org/events](http://echcharity.org/events) or scan the QR code.

- **September 17th**  
Kiltwalk 📍 Edinburgh
- **September 24th**  
Scottish Half Marathon & 10k 📍 Edinburgh
- **September 30th**  
Tandem Skydive  
📍 Glenrothes
- **October 6th**  
Save Point Gaming Marathon 📍 Virtual
- **October 22nd**  
Women's and Men's 10k 📍 Edinburgh
- **December 7th**  
All Wrapped Up  
📍 Edinburgh



## Survey

Help us make Your ECHC the very best it can be. Let us know what you think by filling in the survey below.

**1. ECHC gets in touch twice a year with a newsletter, and with fundraising appeals. I feel that this is**

- ☐ Not often enough
- ☐ Just right
- ☐ Too often

**2. I can see clearly what kind of impact my donation has made**

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

**3. I am happy with the way I am treated as a supporter of ECHC**

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

**4. My donation experience is slick and professional**

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree or disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

**5. I prefer to make my donations**

- ☐ Via post
- ☐ Over the phone
- ☐ Online
- ☐ Via QR code
- ☐ Other – please state

**6. On a scale of 1-10 how likely are you to recommend ECHC as a charity to your friends and family?**

- ☐ 1 Would not recommend
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5
- ☐ 6
- ☐ 7
- ☐ 8
- ☐ 9
- ☐ 10 Would highly recommend

**7. Please tick if there are any areas of fundraising you would like to hear more about**

- ☐ Events
- ☐ Fundraising in your community
- ☐ Fundraising at work
- ☐ Your Lottery
- ☐ Leaving a gift in your will

# Please donate today!

## Yes, I'll help **today** with a gift of...

- ☐ **£15** could pay for a child to understand, through play, the technology their surgeons use and help take away the fear of medical procedures.
- ☐ **£44** could help provide a listening ear for a worried parent, a chance to talk through their emotions with someone who understands.
- ☐ **£120** could provide escape and distraction through magic for eight children, whose stay in hospital could be painful and scary.
- ☐ **Other** £

For security reasons please use the freepost envelope enclosed and do not send cash through the post

☐ Cheque made payable to Edinburgh Children's Hospital Charity

☐ Card

Card No:

Expiry:  /  CVC:

Signature  Date

## MY DETAILS:

Title

Full name

Address

Postcode

Email

Phone No

You don't have to leave your email address or phone number, but if you do, we'll use these to keep you updated on our news, appeals and how you can get involved. You can opt out at any time by emailing [hello@echcharity.org](mailto:hello@echcharity.org) or calling **0131 668 4949**. We promise to keep your details safe and never sell them or swap them with anyone. Our privacy policy has been updated for fundraising purposes. The updated policy can be viewed at [echcharity.org/privacy-policy](http://echcharity.org/privacy-policy) or you can contact us for more information.

## PLEASE FOLD AND SEND YOUR DONATION FORM IN THE SELF ADDRESSED FREEPPOST ENVELOPE:

**Edinburgh Children's Hospital Charity**  
**First Floor, 1 Wester Shawfair, Danderhall, Dalkeith, EH22 1FD**

You can also donate by scanning the QR code, visiting [www.echcharity.org/donate](http://www.echcharity.org/donate) or calling **0131 668 4949**



**Edinburgh  
Children's  
Hospital Charity**



## Yes, I'll help long term by giving **regularly**

I want to give £

Every (please tick) ☐ **Month** ☐ **Quarter** ☐ **Year** ☐  
on the (please tick) ☐ **1st** ☐ **15th** ☐ **25th** ☐

**Instruction to your bank or building society to pay**  
by **Direct Debit** Edinburgh Children's Hospital Charity  
Direct Debit Originator Number 801897



Account Name

Bank / Building Society Account No

Sort Code

Name of Bank / Building Society Branch

Bank Address

Postcode

### Instruction to your bank or building society

Please pay Edinburgh Children's Hospital Charity Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Edinburgh Children's Hospital Charity and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my bank / building society.

Signature

Date

## BOOST YOUR DONATION BY 25P FOR EVERY £1 YOU DONATE THROUGH GIFT AID.

*giftaid it*

Gift Aid is reclaimed by Edinburgh Children's Hospital Charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year. In order to claim Gift Aid on your donation you must tick the box below.

I am a UK taxpayer and would like ECHC to reclaim the tax on donations I have made in the last four years and for all future gifts of money that I make to be Gift Aid donations. I understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year then it is my responsibility to pay the difference. ☐

No I am not a UK tax payer. ☐

Please email [hello@echcharity.org](mailto:hello@echcharity.org) if you wish to cancel this declaration.

## THE DIRECT DEBIT GUARANTEE

- This Guarantee is offered by all banks and building societies that accept instructions to pay Direct Debits.
- If there are any changes to the amount, date or frequency of your Direct Debit Edinburgh Children's Hospital Charity will notify you 10 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed. If you request Edinburgh Children's Hospital Charity to collect a payment, confirmation of the amount and date will be given to you at the time of the request.
- If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit, by Edinburgh Children's Hospital Charity or your bank or building society, you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society. If you receive a refund you are not entitled to, you must pay it back when Edinburgh Children's Hospital Charity asks you to.
- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your bank or building society. Written confirmation may be required. Please also notify us.

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