



Spring 2016

Focus

Great Ormond Street 
Hospital for Children
NHS Foundation Trust

**Volunteering at
Great Ormond Street
Hospital**



Welcome from Jamie Wilcox, Head of Volunteer Services

Hello everyone

Within this bumper edition I'm proud to present some of the wonderful work that has been going on in the past 3 months.

But firstly, I want to thank my small but very hard working team in Volunteer Services for all they do in preparing and then supporting volunteers. I was amazed to discover when I recently wrote our annual Impact Report, that we currently have 1,046 active volunteers! That's a huge increase from last year. And you can see

the result just by how many new people there are in the Welcome Wave below.

In this edition we focus on three volunteers who have gone on to gain employment in GOSH as a direct result of their experience as volunteers —all with their own personal stories.

Lots of fun things are coming up in the next few months, please look out for these in VBytes and sign up when you can. Best Wishes *Jamie*

Welcome Wave! A big hello to our new volunteers

GOSH Guides - Agata, Amanda S, Amanda Y, Anca-Debora, Ama, Andrine, Anita, Ana, Anna, Anna-L, Annabel, Armand, Ayaat, Ayan, Beatrice, Cara, Caroline, Catherine B, Catherine E, Celine, Charlotte G, Charlotte L, Charlotte R, Chloe, Christine, Costa, Eleanor, Elizabeth, Ellie, Emily, Esther, Danielle, Georgia Lily, Gurpreet, Haajarah, Hannah, Harry, Hussain, Indira, Jackie, Jen, Julia, Krystyna, Lynsey, Maria M, Maria V, Mariah, Marina, Maisha, Marissa, Matteo, Meetal, Monica, Monika, Nafeesa, Nana, Naomi, Natalie, Nathay's, Neelam, Nicola, Olivia, Parissa, Patti, Priscilla,

Queena, Rachel, Renee, Rianna, Ruvimbo, Saffron, Sandra, Sara, Sarah E, Sarah G, Sasha, Sharon, Shifa, Shirin, Shumell, Sian, Simran, Sofia, Stephen, Sue, Tahmena, Victoria, Wendy, Zoe

Massage Therapist - Lucy, Miranda, Peter

PAT Dog - Wendy & Alfie

Performer & photographer- Daniel

Saturday Club - Alison, Alra, Jamila, Natalie, Simi, Szilvia, Urmi, Zaynah

School - Danielle

Movers and Shakers! Volunteers who have moved to new roles

Baby Buddy - Faye, Natasha

Buddy - Angie, Annabel, Gillian

Character Chaperon - Charlotte, Indira

Chronic Pain Clinic - Lara

Crocodile Club - Faye, Pamela, Zoe

Play Support - Esra, Hannah N, Shirej, Sophie

Patient and Parent Support - Jean, Liz, Nana,

Saturday Club - Charlotte C, Fleur, Jen, Sofia

PALS - Deborahrah

Physio - Hannah





A Day in the Life of...

Bernard Bear, AKA Serena

MEET SERENA MORGAN, GOSH
VOLUNTEER –
THE THEATRE COMES TO GOSH!

What do Bernard the Bear and Wendy the Nurse have to do with Serena Morgan? Well, come in to Great Ormond Street Hospital on days when Serena is around, and you will find her in a 'bubbly', interactive role, cheering up children (and parents), who feel less than their own bubbly self!

Serena is Bernard Bear on some days and when Bernard has a little rest, out comes Wendy the Nurse. Both Bernard Bear and Wendy Nurse are hospital mascots that come alive with the help of the kids, as Serena moves among the children in all areas of the hospital. As Bernard and Wendy are real, of course, children interact with Serena, as the mascots help to brighten their day. Smiles and laughter and hugs for Bernard and Wendy are spontaneous, as the children make friends with them.

Serena has been volunteering at Great Ormond Street hospital for 6 months, every Thursday for 2-3 hours; taking time off from her theatrical performance in the West End stage performance of STOMP. Serena has volunteered for many years as a Big Sister Mentor and loves helping people and bringing smiles to anyone that she can. She is a very outgoing, fun and bubbly individual. Her personality shines through both Wendy Nurse and Bernard Bear mascots, making them have their own unique personality with the help of the children at GOSH.



it an emotional and exhilarating experience that helps the children."

Through the mascots, Serena tries to create a fantasy world for the children and families, where they can forget their struggles and hardships. Bernard Bear has purred his way around the hospital and is very happy with his new friends – the children. Wendy Nurse has imitated the caring nature of the staff, and the kids attach themselves to these mascots.

I asked Serena, "What do you like about being Bernard the Bear at Great Ormond Street Hospital?"

"The children, their hugs, smiles - without them Bernard wouldn't exist."

From the time you meet Serena she makes you laugh and it is clear that as soon as she is with these kids, they forget what they're going through, and adopt her mascot as their own personal character.

Serena says that she "loves being Bernard as well as Wendy and finds

Serena walks around all areas of the hospital but mainly outpatients, playing games with children who are quite happy to give hugs, believing Bernard is a real bear. For these children reality freezes for a while and they are transported to a world without sickness.

The bond Bernard and Wendy make with the children is strong. Serena really gets into character in the outfits. It's phenomenal what she is doing for GOSH; bringing joy to children who require a little extra support and assistance to get through their everyday lives.

Written by
Narissa Cherrington

So its a huge **thank you** to Serena Morgan, aka Bernard Bear and Wendy Nurse!!



Volunteers make the difference with Operation TLC at GOSH

With volunteer support, Great Ormond Street Hospital is successfully demonstrating how simple changes in our behaviour can lead to more healing and comfortable environments for both hospital staff and patients as part of the Operation TLC programme.

Operation TLC is being run across the hospital with wards, offices and the estates team. It asks staff and visitors to switch off unnecessary lighting and equipment and help to manage temperature better, all things that make the hospital more comfortable for staff and patients. These simple actions also help to cut energy use, saving carbon and money.

GOSH volunteers have done a fantastic job of supporting the Operation TLC team. Volunteers Peter Roche and Val Clyne have helped to measure the effectiveness of the heating and lighting campaigns by completing behaviour change and energy audits across the hospital.

The Impact of Operation TLC

Volunteers with a good knowledge of the wards have invaluable insights into the staff and patient experience and are uniquely placed to monitor on-going progress and help us to embed change with GOSH.

"We were able to see the improvements first hand on the wards. It became more evident when you went around and you saw the

lights dimmed or off, you would see a calm and peaceful atmosphere. Whereas if the lights are blaring there isn't that calmness or quietness, and children are much less peaceful". **Val Clyne, Operation TLC Volunteer**

received a thorough introduction which provided me with a clear understanding of the programme. **Val Clyne, Operation TLC Volunteer**

"I made lots of friends – I love it. Operation TLC gave me great personal insight into the heart of a



"I felt like an angel! I was so concerned with one of the senior nurses, she was in a tiny room and it was so hot inside! She had to keep closing the door to keep her conversations with patients confidential. I was able to tell her how she could take more control of the temperature." **Peter Roche, Operation TLC Volunteer**

Opportunities with Operation TLC

Jamie Wilcox, the Head of Volunteer Services at GOSH explained that the Trust is committed to engaging volunteers in meaningful roles that enhance services and improve the patient and family experience.

"I have enjoyed working with the Operation TLC team because I

hospital. I can say it's a fantastic hospital! – seeing the recovery rooms and high dependency wards, I felt privileged to be able to do it. The briefing was very good, understood perfectly. There has been a total improvement – big tick to Operation TLC!" **Peter Roche, Operation TLC Volunteer**

If you would like to get involved in helping to create healing environments at GOSH, then please get in contact with operationTLC@globalactionplan.org.uk or speak to Jamie Wilcox.



Charlie and the Chocolate Factory Party

As party time drew near our patients and families were already queuing up to register and collect their golden ticket.

Our event team had done a fabulous job in transforming the Lagoon into a magical world of chocolate and candy where party goers could decorate their own biscuits, experiment with the fun scientist, make Willy Wonka hats, have their faces painted and have their picture taken in front of the magic mirror.

Best treat of all was eating the absolutely SCRUMDIDDLYUMPTIOUS nitrogen icecream made while you wait, especially the chocolate flavour!

Patients were greeted in person by Mr Willy Wonka, Candy Girl, Violet Beauregard (who had turned into a blueberry!) a squirrel and a group of Oompa Loompas.

The party games and activities were also taken up to the wards by our teams of volunteers so patients who were unable to come down didn't miss out on the FUN.

Many patients and parents commented on how much they enjoyed the event and how it had given them all something to look forward to and to remember afterwards.

Another hugely successful event – Well Done EVERYONE!

"As a volunteer, I felt very satisfied and pleased that I was part of the wonderful team who put on this event for the children of GOSH to enjoy and have a fabulous time!!!"
Kala Diran



Staff & Volunteer Awards

Do you know someone who deserves an award?

What better way to celebrate an individual or team who lives Our Always Values than by nominating them for a staff or volunteer award? There are a number of different categories, so if you know someone who goes the extra mile and deserves to be recognised more widely for being Always Welcoming, Always Helpful, Always Expert and Always One Team then take a second to tell us why. Nominations are open



until Friday 20th May and all nominees will receive a personal letter from the Chief Executive and an invitation to our award ceremony on Monday 11th July, 5

to 7pm. To make a nomination please email details of who you are nominating and why to staff.recognition@gosh.nhs.uk or speak to Jamie for more information.

Volunteer of the year – the award for Volunteer of the Year will also be up for grabs! The award is for an exceptional person who has made the greatest impact and contribution to the experiences of patients and families at the hospital.

Good luck everyone!

Great Ormond Street NHS Foundation Trust

Great Ormond Street Hospital Charity

The Queen's Birthday Street Party

For all patients and their families
Come along and join the fun in The Lagoon Restaurant,
Morgan Stanley Clinical Building

Wednesday 15 June 2016
12.00pm - 3.30pm

Entertainment provided by
Butlin's

Face painting

Arts and crafts

Cake decorating

For further details, please contact: Patti Hogan - Volunteer Services Coordinator
Patti.Hogan@gosh.nhs.org, 020 7829 8861

Saying Goodbye to Zeena

Sadly our Zeena will be leaving her role as Recruitment and Support Officer in mid June.

Zeena started with Volunteer Services as an apprentice on the National Apprenticeship Programme and quickly settled into her role in the department. The role is to manage the whole pre-volunteering programme for any individual going through the main volunteering programme and all the volunteers and personnel from external charities and organisations that work in the Trust. It's a huge job and Zeena threw herself into the role quickly, picking up all the complex areas and supporting hundreds of new volunteers. Zeena is moving on and up—to Guys and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust and we all wish her the very best for her new career. We'll miss you!





We need YOU! New Roles

New roles coming up. Are you interested? Please email Patti at patti.hogan4@gosh.nhs.uk for more info, a look at the role descriptions and to sign up to any of these.

Patient Experience Surveys

This would be a great chance to help the Trust survey patients and parents about their visit to the hospital. You will join a fun team of

volunteers already collecting valuable information.

Costume Characters and Chaperones

Are you a budding performer?? Do you love getting dressed up and enjoy entertaining? We need to build our team of costume characters and people supporting the characters. Please let Patti know if this is something that interests you.

Summer Party on the way!

This year's party will be sponsored by Butlins again and we look

forward to loads of fun and entertainment in our Queens 90th Birthday themed party. The main event will be based in the Lagoon as well as taking the party up to the wards. If you would like to join our event team for the day please contact Patti.

2016 Formula 1 British Grand Prix.

As the official charity of the 2016 Formula 1 Grand Prix, we are looking for volunteers to represent GOSH Children's Charity at Silverstone on Saturday 9 or Sunday 10 July, by bucket collecting around the circuit. Please contact: Mika Brenan:

f1challenge@gosh.org

Jack moves to GOSH Staff

Jack Buckner was a GOSH Guide for some time and through his involvement welcoming people to the Trust and helping them find their way, he decided to apply for a job in reception. Jack has quickly been promoted and is now the Reception Team Leader in Outpatients. Here is his story:

I started off guiding, as most do, and loved it from the first day.

What really helped was that every other volunteer I met was exactly how I'd imagined; friendly, welcoming and helpful.

Guiding allowed me to get used to the hospital and feel comfortable being the first person anxious parents and patients see. It also helped me to get to know GOSH staff, as I would often speak to them when helping a patient find somewhere, check in for their

appointment, or whatever else they needed.

I was also able to learn a little about the outpatients journey by speaking to the receptionists and asking questions.



My GOSH Guide team leader had taken the time to introduce me to them all, which was immensely helpful and reassuring.

Having this knowledge helped me a lot when I decided I wanted to

extend my time at GOSH and apply to actually work here.

Volunteering had also given a realistic view of the patient/parent perspective, and the challenges they face, something I never fully appreciated before I started.

My work now involves dealing with every division in GOSH, and every level of staff, from admin to clinical, from porters to surgeons, and there isn't a day where I don't use some small piece of knowledge from my time volunteering.

Whether it's knowing where somewhere obscure in the trust is located (Shabbat room I'm looking at you), or knowing how to reassure a patient who's extremely anxious about their first visit to Safari; things I learned from being a volunteer are invaluable.



Proud of your colours

My Yellow T-Shirt

My yellow t-shirt
What does it mean?
It's my yellow t-shirt
I'm here to be seen

The people I meet
I'm here to greet
In my yellow t-shirt
Not a sign of a tweet

I guide them along
Although things may be wrong
I wait for a while
And put on a smile
In my yellow t-shirt

The hours pass by
And I never get bored
They come up and ask
Could you show me the Ward?

Maybe Badger or Bear
I don't really care
It's my yellow t-shirt
And that's why I'm there

My duties are many
And I don't earn a penny
I do it for love
For Him up above
In my yellow t-shirt

In the colour of yellow
There is no place to hide
GOSH is so vast
I wear it with pride
It's my yellow t-shirt

In the Chapel I pray
That maybe one day
The anguish and pain
Will all go away
I'm wearing my t-shirt

Now I've been here for a year
And there is nothing I fear
Yes I'm a GOSH Volunteer
In my yellow t-shirt

It's the end of my poem or call it a
rhyme
I'd like to be wearing my t-shirt
All of the time
Maybe one day I will



It is hard for anyone else to understand what it means to wear that yellow t-shirt but to me it means so much .

Lawrence S Marshom, GOSH Guide Team Leader

Georgia becomes a GOSH member of staff

My name is Georgia Raphael, I started volunteering at the Trust in June 2012.

I started as a GOSH Guide, meeting and greeting visitors. I then moved on to Play Support where I played with patients on Penguin Ward.

During my Play Support role on several occasions I would put myself forward for offering one to one support to a family if needed. These are families where the patient has been in hospital for a long time. I would make weekly visits to the ward, to patients who are isolated. Offering a couple of hours of one to one play, giving mum a break,

for her to have some time just to get away from the ward.

This I truly enjoyed, and my weekly visits were greatly appreciated by mum and patient.

I then moved onto Ophthalmology where I offered administrative support to the Admissions Coordinator.

My volunteering opportunities contributed greatly to me getting my job role as an Outpatients Receptionist—volunteering helped me to build on skills I already had and it increased my self-confidence. I enjoyed my roles as a volunteer, the environment and the people. I



feel very at home at GOSH, volunteering has made me very familiar with the people and the surroundings.



How volunteering helped me find a wonderful job

Having recently completed a Master's degree in Psychology my ambition is to one day train as a clinical child psychologist. Experience working within a clinical setting is vital for this role, and this is what initially led to my decision to become a GOSH volunteer.

Whilst volunteering as a guide I had the opportunity to apply for a support worker role within the Trust. I had spent several weeks guiding by this point and had already quickly grown to love volunteering at GOSH, and based on the job description – which included a love of dogs and children – the role seemed ideal for me. I was fortunate enough to be successful, and have been working as a support worker at GOSH for the last six months.

My role involves supporting the Eye Clinic Liaison Officer (ECLO), Paula - in the Ophthalmology outpatients department. As an ECLO, Paula offers support to children and their families who have been diagnosed with a visual

impairment. She provides emotional and practical support with areas such as development, independence, education, and social and living skills.

Paula is herself registered severely sight impaired, so it's my job to assist and support with any tasks that she's unable to complete herself. This can vary from day to day, but can range from administrative support, such as updating the patient management software PiMs and completing



registration documents, to more challenging practical support, such as helping Paula to recognise the emotional states of the families she's with. I love the role - I'm able to interact with some wonderful patients and their families, and on the very rare occasions when it does get quiet in the clinic I have Paula's guide dog, Greg, with me in the office for company.

Of course I loved volunteering at GOSH far too much to give it up when I began working within the trust, and I have since moved on from guiding to helping out in the Chronic Pain Clinic each week. This role has provided me with invaluable experience carrying out clinical questionnaires and conducting literature searches for ongoing research, all of which will no doubt prove extremely useful when I begin applying for a place on a clinical psychology doctorate – although I am enjoying my job and voluntary work at GOSH so much at the moment that I have no immediate plans to pursue this just yet!

Lara Ditzel



Share the Miracle

For the third Easter running there has been a 'kindness explosion' at GOSH! Members of staff from the hospital, the charity and our own volunteer team have joined with members of the ShareTheMiracle team to give soft toys and a card with a message to each child in the hospital.

Thousands of soft toys have been given away over the three years to the delight of all the children and young people—it creates such happiness. This year children and staff were also invited to the Charlie and the Chocolate Factory event that helps us build a stronger 'community' at the hospital amongst patients, relatives, staff and volunteers—people feel more positive about each other and what the hospital is aiming to do with patient experience.

*"The aim of **ShareTheMiracle** is very simple - to show kindness and help to release hope across communities,"* says Dan Usher,

founder of ShareTheMiracle. "We have 3 simple steps – 'GIVE (as an act of kindness), INVITE (to help build community) and SHARE (to encourage and inspire others)'"

"I believe Easter is a time of new life and hope, so what better time of year to be kind, reach out and transform our communities. We are all '#designedforkindness' and although giving out a soft toy and extending an invitation to a community event, might seem a little thing we believe a simple intentional act of kindness can begin to change our world!" Dan says.

One of the play specialists in the hospital said: *'Can you feedback to the lovely people that came round bringing cuddly toys – they were great, really friendly and had time for all the kids, so thank you. It was a nice surprise for all the kids.'*

Mark from GOSH Charity said: *"As a member of the Charity staff who doesn't interact with patients, it*

was such a privilege to be able to spend a day in the wards with the children and parents and see how acts of kindness can bring some joy in the midst of difficult times. I would love to be involved again next year!"

"ShareTheMiracle has been exemplary in fostering partnerships between GOSH and charity groups for the mutual benefit of hospital staff and the patients they strive to care for together," says Freida, a research registrar in the hospital. She reflects, *"It makes the Trust vision of 'Always One-Team' come to fruition in an impactful and practical way. I've never seen such an instant change among the patients, staff and ward atmospheres as a result of the simple giving of a gift. Crying patients smiled and ward staff immediately brightened, lifting the atmosphere on wards instantly – the hospital was suddenly a much brighter, friendlier place to be."*

Many thanks to ShareTheMiracle for their work and we look forward to seeing them again next year.

sharethemiracle...



Magic Monday Radio Lollipop joins in the fun



I am, Joanna Araminta, a Magic Monday Radio Lollipop volunteer at GOSH. On Thursday, 7 April, I helped out Share the Miracle with their yearly Easter event, to distribute hundreds of cuddly animal toys to patients and siblings across the Hospital - for all the inpatients and outpatients. It

was such a rewarding day. I believe we didn't just brighten up the children that day, but also the staff. The toys range from cuddly bright green frogs to bears which we use for Bear ward.

We went through all the wards in the hospital and it is amazing to see what a little gift and smile do to the sick children. We even managed to distribute some to the recovery wards (which was not

on our ward list as we didn't want to get in the way). This was because one of the senior nurses saw us and asked us to come with her and cheer those who had just come out of operations.

In one of the wards, we had the privilege to have one of the children

help us distribute the toys—he even helped us choose which animal the children in the ward would like, as he knew most of them quite well.

One of the young patients was upset and crying as his dad was trying to put on his oxygen mask, but then as one of our volunteers came in to give him the toy, he suddenly stopped crying and this few seconds allowed his dad to fit the mask on properly.

No words can describe how grateful I am to be part of the event. I would encourage anyone to help out next year, it was amazing and inspirational.



Annual Memorial Service

The GOSH Annual Memorial Service was held on Saturday 30th April at St George the Martyr Church, Queen Square and I was one of the volunteers attending.

This is a special service for any family who has lost a child in the past twelve months or any previous year and is so well attended that extra seating is needed.

For some families it is their first service, others have been coming for many years, such is the

importance of it to them.

Many families find comfort from bringing photos, which are displayed during the service. Often a brother or sister would bring it to the table and tell us all about them.

It is a very moving service, during which, each child being remembered has a candle lit for them and their names are read out individually.

There are beautiful readings, music and poems, a celebration of life.

At the end of the service, the books of remembrance are open, so the families can see the entry in the book for their child.

The Memorial Service is a very special link to GOSH and the overall feeling is of support, care and sensitivity.

It provides an opportunity for the family to come together to remember their child and to keep them close.

**Hilary Cullen PPS Volunteer
NICU/PICU**



Friends and Family Test

The Friends and Family Test has been running at GOSH since April 2014. We have over 17,000 pieces of feedback from children, young people and their parents.

Positive changes have been made at GOSH as a result of the feedback and will allow us to continually improve the experience for GOSH patients and their families. Please encourage patients and their families to complete the FFT cards which are situated on every ward, outpatient area and also within the lagoon, PALs and parent accommodation. Here's a few examples of comments we've received about volunteers at GOSH:

All staff were very friendly, helpful and knowledgeable. Volunteer help was thoughtful and made things go smoothly too.

Everyone is really friendly + helpful on koala ward, from the receptionist to the nurses and to the surgeon and the kitchen staff (name of staff) also loved the play team, the magician and the bedside singing. It's clear that everyone, including volunteers care a great deal.

The nursing staff, health care assistants, play specialist and volunteer have been amazing. Patient, kind, listened and most of all caring - which creates a positive atmosphere and reduces stress, which is so important in what has been a very stressful time. Much better than (Other trust named). The staff are hugely supportive and we are hugely grateful.

Thank Volunteer (name) for updating us on our daughter's stats in recovery when we were in the recovery waiting room. In the past we have been left in there 20 mins.

The support we're having is great. The staff's all excellent. The volunteers are excellent

Doctors, nurses and volunteers excellent. Showing great understanding and sympathy for the challenges and stresses. Thank you.

Every time we have visited GOSH we have always had a great experience. The staff and volunteers are always very helpful and

We were met at the main lobby by very helpful and friendly volunteer that took us to the area we needed. All staff we saw were very efficient and made our daughter very welcome. All in all wonderful experience.

We particularly appreciated how good the staff were in dealing with children, and the play facilities/volunteer staff/play specialists available.

The staffs are friendly and caring (doctors, nurses, volunteers etc). Thanks to all the staffs.



GOSH Charity News

Volunteers are essential to the success of the charity's outdoor challenge events like the Virgin Money London Marathon. They wouldn't be able to provide the level of support that they do to fundraisers without the amazing help of volunteers like you. So whoop, holler, whistle, shout and clap #TeamGOSH runners and riders as the whizz past the cheering stations along the route. It's a great way to spend a few hours and a brilliant excuse to make loads of noise!

Coming up...

Clinique Run or Dye 5k - Sunday 3 July (Penshurst Place, Kent)

Vitality British 10k London Run - Sunday 10 July (Central London)

Morrison's Great Newham Run - Sunday 17 July (Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park)

Sign up to get involved
visit gosh.org/cheer
email volunteering@gosh.org
020 3841 3066



GOSH kneads you!

Thanks to your amazing support last year's **Bake it Better**, the charity's annual baking week, raised an incredible £117,000 - that's a lot of bake sales!

This year **Bake it Better** is taking place 17-23 October, and we *knead* your help to make it bigger and better than ever before! Simply register your interest today and we'll be in touch nearer the time with information on how to receive your super fundraising pack.

Visit bakeitbetter.org or email bakeitbetter@gosh.org for more



Thanks & Final Thoughts

Please remember to close and lock the door on the Volunteers' cupboard in the Lagoon. It has been left open on a few occasions, with other volunteers' valuables on the shelves.

Thank yous:

Elliott's Heart Transplant Journey - Life with Dilated Cardiomyopathy at Great Ormond Street Hospital

Best of friends.

On Elliott's return to Bear Ward, one of the volunteers surprised him with a couple of floating dinosaur balloons.

Unaware to Elliott, we watched him from the opposite side of the bed as he hugged his new dinosaur friends. Using his Makaton, he then went on to explain to his dinosaurs that he once had a friend (his Berlin Heart), but it's finished now as it has gone to help the sick babies. For the next few hours, Elliott walked them around the ward, pointing out his favourite Echo machines before settling down with them to watch Jungle Book.

Watching this interaction brought about mixed emotions. You feel pride at the improvements you are witnessing in Elliott's communication. But at the same time, your heart aches that he hasn't had the chance to interact normally with other children. This will continue for the first few months after transplant while his immune system is at its most compromised.

Volunteers at GOSH are unsung heroes. They don't garner the same

accolades and attention that the medical staff receive for keeping Elliott alive. But to us, they have been instrumental in making a difficult situation easier. Whether that be emotional support, playing with Elliott while we sneak out to the toilet, picking up Elliott's favourite food when we don't have time to get to the shop, or something as simple as bringing in a coffee and a treat for us, these little things at times have helped keep our sanity intact.

As we don't have any family close by to help us, these small practical gestures over the past year have added up to a massive support network for us. It is difficult for us to ask for help as we are very independently-minded people and it is even more difficult when the people you are asking are complete strangers. However with the Volunteers at GOSH, we didn't even have to ask, they just helped. And then those strangers weren't strangers anymore. They became a different kind of extended family to us and gave the support we didn't even realise we needed.

[Father of patient on Bear]

Hi Spread A Smile team,

Thank you so much for your visit yesterday.

Erin and I were teaching so missed it but just wanted to pass on some feedback.

Catherine, one of our senior members of staff on Badger Ward wanted me to contact you to express how impressed she was with one of your entertainers.

The Spontaneous Poet who I

believe is called Judge was absolutely fantastic with our patients especially one very hard to please 10 year old!!

Catherine said he was just great with everyone and perfect for the patients on our ward.

I hope you can pass on such positive feedback to Judge.

Your visits are always appreciated, thank you so much.

Best Wishes

Lizzie Penn

Play Specialist

Quote of the Month

The Saturday Club has been amazing. With our 3 year old in CICU, our other children visit every weekend. I don't know what we would have done without it. The children love it and it enables my husband and I to have some time together.

Reminders

Please ensure you remember vital infection control procedures when working on wards.

The Next V-focus will be out in August. If you want to get involved, please contact Patti

Editorial team: Jamie Wilcox, Patti Hogan, Narissa Valiseh and thanks to all the contributors

Thank you to all the volunteers at the hospital! Your continued support means that so much is possible!

