

Report to John Jackson Charitable Trust from Chestnut Tree House

Throughout the pandemic, like every organisation in the UK, Chestnut Tree House has had to rapidly change and adapt in light of COVID-19. Our aim is to make sure that the needs of our children and families still continue to be met wherever possible.

Even during these truly challenging and unprecedented times, Chestnut Tree House has continued to operate a vital service, providing crisis, end of life care and bereavement support and ensuring that community-based services are still available where needed.

Many of the families cared for by Chestnut Tree House have been and continue to be shielding due to COVID-19. For the parents, anxiety is very high – the impact of having little or no time off means they're being pushed to the limits.

Our Community Nursing Work



More than ever before, the community services supported by the John Jackson Charitable Trust have been welcomed and appreciated by our vulnerable children and their families in the Eastbourne area. Children like seven-year-old Lilly who is profoundly deaf, cannot walk and has very complex needs. Whilst her family were in lockdown they found life a huge challenge, as Lilly's mum Paula told us:

"I am just waiting for the phone call from Chestnut to let me know when someone can visit. That couple of hours will be lovely, it will just mean that I don't have to worry about her for a little while. I can relax knowing someone else is with her to give her everything she needs.

It's not easy because Lilly is unable to walk, and you have to keep her entertained – and that is easier said than done! There are a lot of things available like the Joe Wicks exercise show which are great for mainstream children. But if you are disabled like Lilly it is a lot more difficult."

No two days are ever the same for our care team and especially at the current time. We posted a lovely film from one of our community nurses Ruth, which you can view by clicking on the link here <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=175173893823593>.

Ruth talks openly about developments at Chestnut Tree House and the way she is currently working including using PPE equipment which she says makes her look like an astronaut! The visits she makes to families like Lilly's have been very much appreciated, allowing parents some respite; a few hours to do simple things such as having a bath or putting the washing away so they feel that they can continue caring for their child afterwards.

Our Outreach Activities and Personalised Activity Packs

Our wonderful nurses and activity leaders have responded to the needs of our children in the most innovative ways over the past six months, making sure that they still feel supported and connected to Chestnut Tree House during these difficult times.

For example, our activities team have provided virtual activities for all our children and families through our social media channels. They created a music session which children could join in and be part of from home, encouraging them to make drums from pots and pans and keep up the beat!

A popular feature on our Facebook page has seen our staff and supporters reading their favourite stories out-loud to the children. Set in the grounds of Chestnut Tree House, these videos have been a lovely way for the children to hear some of the stories they would have been so familiar with when they visited Chestnut Tree House. We have also been delighted that our Patron, actress Julie

Graham and children's author and Ambassador, Julia Donaldson have read special stories which we have been able to publish across our social media channels.

The school holidays are usually a very busy time at Chestnut Tree House, with lots of themed arts and crafts, visits from amazing animals, baking, and fun activities going on. But, with so many of our vulnerable families shielding for a prolonged period, our amazing care team have taken some of the much-loved in-house activities straight to families' doorsteps during the holiday periods.

By clicking on the link below, you can watch a video from Mike and Karen, who talk about activities during the lockdown period. <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=843799456098835>



Part of the work for the care team in the community over the last six months has been dropping off special craft packages to children like Izzy and her family. Each personalised pack has been designed to help families spend precious time together and create memories that will last a lifetime. We've also been ringing each of our families regularly, offering a listening ear. It might sound simple, but having someone to talk to who knows your child and situation at home can feel like a huge weight lifted.

Izzy's mum said "I just wanted to say thank you for the support that we have been receiving whilst the current pandemic is going on. The regular phone calls to check in on us, which included a general chat, and the offer of outreach support has been gratefully received.

"Chestnut Tree House have gone the extra mile in delivering an activity pack for Izzy to help keep her busy and distracted. This was delivered to my house today. Chestnut Tree House have made it possible to still feel supported even from a distance and for that, we thank you. We will be sure to share pictures of the finished art projects".

Since the beginning of August, the hospice has been able to reopen for short breaks and more and more families are beginning to feel comfortable receiving face to face support in their own homes, meaning more community visits can take place.

Thanks to the ongoing support of the John Jackson Charitable Trust, we have been able to continue making a positive difference to the lives of children and young people in the Eastbourne area, even during these unprecedented times.

**THANK
YOU**