

Spring 2019

NORTH·LONDON
HOSPICE

Registered Charity No. 285300

Life

Keeping you up to date with news from North London Hospice

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www.northlondonhospice.org



A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR...

The start of the year is a time to reflect on the year that has passed, and all that has been achieved, but most importantly, it's a time to look ahead to the possibilities and opportunities of a new year.

During the second half of 2018 we laid the foundations for the exciting expansion of our community teams within Barnet, Enfield & Haringey and January saw us begin the first phase, providing greater access to palliative care services in the community. A significant increase in our nursing staff is required to deliver this expansion and services will grow as and when this happens.

In Barnet, this will literally mean building foundations for an expansion of space at the Woodside Avenue Hospice to accommodate new members of staff who will make it possible for more people to access Hospice services at home, in the community, at our Health & Wellbeing Centre in Winchmore Hill or at North Finchley.

MEDICAL DIRECTORS

In November we had the opportunity to say a heartfelt "Farewell and Thank You" to Dr. Chris Baxter, the Medical Director of the Hospice for 28 years, and to warmly welcome Dr Sam Edward who joined us as Medical Director in January. Dr. Edward, already a highly experienced Medical Director, joins the Hospice Executive Team at an exciting time of growth and expansion.

NEW TRUSTEES

As well as expansion of the clinical services, we are also looking forward to recruiting more trustees in the year ahead to support the work of the Hospice, through their work as members of the Board and its committees as well as undertaking annual visits to services.

EVENTS & SUPPORT

As ever, our events Calendar for 2019 is full, and got off to an excellent start with North London's Got Talent event on the 2nd of February. In a month or so spring will be here and walks outside will be a pleasure, so we hope you'll join us for our annual Big Fun Walk on 5th May and perhaps visit Highwood Ash garden for its annual open day in May. There are golf days, bike rides and runs you can take part in if you'd like a challenge in 2019 and perhaps fundraise for us at the same time. Keep an eye on the website for ideas and opportunities. On September 26th we'll be hosting a very special Gala Dinner to fundraise for patient care.

SPREAD THE WORD

At any one time in our communities, 800 people are benefitting from our Hospice services. It is only through the commitment of hundreds of volunteers, the expertise of dedicated practitioners from all disciplines and the unstinting support of our local communities that we are able to continue to provide the excellent standards of care that patients and families experience. Yet across the UK 1 in 4 people find it hard to access hospice care so in March a national campaign called 'Open Up Hospice Care' will highlight hospice services, particularly at home. Look out for messages on social media you can share and help us 'spread the word' that support is available to people in our communities facing a life-limiting illness.

Lis Burgess Jones
Chair of Trustees

BIG FUN WALK 2019

Join us on **Sunday 5th May** for the Big Fun Walk – our flagship event of the year. Over 1000 supporters take part in our **8.5 mile sponsored walk** through the beautiful parks of London from **East Finchley to Westminster** – and we hope you'll be there!

Last year the **Big Fun Walk** raised an incredible **£148,000** towards funding patient care in our Barnet, Enfield & Haringey communities.

Whether you want to **walk** and **fundraise**, **volunteer** with us on the day, **support** one of your **friends** or **family** taking part or convince your **employers** to form a **team**, it's a wonderful opportunity to come together in memory of someone special or simply to support your local hospice.

If you would like to register for the **Big Fun Walk** you can do so by completing the form below and returning it to the Hospice or you can register online at www.bigfunwalk.co.uk. If you would like to register over the phone, discuss volunteering at the event, or would like more information, please ring **020 8446 2288**. We would love to see you in May!



COMPLETE AND RETURN THE FORM BELOW OR REGISTER ONLINE AT WWW.BIGFUNWALK.CO.UK

PLEASE COMPLETE ALL FIELDS

FULL NAME

ADDRESS

POSTCODE

TELEPHONE

EMAIL (if you are happy to be contacted this way)

ADULT: £12.50

5 – 16 year olds: £7.50

Under 5s: FREE

T-SHIRTS COST AN ADDITIONAL FEE OF £5 EACH

REQUESTED MINIMUM SPONSORSHIP FOR EACH PARTICIPANT IS £25

TEAM WALKERS (PLEASE USE A SEPARATE SHEET FOR MORE WALKERS)

FULL NAME	EMAIL	ADULT Y/N	TSHIRT S/M/L XL/XXL	TOTAL £

PAYMENT DETAILS

TOTAL PAYABLE FOR REGISTRATION AND T-SHIRT(S) £ : _____

☐ I enclose a cheque made payable to North London Hospice

☐ Please debit my credit/debit card ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa Credit ☐ Visa Debit (Delta) ☐ Maestro

Card No: Start Date: / / Expiry: / /

Issue No. (if applicable): _____

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NLH WELCOMES NEW MEDICAL DIRECTOR

Sam Edward joined North London Hospice in January as the new **Medical Director**.

She has a wealth of palliative care experience in independent hospices, hospitals and cancer treatment centres and joins us from her role as **Medical Director** at **St Joseph's Hospice in East London**, where she spent four-and-a-half years.

"I really believe in the holistic model of care," said Sam, a mum of two daughters. "Working within the hospice environment is very different to NHS care. You have the luxury of time to spend with patients and it's an area of care where I believe you can really do a good job. The principles of compassion and dignity are alive and well in the hospice sector."

Sam replaces **Dr Chris Baxter** who retired from NLH after **28 years** in November. "Chris had such an impact on so many lives. His are big shoes to fill with my small feet but I believe in a collaborative approach and am looking forward to working with the excellent team here. Everyone's been wonderfully welcoming. There's a real pride in the quality of care we provide."



VICAR'S SNOWBOARDING CHALLENGE

Vicars might normally oversee fundraisers such as cake sales and festive bazaars but not North London Hospice's **Anglican Vicar Steven Young**! As Life magazine hits doormats across North London, Steven will be attempting to snowboard at **every snow centre in the UK** in just **ONE DAY**. And he's attempting it to raise funds for North London Hospice.

It's believed to be the first time anyone has tried the challenge and involves a journey of **478 miles** to **SIX snow centres** - starting in **Hemel Hempstead** and ending in **Glasgow**. Can it be done? We'll find out on **Tuesday 26 February**.

Steven caught the skiing bug in his 20s and moved onto snowboarding 10 years ago. He's taking on the challenge in a bid to raise **£1,000** for North London Hospice, where he **volunteers as Anglican Chaplain** in addition to his day job as **Vicar of St Michael's Church in Mill Hill**.

"A friend and I came up with the idea over a beer one day and worked out it might JUST be possible. I'll literally be running into each snow dome for one descent and then it's back in the car and onto the next," explained Steven. "People ask me if I'm the only snowboarding vicar and I assure them I'm not. There's quite a few of us. It'll be fun to see if it's possible to snowboard at all six snow centres in the UK and boost the funds for the Hospice to help it continue to provide its invaluable patient and family care in our community."

To support Steven in his quest visit his JustGiving page at www.justgiving.com/fundraising/steven-young81



HOUSE OF COMMONS EVENT

Staff, patients and hospice supporters attended another event at the **House of Commons** in November ahead of the second reading of **Enfield MP Bambos Charalambous's Private Members Bill on Hospice Care**.

The Bill has been dubbed **Joy's Bill**, after NLH patient **Joy Watkins** who inspired Bambos to champion hospice care after he heard her speech on her personal journey at our **Health & Wellbeing Centre**. Many of her friends were there to support us at the HoC.



Several MPs attended the event and **BBC Radio 4** and **BBC London TV** news ran features on hospice care to tie in with the event and Bill reading, which keeps the conversation on its importance in the spotlight.



Escape to the Seaside...in North Finchley

The smoking room for our in-patients at North Finchley has been decorated with a wonderful mural by local artist **Hannah Roberts**.

Hannah offered to **paint a mural** after the Hospice cared for her boyfriend's uncle. The seascape, which took two weeks to complete, provides a relaxed feel to the room. "It was such a lovely place that I wanted to give something back. It was really fun to do."

If you like Hannah's work, make sure you visit her website www.hannahpaints.com to check out her gallery.



OUR BEREAVEMENT SERVICES

We have a group of trained **staff** and **volunteers** who are able to offer a variety of **support and counselling services** to the friends and families of patients we have cared for.

Whether it's one-to-one or group support, a more casual regular walk with others experiencing the same loss, or more practical assistance with things like paperwork, you can find information on how we can help on our website www.northlondonhospice.org/our-care/berereavement-service





Education at North London Hospice

At NLH we provide a huge range of quality palliative and end-of-life care education to develop the knowledge and skills of healthcare professionals.

We offer a mixture of accredited and non-accredited courses and our 2019/2020 prospectus is now available to view on our website.

Subjects range from Emotional Resilience, Advanced Communication Skills and Dementia at the End-of-Life to Human Rights & Ethical Issues at End of Life, and Understanding Loss, Grief & Bereavement.

www.northlondonhospice.org/for-education/education

LIGHT UP A LIFE 2018

A thousand people joined us on Woodside Avenue to watch our beautiful horse chestnut tree lit up with hundreds of twinkling white lights in memory of their loved ones we've cared for.

Our annual **Light Up A Life** ceremony on **November 25** was an opportunity for people of all faiths and none to come together to remember those who have passed away.

Guests heard poignant and uplifting readings from many of our chaplaincy team and our **Hindu Chaplain Deva Pandit Samaroo** performed the Hindu ritual of light, known as Aarti. He was accompanied by singing from **Unnati Dasgupta**.

The crowd also enjoyed a live performance from the choir of the local **Brookland Junior School** who sang 'This is Me' from The Greatest Showman.

Jonathan Barr gave his heartfelt thanks to North London Hospice as he shared his experience of care for his mother, who passed away at the Hospice in 2015.

To keep the cold at bay the **Mill Hill Rotary Club** served mulled wine, minced pies and fresh doughnuts to the crowd.





OH WHAT A NIGHT.... NORTH LONDON'S GOT TALENT 2019



His voice is said to have moved people to tears and 10-year-old **Joel Brahms** certainly wowed the judges at the Finchley **artsdepot** as they crowned him the **winner of North London's Got Talent 2019**.

His performance of Don't Cry For Me Argentina secured Joel the glitterball trophy at the annual live talent show in aid of North London Hospice.

The inaugural '**Audience Choice**' award in which the 300 strong audience voted for their favourite performance from our 11 acts went to 14-year-old **Ellie Morrow**. Her beautiful contemporary dance routine in memory of her mum, who was cared for by North London Hospice last year, melted hearts and won her the trophy in our first 'Audience Choice' award. Ellie was also runner-up in the judges vote.

Thanks to the fundraising efforts of our acts, donations on the night, ticket sales and support from local businesses, thousands of pounds was raised for the hospice and will be put towards providing patient care in our Barnet, Enfield & Haringey communities.

North London Hospice **Chair of Trustees Lis Burgess Jones** was bowled over by the talent on stage and the support being shown for the Hospice: "What a night! It was a fabulous evening of live entertainment and a delight to see so many people there supporting the Hospice and all of our acts. Joel is a star in the making and our thoroughly deserved winner. I'm already looking forward to NLGT 2020."

Teenage rock band **Roycroft** impressed our judging panel and had the audience on their feet with their performance of an original song written by their drummer and pianist called 'Don't Stop'. It secured them the third place spot.

This year's event saw some wonderful performances by talented youngsters from our community including solo performances from 10-year-old Barnet schoolgirls **Ava Adams** and **Isla Slane**, and a show-stopping homage to Michael Jackson's best moves by our youngest performer nine-year-old **Saavan Bhatt**. There was music, dance and magic from **Miriam's Sister**, **Impel Elite**, the **Finchley Steel Orchestra**, **Show Reel** and **Roy Noakes** which ensured the audience was thoroughly entertained all evening.



A big thank you to
JAG'S TROPHIES
who supplied the
winners trophies,
shield and medals.

JAG'S TROPHIES
247 Summers Lane, Friern Barnet N12
www.jags-trophies.co.uk



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PHOTOGRAPHER PETER DYER - SURROUNDED BY LOVE AND LAUGHTER TO THE END

“Watching this wonderful man slowly die away in front of our eyes over the nine months of his illness was deeply painful. But the amazing support of North London Hospice enabled him to die with such dignity, in the home he loved, constantly surrounded by all four generations of his family”

These words from Peter Dyer’s daughter, Louise Hodgkinson, show the impact our community nursing team can have on a family facing a journey with a terminally ill loved one.

Peter Dyer had many passions. He was a blues and jazz singer and a dog trainer but was perhaps best known across North London for his wedding photography, having captured that special day for thousands of happy couples over the years. Not to mention portraits of the rich and famous from Princess Diana to the Rothschild’s. He took photographs of anyone and everyone. ‘From palaces to prefabs’ was his mantra.

Enfield born and bred Peter enjoyed a wonderful life with Pam, his wife of 53 years, their three talented children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.



Then in late 2017 Peter was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumour at the age of 75.

“Of course it was a shock,” said Pam. “He had an op to remove the tumour followed by radiotherapy. It was then that we first heard the words palliative care and hospice. It was frightening. You think of a hospice and assume you only have days to live.

“But the first time we walked into the Hospice’s Health & Wellbeing Centre in Winchmore Hill in January 2018 we were happy to be there. It was a big thing to go there in the first place but everyone was so lovely and helped us understand the next step of what we were facing.”

While Peter was mobile he and Pam utilised the facilities at Winchmore Hill. Peter would attend the



exercise classes and lunches and if the pianist was there he would often provide the vocals.

“As a carer, I received much needed support from the Hospice,” explained Pam. “I did the carers course, had massages with Will and tried reiki with Christine.”

North London Hospice organised a care plan for Peter and took care of his symptom management. Community

Palliative Clinical Nursing Specialist Ayesha Ruiters visited Peter and Pam every week and they received regular visits and support from social worker Yvonne O’Driscoll and Palliative Consultant Louise Schofield.

“They were all excellent,” added Pam. “They helped us prepare and gave us all the time we needed as we tried to ready ourselves for what would happen next.

“I had counselling with Sam and Martin. My family couldn’t believe it as I’d never had anything like that before but it really helped. The overall care was wonderful.

“You can feel very isolated when facing a terminal illness, even when you are surrounded by a loving family. You find yourselves in this awful situation and its good to know the hospice is there to lean on. They really understood what we were going through.”

In the final months, Peter decided he wanted to remain at home so a care team was arranged.

Louise said: “The hospice played a big part in us being able to keep dad at home. During the last couple of weeks the house was full of family... grandkids, great-grandkids... sometimes we’d have 18 for dinner. We’d all float in and out of dad’s room to chat or read to him. We created some wonderful memories in those last few months, including celebrating his 76th birthday.

“Having dad cared for at home enabled us to be with him and for the children to be more prepared for his passing. On the day he died he received a kiss from one of his grandchildren and two minutes later, he was gone.”

More than 400 people attended Peter’s funeral, which was a celebration of his life, complete with marching jazz band. The Dyer family asked for donations to be made to North London Hospice and we were grateful to receive a cheque for **£3128** which will be used to fund patient care.



THANK YOU!

The community support for NLH is amazing. We are also very grateful to local businesses that choose to support us. There's been lots of activity over the winter and here's a few companies and groups we'd like to thank.

HELEN BLOOM'S ANNUAL APPEAL

To say that **Helen Bloom** has been a supporter of NLH for the last **26 years**, would be to sell her short!

Over the years her generosity and dedication to raising money for the Hospice has helped with the **refurbishment of our In-Patient Unit** and the **North Finchley reception**, donations towards the build of the **Health & Wellbeing Centre**, funding new vehicles, **beds or linen** or our current **kitchen project** – it's safe to say Helen's fundraising work has been invaluable.

And, she's still at it! She recently presented the hospice with a cheque for an **incredible £20,000** from her annual appeal. **WOW!** This money will go towards the **refurbishment of the kitchen** at our **in-patient unit in Finchley**. Thank you Helen for your continued support. Without people like you, we would not be able to continue to provide our services to the communities of Barnet, Enfield & Haringey.



KING ALFRED SCHOOL STUDENTS TAKE ON HIGH FIVE CHALLENGE

A big thank you goes to the **Year 8** pupils at **King Alfred School** in **Hampstead** who took part in our **High Five Challenge** and raised a fantastic **£920.54** for patient care.

The **High Five Challenge** encourages groups of students to think creatively and make the most of their own skills and talents to turn £5 into much more.



Pupils divided into teams and used their entrepreneurial skills and team work to come up with innovative ways to increase their profits. Amongst the many creative ideas, was the hugely popular '**KAS Has Got Talent**' contest for **Lower School pupils**, which went down a storm.

BLANKET IS A WORK OF ART

This beautiful blanket was a labour of love by **Monica James** and took her six months to crochet. We are delighted she has donated it to the Hospice as a thank you for the care that was provided to her husband **Willielift James**, who died with us last year. Thank you Monica!



SAWYER FIELDING

Our grateful thanks to local company **Sawyer Fielding Ltd** from Barnet who came in to the Hospice just before Christmas with a cheque for **£1,000**. Thanks goes to **Adam Newman**, a graduate surveyor with the firm, who enlisted the support of his company to donate the sum, after having had a close relative cared for at the Finchley Hospice.



THANK YOU MILL HILL SUPPORT GROUP

Our grateful thanks go to this wonderful group of fundraisers who kicked off our celebration season with their annual **Festive Gift Fair** which raised just under **£17k**. Fair-goers who dropped in were treated to an array of stalls featuring handbags, candles, jewellery, clothes, books, toys and homemade food from a range of independent sellers. **Thank you ladies, your effort and support is much appreciated!**



COMMUNITY MUSICIANS!

Thank you to all those who attended the **Community Carol Service** at **Middlesex University**. You raised a fantastic **£1134** towards patient care at North London Hospice. The wonderful **Salvation Army brass band**, the pupils from **St Mary's Primary School Finchley** and the **Hendon Band & Songsters** joined carollers for a festive evening.



Community Service Expansion

We are embarking on an ambitious expansion that will see us increase specialist palliative care in the community over the next two years.

We have already begun the roll out, adding extra nursing staff to our Barnet, Enfield & Haringey Community teams and will continue to increase the number of people we are able to see at home and in the community as we add additional staff in the coming months.



Later in the year we will be extending the core hours we are able to see patients and families from 9am-5pm seven days a week to 8am – 8pm seven days a week.

The expansion is possible due to an increase in NHS funding and will enable a greater number of people to be cared for in their home, avoiding inappropriate and often unnecessary hospital admissions where possible.

Referrals will be accepted from health and social care professionals in all settings and will be triaged within 48 hours wherever possible.

Whilst work has already begun to recruit more staff to ensure that we have the capacity to be able to deliver a comprehensive 'wrap-around' service, the full expansion of our services will take up to two years to introduce.

Updates on additional services will be made via our website as and when they happen.

POETS OPAL BALL

A HUGE Thank You! goes to the **POETS' Society of North London**, a group of like-minded individuals from the **construction industry**, who have chosen to support North London Hospice this year.

Their **POETS 'Opal Ball'** was a glittering occasion, with over 140 guests present who enjoyed a meal with entertainment. From the start, the evening was dedicated to North London Hospice, with guests eager to hear about the work we do and the services we provide.

We truly value and appreciate the support of the **POETS Committee** who ensured the evening was a success. Their efforts raised an incredible **£11,600**, which they duly handed over to our **Chair of Trustees Lis Burgess Jones** when they came in a few weeks after the event to our Health & Wellbeing Centre.

Thanks are also due to some of our AMAZING **Hospice Ambassadors** who attended the event including ardent advocate for hospice services **Ann-Marie Wilson** and **Nicola Miller**, who spoke movingly about the support she and her family had received when her mother was cared for by NLH. She later became a volunteer and is now a member of staff working in our **Bereavement Team**.



CHRISTMAS CAROLLERS

And...the Christmas spirit was also very much in evidence at **The Highgate Society's** wonderful Carols' evening in **Pond Square, Highgate Village**. We were delighted to have been chosen as beneficiary of this evening of carols which raised **£672** for NLH and was followed by mulled wine and festive fare.



FINCHLEY BUSINESS CLUB

NLH were presented with a cheque from **The Finchley Business Club** for **£1,000** following their annual fundraising events.



OUR CHARITY SHOPS

By donating your unwanted items to the Hospice you are not only helping us to continue providing our services to the local community but you are also recycling and preventing your items going into landfill.

If you have large items or would like to arrange a house clearance contact our collections team: **020 8343 6813**



Crouch End
020 8340 3269
21 Topsfield Parade, London, N8 8TP

East Finchley
020 8883 6493
123 High Road, London, N2 8AG

Enfield Town
020 8366 1297
60 Church Street, Enfield, EN2 6AX

Finchley Central
020 8349 0290
15 Ballards Lane, London, N3 1UX

Golders Green
020 8731 7807
41 Golders Green Road, London, NW11 8EE

High Barnet
020 8441 3325
94 High Street, Barnet, EN5 5SN

Mill Hill
020 8959 3162
8 The Broadway, London, NW7 3LL

Muswell Hill
020 8444 8131
44 Fortis Green Road, London, N10 3HN

New Barnet
020 8440 8424
63 East Barnet Road, Barnet, EN4 8RW

North Finchley
020 8445 5148
724 High Road, London, N12 9QD

North Finchley Furniture Shop
020 8343 6814
987 High Road, London, N12 8QR

Palmers Green
020 8447 8884
377 Green Lanes, London, N13 4JG

Southgate
020 8886 4342
71 Chase Side, London, N14 5BU

Turnpike Lane
020 8889 0660
19 High Road, London, N22 6BH

Whetstone
020 8343 9888
1297 High Road, London, N20 9HX

Winchmore Hill
020 8360 5220
743 Green Lanes, London, N21 3RX

Wood Green
020 8365 8622
212 High Road, London, N22 8HH

NORTH LONDON HOSPICE FINCHLEY

47 Woodside Avenue, London N12 8TT (for SatNav use the postcode N12 8TF)
Telephone: 020 8343 8841 Fax: 020 8343 7672 Email: nlh@northlondonhospice.co.uk

HEALTH AND WELLBEING CENTRE

110 Barrowell Green, Winchmore Hill London N21 3AY

NORTH LONDON HOSPICE HARINGEY

Haringey Community Palliative Care Team
George Marsh Centre, St Ann's Hospital, St Ann's Road, London N15 5TH

www.northlondonhospice.org



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

'OPEN UP' CAMPAIGN STARTS MONDAY 4TH MARCH

Look out for our '**Open Up**' campaign in **March**, which focuses on the many ways that **hospices care** for **people at home** and **in the community**. We will share information and stories from patients and families on our **website** and **social media** channels which convey the many ways hospices support families outside of the hospice building.



LONDON MARATHON SUNDAY 28TH APRIL

We are thrilled to have **14 runners** taking part in the **London Marathon** on **28th April**. What a challenge! Please look out for more updates about who they are and why they are supporting us as we feature them in the coming months on our website and social media pages. Last year our runners shared some incredible stories about their challenge and raised **£51,867** for our hospice service



BIG FUN WALK SUNDAY 5TH MAY

If you haven't already signed up for this iconic **8.5mile walk** through some of London's finest green spaces, why not join us for our biggest fundraising event of the year on **Sunday May 5th**. Last year almost **1,400 walkers** signed up for the walk and raised a phenomenal **£140,000** for hospice care. Take a look and register online at **www.bigfunwalk.co.uk**



DYING MATTERS AWARENESS WEEK 13-19 MAY

Also in **May**, we want to get people talking! **Dying Matters Week** is a national campaign which aims to help people talk about something that all of us find difficult. We will be helping people start the conversation in a number of ways throughout the week, such as at a **Death Cafe** where you can share thoughts, concerns, hopes and experiences and help us break the taboo on something that eventually comes to us all. Keep an eye on our **website** and **social media** pages for information.



HIGHWOOD ASH OPEN GARDEN SATURDAY JUNE 29TH

What's better than an English early summer garden? Not much we say, and the **Open Garden** at **Highwood Ash** in **Mill Hill** is certainly sure to delight. The garden will be open from **2-5.30pm** with all proceeds from the ticket entry going to North London Hospice. Make this a date in your diary – it's a wonderful day out for a fantastic cause.





FAREWELL DR CHRIS BAXTER

If you heard that a person had been involved in almost 10,000 deaths, a look of shock would almost certainly follow. But not for those patients and families who have been under the care of North London Hospice's retiring Medical Director Dr Chris Baxter.

You'd hear nothing but praise for this man who has helped so many people face dying in a calm dignified way. But after 28 years at NLH and a 38-year career in medicine Dr Chris has hung up his stethoscope. We caught up with him before his retirement at the end of 2018 to talk about his career.

Since joining in 1990 – when North London Hospice consisted of a single Community Team working from an office in Finchley – things have changed considerably, not just in terms of scale and buildings but for patients too.

"We mainly saw cancer patients but now it's people with the whole range of life-limiting illnesses. Treatments have changed and patients are living longer. So we are often presented with different problems relating to chronic disease.

WE'RE A DEATH DENYING SOCIETY

"As a society our expectations have changed. We are a 'death denying society'. We are living longer and there are more treatments available so a cancer diagnosis no longer always means an immediate death. But one sure thing is that this physical life is going to end for all of us some day and helping people face and talk about this fact sooner rather than later makes it less daunting further down the line."

In 28 years with NLH Dr Chris has cared for a huge range of patients.

"I've looked after renowned scientists, stars of the stage, screen, and sport, the wealthy, the poor and those who have had incredible life experience."

HUMBLING MOMENTS

"Because of our location I've also cared for holocaust survivors many of whom have never talked about their experiences. But as they face their own end these feelings come flooding back. Some come with a sense of guilt that they haven't done enough with their lives. I've found these experiences very humbling."



EACH DEATH IS DIFFERENT

Like in any role you might imagine you would grow accustomed to adopting a standard approach when supporting a patient.

"There is no common theme when it comes to someone's death. Every one is different. You need to look at the whole person and what makes them up. Money, religion, relationships....they can all produce good or bad reactions. For instance religion can be comforting and supportive to one and leave another fearful of judgement."

So, as we bid farewell to Dr Chris and thank him for his enormous commitment to North London Hospice, we'll need only to look at the artwork on the walls at our two centres to be reminded of him. Art in its many forms is one of his passions and over the years he has arranged loans and donations from friends and galleries.

You only need to read about his Himalayan Trek with two fellow directors in May 2018 to guess that he's also a keen traveller – having visited all seven continents on Earth – and more trips are on the cards in the coming months.

"I will miss the team, the patients and their relatives. It's been a privilege to meet such a cross section of people at a very vulnerable time in their life journey and helping them to get through that. We not only deal with dying but also support people going through a traumatic period to live."



GIVING THE GIFT OF SIGHT

Last Autumn saw lots of news and discussion about the importance of organ donors during Organ Donation Week. At North London Hospice we have seen a sizeable increase in corneal donation thanks to a partnership over the last year with **Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust**.

Staff received a training and education session on corneal donation and began to speak to patients and asked them if they were registered organ donors. Many patients were unaware they could donate their corneas, even if they are undergoing cancer treatment or are otherwise unwell. This led to a rapid rise in corneal donations from hospice patients. So far this year **17 donations have been made** – compared to just one in the previous five years.

Moorfields have confirmed that so far this has resulted in eight men between the ages of 20-87 and four women aged 64-80 having their sight saved. But each donation can benefit the sight of up to 10 people.

Rory Carrigan, North London Hospice's Palliative Medicine Registrar and Corneal Donation Champion explained: Within the UK, there is currently a transplant shortage of approximately 500 corneas each year. Since corneal transplant is a sight-saving procedure, corneal donation (CD) can be empowering for end-of-life patients who are otherwise unable to donate their organs. As an organisation the North London Hospice felt more could be done to promote CD, taking the wishes of our patients further. By asking and exploring their wishes, it has been clear that many patients wished to donate their corneas. Whilst this is a sensitive topic, discussion has been received positively even if ultimately this was not something a patient wished to pursue.

"To continue the good work, we plan to identify CD champions across our services with regular

awareness days such as 'Organ Donation Week'. With any organisational change, there needs to be a 'cultural shift' in practice and I'm delighted to say we are now seeing this at NLH as we continue to see the positive impact that CD has on our patients and their relatives."

Facts and figures are important but what does corneal donation mean to real people in their every day lives? Here we meet the family of a donor and a mother whose sight has been restored thanks to corneal donation.

Filomena's Story

Filomena Komodromou's family has benefitted from and contributed to organ donation. Fifteen years ago a heart transplant saved her brother's life and in the summer of 2018 stheir father passed away at North London Hospice and he chose to donate his corneas.

Filomena explains the family's passionate advocacy of organ donation and how her father **Pasquale Scannella's** donation has really helped with their grieving process.

My brother Mario had a heart condition when he was 34, which developed into heart failure and the only option was to have a heart transplant. As a family it changed our whole outlook on organ donation. I had always been in favour of organ donation but for my parents, who are Italian and from a different generation, it wasn't something they were really comfortable with. At the time my brother was ill, he had a three-month old son and had no quality of life. Now he's married, went on to have two other sons and has been able to watch them grow up, enjoy his family and his life. Last June my father passed away at North London Hospice in the inpatient unit. He had been suffering from lung cancer for over a year. He decided to donate his corneas to Moorfields eye hospital, something that was arranged by the Hospice.

My father would have donated all of his organs if he could, but because he had cancer he could only donate his corneas. There was no hesitation in his decision. I guess it was his way of giving back especially after my brother's experience. Someone died in order for my brother to live, so although corneal donation doesn't save lives, it's giving the gift of sight. My father was told his corneas could help up to 10 people.

The conversation about organ donation was handled very sensitively. His community nurse and Rory from the Hospice visited my father one day at home. My mum, myself and my cousin were also present. It meant that my father had the chance to fully understand the implications of corneal donation and that we were there as a family to hear his wishes.

It's a truly wonderful thing and it really helps with the grieving process. I miss my father terribly and not a day goes by when I'm not thinking of him. Knowing that part of him is still living and helping others see is very humbling and comforting. I would urge everyone, whether they are sick or well to discuss organ donation with their family and loved ones. So many people die in this country on the organ waiting list. To be able to give the gift of life or sight to others is a truly amazing thing.

Alison's story

Mum-of-two **Alison Castleton** from Horsham, West Sussex was a normal 24-year-old with a great career as a lingerie designer for Marks & Spencer when she was suddenly struck with the eye condition Fuch's while driving one day. Now more than 40 years later she has undergone three corneal transplants which have enabled

her to live a full life and watch her two children and four grandchildren grow up.

I was driving along and found I couldn't see. A mist clouded my vision and made everything blurred. Just like that. And in that moment my life changed. By chance my neighbour was an optician who worked for Moorfields Eye Hospital and I was diagnosed with Fuch's. From that first day I would wake up in a fog and gradually as the day went on the mist would clear and by evening I could see. Then it would be back to square one the following morning. It was devastating. I had to give up my career, as sewing was out of the question.



Filomena Komodromou with her father Pasquale Scannella and family



Alison Castleton

I had two children and when my son was six I had my first graft. I've had three grafts in total and they've totally transformed my life. I can drive, I can read, I look after my four granddaughters without any problem. I feel so lucky to be living in England where I've been able

to have the corneal grafts.

If you are thinking about donation, please don't hesitate. It really can transform not just one but many lives. I would love to have known who my donors were so I could thank their families and show them what a difference their loved one's kindness has made. I shudder to think what my life would have been like without the donations. I'd have missed so much. My father also had the same condition and he too was fortunate to have the corneal grafts. I worry that my sons and granddaughters may inherit the condition and hope that the importance of corneal donation and its life changing effects inspire people to continue to donate so that they, and many others, may benefit in the future.

A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF...

Community & Events Manager, Ashra Jayatilaka

Whether you're organising a coffee morning, a golf day or a concert in aid of North London Hospice, need collection buckets or prizes for an event, all roads will lead you to Ashra Jayatilaka, our Community & Events Manager. Ashra's a busy lady.....and that's before we've mentioned our own events that she manages such as our forthcoming Big Fun Walk in May and Light Up A Light ceremony in November.

"I meet so many people who tell me their family has received incredible care from our nurses and doctors and they want to give something back, so we are fortunate to have a lot of support in our communities. It makes you proud to be part of the organisation."

The role's varied and extremely hands on. A typical week might see Ashra talking to children in a **school assembly**, attending a **golf day**, organising **raffle prizes** and picking up and delivering collection pots. But right now it's full steam ahead for our **biggest fundraiser of the year**, the **Big Fun Walk** in May.

"The registrations for **Big Fun Walk** are coming through thick and fast now and we expect around **1,000 participants** on the day. There's so much that goes into making this event a success. We can't plan for the weather but we do plan for everything else. The route is 8.5 miles from East Finchley to Westminster and we pass through wonderful parkland and past famous landmarks.

Packs are being sent out to the participants providing all the information they need and we have t-shirts made each year which are also distributed. There's maps to print, food and drink to source for the day, entertainment to book for the finish line and medals to order. Plus I need to arrange around **50 volunteers** to help on the day. So we're quite busy right now! We're also trialling a new feature in the run up to Big Fun Walk called **Big Fun Feet**. We're writing to schools asking their children to get involved by drawing designs to go inside the feet on our Big Fun Walk logo. The chosen design will be printed all over a snood and will be available to buy at our events. So far the response has been really positive.

PLANNING

We have a **weekly team planning meeting**, which is key as things change week by week with events. Our team held another of our big events this month. **North London's Got Talent** showcased a dozen acts from across our region who performed at a **live talent show** at the **artsdepot** in Finchley. Everyone had a great time and it raised thousands towards patient care.

SCHOOL VISIT

I visited **King Alfred School** to collect a cheque for over **£900!** The children took part in our '**High Five**' challenge in which teams had to use their entrepreneurial skills and grow £5 into much more. They did really well and it was great to hear some of the ways teams increased their profits. I really enjoy the school visits. It's good to help children develop an early understanding of the support hospice care provides in their communities.

EDUCATION

On Friday morning I visit a local primary school to talk during their morning assembly. Many have experience or knowledge of a hospice but I explain in simple terms what a hospice is and use a visual 'treasure chest' of items to give an idea of the services we provide. So there's a candle to show we're multi faith, a photo of a family to show we care for the whole family, not just the patient, a bottle of oil to show the holistic services available at our **Health & Wellbeing Centre**, and so on.

Later, I head to Tottenham to visit the huge **Sainsbury's** next to the football ground, which has just chosen **North London Hospice** as its **charity of the year**. They were great. So enthusiastic and I'm excited about the scope of the partnership. I give a presentation on what we do and we talk about bag packing days, donation bins for shoppers etc.

It's a busy job but every day is different so there's no chance of getting bored!"

