

# Martha NEWS



Autumn 2017



More than words can say  
communication – but not as we know it!



# 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



Good communication is key to an organisation like Martha, the most important aspect being how we communicate with the residents we support. The article we have featured in this issue about the life-changing day one of our parents attended a Communication Workshop at the Rett Society is a perfect example of the amazing impact effective communication can have.

This is also true in other areas of our work. Recently we sent out our family survey and I have been pleased with the response. It indicates that generally our families rate us in the good to excellent category but, as with most organisations like ours, the challenge of communication is a key area that we need to work on. This is made more important by the fact that many of our families live a good distance from Martha and we need to provide them with the information and reassurance they need.

With this in mind a large part of our three year strategy will be around communication and we will be seeking ideas from everyone on how we can improve it at all levels.

**George White**  
CEO Martha Trust

## A rebounding success

Rebound therapy – using a sunken trampoline – has transformed the meaning of outdoor activities this summer at Mary House. Positioned on the back lawn of the home, the trampoline offers our residents an unusual opportunity for therapeutic exercise, recreation and lots of fun. Rebound therapy was developed in the United Kingdom, is widely used by Canadian, American and Australian physiotherapists, and is supported by the Association of Chartered Physiotherapists for People with Learning Disabilities (ACPLD).

The essence of rebound therapy is that for a brief moment, and in a controlled way, it frees the user from the confines of their disability and, while it sounds more like fun than treatment, physiotherapists use the trampoline to introduce people with profound learning disabilities to structured sessions of both passive and active bouncing in a variety of positions. We have seen first hand that the experience is so liberating for our residents and most don't realise how hard they are working!



Trampoline exercise is proven to be good for the heart, lungs and muscles, also the skin, tendons, joints and the 'kinaesthetic' senses (touching and feeling). For those with limited vocal ability it can also be a gateway to communication, drawing from them squeals of delight, gasps and intakes of breath. Numeracy can improve too, as our residents are encouraged to count their bounces.

Sessions are supervised by our physiotherapist, Louise Myeni, who has undergone specific training in rebound therapy. She is assisted by two trained support workers who are needed to guard and steady the user, as well as the position rolls, balls and wedges that are used to produce effects where a small movement on the bed results in a large movement by the body.

We were incredibly lucky to receive a generous gift which enabled us to purchase the trampoline. It has not come without its installation problems, but following a determined effort to get these resolved it is now clear from the joy on our residents' faces that our perseverance was worthwhile.

## Martha News online

We keep our production costs to an absolute minimum, but you could help us save even more money by signing up to our newsletter by email.

Simply email us at [fundraising@marthatrust.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@marthatrust.org.uk) quoting 'Martha News' in the subject line. You will then receive your newsletter in pdf format, so it won't even clog up your inbox!

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# The communication connection

Rett syndrome is a rare genetic-neurological disorder affecting mainly females. It is present from conception and usually remains undetected until major regression occurs at around one year of age, when children may lose acquired skills and become withdrawn.



People with Rett syndrome have profound and multiple physical and communication disabilities and are totally reliant on others for support throughout their lives.

Here at Martha we have seven young women living with us who have Rett syndrome, a significant population within our small charity. One of their parents, Brett, is hoping to set up a Martha Rett community to share experiences and work with us to improve the lives of our special Rett women. Brett recently wrote to other family members saying: "I am dad to a wonderful daughter who lives with Martha Trust at the Deal site. My daughter suffers from

Rett syndrome, is now 30 years old and she continually amazes me. As a parent, my focus for the past few years has been with Martha and working in partnership with them to provide great care for my daughter. After a chance meeting with a young Rett lady and her mum who live close to me, my interest in Rett syndrome was reinvigorated.

"Recently my interest peaked after I attended an Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC) workshop run by Rett UK. This was an amazing day for me and I hope too for my daughter. It led me to

think about how many Rett women live in the care of Martha and how, collectively, we as their families could positively impact their lives and care.

It was a truly goose-bump moment when Brett shared with us the huge impact the workshop had on him. He said: "5th July 2017, a day that changed my life, but even more significantly a day that was the start of my daughter Charlotte's new communication journey. I was lucky enough to gain a place on the AAC day.

"Thought provoking and mind blowing, it was one of the best days invested in Charlotte that I have ever spent. The day made me look at how for 30 years, I had been talking to Charlotte rather than with her. It made me look at communication



as it is unique to each individual. But the rewards when a connection is made are huge.

AAC is the term used to describe various methods of communication

from an alternative viewpoint, a real paradigm shift. I came back and the very next day tried some of what I had learned with Charlotte and got a positive response, a real tear-jerking moment. "Since then I have spoken to many of the care staff at Frances House and they too have tried. Guess what? Charlotte is now making her wishes known and the effect is so special. Just last week, I had an hour's 'conversation' with Charlotte, my first ever. It was two-way and so fulfilling.

"I know this is just the start of Charlotte's journey and I am working hard with the Martha care team to make the most of this very exciting and challenging learning path for us all. Awakened and enthusiastic doesn't come close to how I'm feeling, imagine how Charlotte is feeling now that she is being actively listened to..."

Whatever type of learning disability our residents have, communicating with them is one of our biggest challenges,

that can 'add-on' to speech and are used to get around problems with ordinary speech. It includes simple systems such as pictures, gestures and pointing, as well as more complex techniques involving computer technology.

We are all familiar with the direct method of communicating – pointing at a picture, or touching the keyboard to type out a message or to dial a telephone number. Some people who need to use an AAC system to communicate may have enough physical ability to use this direct form of access.

Others may be able to point or type using a different part of their bodies such as a fist or toes instead of a finger, or maybe use a technique called eye pointing.

We all use eye-gaze from time to time, looking hard at a person or an object – it can be a more subtle way of pointing

than actually pointing with a finger. For people with very little control over their bodies, eye-gaze can be a very quick and efficient method of communicating. Looking at a cup of coffee on the table might mean that the person would like to have their drink...**now!** Some people are able to use eye-gaze at a very advanced level to look at special symbols, words or letters printed out on a card or other display.

Last year we were lucky enough to receive a legacy gift which enabled us to purchase Eye Gaze technology for our residents. This has opened up a whole new world of communication opportunities for them.



Brett's excitement and enthusiasm to explore new ways of communicating with his daughter is infectious and we look forward to learning with him for the benefit of everyone who lives at Martha.

If you would like to contact Brett for more information please email [brettshome@aol.com](mailto:brettshome@aol.com)

# How to support Martha this Christmas

## Christmas Cards

We have two types of Christmas card packs available this year, each costing £3.25

### Snowy Scenes

Pack of 10 (five of each design)

They come in two designs, Choirboys and Geese in the Snow.

Individual Card dimensions 125mm x 125mm



### Christmas Designs

Packs of 16 (four cards of each design)

They come in four designs based on popular Christmas icons – Holly Berry Wreath, Figgy Pudding, Little Tree and Robins Perch.

Individual Card dimensions 100mm x 100mm

To purchase Christmas cards please complete the Christmas Card order form, order online at [www.marthatrust.org.uk/shop](http://www.marthatrust.org.uk/shop) or call 01304 610448



Help us reach our target of 30 Music4Martha events in 2017. If you are hosting a carol service, Christmas service or pantomime why not hold a retiring collection in aid of Martha.

We'd love to hear what you have planned so get in touch with us on 01304 610448 or email [fundraising@marthatrust.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@marthatrust.org.uk)



## Light Up a Life

When you make a donation to Martha this Christmas you can Light Up A Life with your own Christmas star. The star can be personalised with a message to celebrate the life of someone close to you. We'll then hang the star on a Christmas tree in the Martha Trust home of your choosing.

Return your Light Up a Life form along with your donation to the address on the form or donate online at

[www.marthatrust.org.uk/lightupalife](http://www.marthatrust.org.uk/lightupalife)

## Christmas raffle

We have some fantastic prizes this year including a top prize of £200 cash kindly donated by Discovery Park, as well as many other prizes. Tickets cost £1 each and are available individually or in a book of five.



It is a great way to support Martha this Christmas. Please encourage your friends, family and colleagues to buy tickets too.

Since we first started our Christmas raffle four years ago it has raised £4,500 towards our work.

To purchase tickets please complete the stubs of the ones enclosed and send them along with your payment to

Martha Trust, Homestead Lane, Hacklinge, Deal, Kent, CT14 0PG

## Wear Blue4Martha



Host a Wear Blue4Martha day at your school or place of work and raise money for people with profound disabilities.



Download tools from our online toolkit to help you promote your day.

Visit [www.marthatrust.org.uk/Blue4Martha](http://www.marthatrust.org.uk/Blue4Martha)

# Supporting Martha in years to come...

**"We make a living by what we get,  
but we make a life by what we give."**

*Winston Churchill*

Our future aspirations at Martha are to reach out to support more families affected by profound disabilities enabling their loved ones to live life to the full. Help us to achieve our vision for the next 30 years and beyond.

Below are just a few ideas of how you can play your part in our vision.



## Give in Memory

Martha received £3,500 through 'in memory' donations last year, this makes a big difference to a charity our size.

Making a donation in memory of a loved one is a positive way of commemorating a life. There are three simple ways you can donate to Martha in memory of a loved one

- 1 Make a gift in memory – give an online donation or send a cheque
- 2 Hold a funeral collection – collecting donations at a funeral or a remembrance service is a simple way for family and friends to join you in making a gift in memory of a loved one. Most funeral directors are happy to help with collections and will make sure all donations are passed on to Martha Trust.
- 3 Set up an online 'in memory' page – an 'in memory' page is a great way for friends and family to celebrate and remember someone special. You can do many things with an 'in memory' page, including posting stories, sharing pictures and memories, make a donation or use the page for events. An 'in memory' page also shows the total raised in your loved one's name, so that everyone can see what they have achieved.

It's quick and easy to create an 'in memory' page by using sites like Memory Giving, Just Giving and Virgin Money Giving. They provide a simple, sensitive way to remember a loved one and take you through a simple step-by-step process to create your page.

If you'd like to help or advice with 'in memory' giving then please call us on **01304 610448** or email [fundraising@marthatrust.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@marthatrust.org.uk)

## Leave a gift in your Will and make a lasting difference

The first priority when making a Will is to ensure loved ones are taken care of, but many people also choose to leave a gift to a cause they hold close to their heart. Leaving a gift in your Will to Martha is one of the most valuable and lasting ways you can choose to support us. It costs you nothing in your lifetime but will have an impact for years to come

Legacies make a real difference to the lives of the people we support. In recent years, we have been fortunate to benefit from some kind bequests. We have ensured these gifts have been put to good use. We have kick-started our fundraising to build two new rooms at Mary House, our home in Hastings, enabling us to support many more families in the years to come. We also purchased the latest communication technology – Eyegaze and magic carpet which has benefited residents across our homes to communicate and learn through playing interactive games.

To find out more visit

[www.marthatrust.org.uk/legacies](http://www.marthatrust.org.uk/legacies)  
or call **01304 610448**



## Diary Dates 2018

German Music Night  
Saturday 24th March

Walmer and Kingsdown  
Golf Day  
Friday 27th April

BBQ and Wine Evening  
at The Salutation,  
Sandwich – June

Martha Prom  
July (venue tbc)

Music4Martha,  
The Square, Deal  
Sunday 5th August

Mad for Madrid  
September

Christmas Fayre,  
The Guildhall,  
Sandwich – November

Community Carol Service,  
St George's Church,  
Deal – December

On behalf of our residents and the team at Martha we want to say a huge

# "Thank You"

We have, once again, been overwhelmed by the generosity of our local communities who have come together to support Martha. Here is just a snapshot of what they've been up to...

Rotary Club of Dover for hosting their Summer dinner, dance and concert in aid of Martha raising just under £4,000



Co-op in Sandwich for their continued support of Martha and for kick starting our 'Wear Blue4Martha' campaign raising over £500



Kreston Reeves for making Martha their Charity of the Year

Waitrose in Ashford for their Community Matters scheme raising £560



A huge thank you to the Rotary Club of Sandwich for all their fundraising efforts this year which accumulated in a cheque for £7,500 presented to Martha

George Sutcliffe for hosting his annual coffee morning in aid of Martha raising £550

Hastings Roundtable for donating £7,000 to purchase specialised ICT equipment for the use of residents at Mary House



David Shooter for running the Brighton Marathon in April raising £1,000



To all our supporters who have sent in a donation to mark our 30th Anniversary

Everyone who came along and supported the Sandwich Prom at the Salutation in Sandwich



Special thanks to our sponsors Helios Real Estate, A Pearson Growers, Barclays and Northbourne Park School. And to all the musicians who gave up their time to play for free, to our band of volunteers, security men, children's entertainment and The Sandwich Auction Rooms for stepping in at the last minute to run the auction. And finally to the team at the Salutation for their hard work and support and for allowing us to host the event in their grounds. The day raised £16,000 towards our work



Kent Police Property Fund for their £500 donation

Three seafront businesses in Deal, The King's Head, The Port Arms and Dunkerley's who joined forces to host their own Music4Martha event for the second year running



The day was a huge success and raised over £6,200 including a generous donation of a £1,000 from the three businesses. Thanks to all our volunteers, musicians, bar staff, Blue Lemon Entertainments, and the event sponsors Jenkinsons Estates and Walmer Installations



To our valiant teams who joined our Monte Carlo Madness adventure – fun and laughter were the order of the day and they raised an incredible £30,000



# Sporting news – a record-breaking year

## King's of the Castle

There was a lot at stake for two pubs from Deal who went head to head in aid of Martha. Teams made up of regulars and staff members, from The King's Head and The Walmer Castle, battled it out at Deal Town FC ground.



There could only be one winner with The King's Head ending the match victorious winning 7-5. The King's Head Captain – Pete Cory said *"It was a really great effort from both teams and it's great to support charities with any fundraising that we can."*

The fixture was organised by local DJ, Stewart Brown. It raised over £200 for Martha and £200 for Action AT.

## A record 22 teams tee off for Martha



A record 22 teams teed off in our annual golf day in association with John Shepherd at Walmer and Kingsdown Golf Club.

The winning team was The King's Head, with Myril Ward's team as runners up. The ladies team prize was won by Roz Whalley's team. The day raised over £6,000 for Martha.



## Keep on running



A record number of runners took part in this year's Virgin London Marathon.

Team Martha was made up of four runners – Jakki, Kate, Mike and Victoria. Sadly our fifth runner Billy had to pull out due to an injury.



Our runners did us proud making it round the gruelling 26.2 mile run whilst

resisting the temptation of the 84 pubs on route! And raised an amazing £8,000 in the process.

And our long-term supporter, David Shooter, donned his running trainers once more to complete the Brighton marathon in aid of Martha and raised £1,000!

**Applications for our 2019 Virgin London Marathon are now open. Visit [www.marthatrust.org.uk/VLM](http://www.marthatrust.org.uk/VLM) or call 01304 610448 to find out more or apply to run for Martha.**