

Martha NEWS



Spring 2021



When it comes to cuddles...

they are a cherished memory



Crafty fundraising



Fundraising calendar



Lockdown heros



No one can read the article in this newsletter by Linda Arthur without being deeply moved.

How absolutely challenging not being able to see her daughter for much of the last year for both herself and her family, and when they did it was at a distance and covered in PPE. Linda goes on to identify though the silver linings of the past 12 months.

Whilst the management team knew how difficult it would be for staff, they also quickly identified that for families the constant uncertainty and separation would be devastating. We have always prided ourselves at Martha on aspiring to be the best of care organisations in working with and communicating with the families of our residents and so 2020 was a year more than any other to put this into action.

Alongside the electronic communications between families and residents, support groups on social media were set up by the families to support one another. The already strong Family Representative group, consisting of six parents and several SMT members, met each week to ensure we were thinking of every option to support families and each other.

As the situation has started to lessen a little now is the time to plan for the future to consistently improve the united and caring community that is Martha Trust.

George White
CEO Martha Trust

Martha News online

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Covid – a family perspective

It is difficult to believe it has been a year since we last hugged, held, kissed, touched our little girl or looked into each other's eyes.

We could never have believed or foreseen that we would ever be in this position or experience such distance and separation. But we are, as so many of us are, for the moment, at a distance. To describe how it has been for us, I think maybe, a roller coaster ride is most apt.

Alexandra is a very sensory young lady. She loves hugs and always reaches out to us when we see her. She loves high fives to greet us. She enjoys nothing better than getting out of her wheelchair and sitting on our laps for a big cuddle. We used to share songs together, read together, watch Disney and rugby and tennis matches and sometimes a bit of a rock and roll on her bench. We used to take her out most weekends for tea at her favourite tearoom in Sandwich where she was always the centre of attention. Walks along the river to see the boats and watch the ducks. Walks along the seafront at Deal and along the pier to see the fishermen. All a distant memory.

At the beginning of the pandemic, we were terrified of this unknown, new and very dangerous virus. The most important thing, uppermost in our minds, was to keep Alexandra and her friends safe. To protect her from what could be serious consequences. We accepted that we could no longer visit her, hard as that was.

As spring rolled into summer, we established a routine of talking to Alexandra on FaceTime as often as we could. We are fortunate that Alexandra adjusted to this very well. She has been used to computer screens and iPads



and responded positively to this new virtual means to communicate. Staff have been amazing, knowing how important communication and connection is for us and despite how busy they have been, they have always tried to make that call. We have taken so much pleasure in



just seeing her, knowing she is well and happy. And so has Alexandra. She has learnt to anticipate the call and when we log on we can see the anticipation, concentration and delight on her face. Only occasionally does she look round the room to see if we are actually there and sometimes she reaches out to try and touch us. Despite everything, using this means to communicate has been a steady learning process for her and she has evolved as time has gone on. We mostly now make contact when she is sitting on her bench, which is



her favourite part of the day and ours (apart from watching Mary Poppins!). We can see her enjoying being the star

for a moment and being cheeky. And she is having fun as well as exercising. We are grateful we have this technology, because without it, life would have been unbearable. We are fortunate – we know this doesn't work for everyone.

We celebrated Alexandra's birthday in July from afar, but when lockdown eased, later in the summer, government guidance allowed us to visit Alexandra. Firstly, just one of us, me. That was really hard. Pre-COVID we always used to visit Alexandra together – a family. Visits were outside and all credit to Martha and all the staff, it was meticulously organised. But I have to admit it was tough to see Alexandra, at a distance, with PPE, and not be able to give her a hug and a kiss. I tried to explain to Alexandra, but I don't know if she understood. I sang to her behind the face shield and read stories and danced around, trying to make it fun. It was not the same. After two visits on my own, John was able to come too. It was lovely for them both to see each other after six months. And indoors too, but at a distance. And then lockdown again.

Days and weeks passed and we looked forward to our regular FaceTime with our little girl. Christmas was approaching and decorations went up early in Frances House. Lots of excitement and Christmas trees, warming, twinkling lights and festive music and films. We were optimistic that by Christmas we could perhaps be together again, but it was not to be. Despite best efforts by Martha, there was an outbreak and Christmas as a family was not possible. But we made the best of it and exchanged

presents, suitably quarantined and via FaceTime we shared present opening on Christmas Day. It was so good to see what a wonderful time Alexandra and her friends were having. Staff had gone to so much effort to make Christmas special. It warmed our hearts.

There is no doubt as time goes on, it is becoming more difficult not seeing Alexandra. I worry, will she still react the same when we do see her? How long will it be? Will it be safe for her? Will it always be different? So many unanswered questions. But over the past year, there have been many positives.

The Martha parents have become a team. Through unusual circumstances, we have joined together through the realms of Zoom, Facebook and WhatsApp for mutual support and discussion. We have had the pleasure of getting to know other parents from all our homes. The Parents' Reps have met together with the SMT, twice weekly for many months, then once a week, and now every other week. We know each other pretty well now! All this communication has reinforced our relationships and strengths. Every cloud has a silver lining.

Into a new year and John and I are feeling more optimistic. Vaccinations for residents and staff, regular testing and community vaccinations seem to promise a safer way out. A light at the end of the tunnel. Throughout these months of ups and downs, there has been one strong constant for us. The unfailing support of Martha Trust. At the beginning of this pandemic we feared the worst. But right from the start the amazing Martha team pulled together



and have gone above and beyond to protect Alexandra and her friends and keep them safe. We know how tough it has been and personal sacrifices have been made and we are blessed to have you and forever grateful. We know how staff have tried to make life as full and as fun as possible during these impossible and difficult times.

We hope you know how thankful we are and look forward to the day when we can give you all hugs.

Linda and John
Alexandra's mum and dad
Frances House

Pat Wilson talks about fundraising – the crafty way!

When I embarked on my first Martha Trust Car Challenge to Rome with my friend Jill Burford in 2016 in a £200 banger dubbed Bessie, I had no idea that my fundraising journey would last for years and extend far beyond Rome.

Known for my quirky knitting, and aided and abetted by some talented friends and sundry cast-offs from far and wide, we made a woolly patchwork

us taking Bessie to the NEC and going on to raise funds for other charities through large scale community engagement projects. And so it would have continued but for the present situation.

Suddenly, like everyone else, I was having to adjust to a new normal. An empty diary, nothing to plan for and days to fill. It would have been easy to slip into despair. I could barely remember a time when I

enough, that for me, fundraising has reaped immeasurable rewards far beyond money.

Like many knitters in lockdown, I embarked on my heap of 'Works in Progress'. A pattern for facemasks from a friend coincided with Aldi selling bundles of assorted cotton squares, so I dusted off my sewing machine and made a few for my neighbours. They asked for more.

resources of creativity and ingenuity to stem the loss. Zoom Bingo and online raffles can only do so much - even when generous donors match fund them. 2020 has been devastating.

Economics apart, the additional strain on mental health has been far more widespread and for those who have never experienced it, confusing and scary. The enforced social isolation of lockdown left many

something bigger. And I am immensely grateful. It gave me a routine and a purpose which helped me cope and the long hot summer meant I frequently sewed in the garden with my sewing machine plugged into the shed! I was enjoying it and embarrassed by the praise I received. But the money rolled in and soon £10,000 was in sight.

It sounds like a lot but it equates to a single

donation for a mask was almost always met with £10. Anyone who chooses to fundraise for them will get a lovely warm fuzzy feeling I guarantee. The enthusiastic and dedicated team offer endless support and encouragement. It's infectious.

Lockdown 3 feels different. Covid-19's reach has got closer. I have family struggling on reduced incomes. I know



cover for the car and paraded it round town shaking our buckets. The 2017 Challenge saw us head off to Monte Carlo and together with quizzes and a spectacular Casino night, raised thousands!

Spotted online by the craft events company ICHF, the journey continued with a three year association as 'Grans on the Make' which saw

had nothing to do. Even on a cruise holiday in the Baltic I had mobilised fellow passengers to knit bees for Grans on the Make!

But I had an advantage. The years of collaborating with ICHF, who so generously enabled our Grans on the Make fundraising, had shown me firsthand the benefits of helping others. I cannot emphasise

There is no doubt about the catastrophic economic effect the pandemic has had on businesses large, but especially small and those who have lost jobs or been furloughed. Who even knew what that meant pre-2020? Charities like Martha Trust have been struggling with the cancellation of their major fundraising events which provide significant annual income, requiring huge

of us grieving for our old lives. I was no different. Faced with apathy, misery and anger it is hard to find the motivation to do the things you know will make you feel better.

Even with the experience of previous years, the way out wasn't immediately apparent. It was my neighbours who showed me that I could turn a small act into

afternoon's 'Music for Martha' event outside the King's Head. The cancelled 2020 Car Challenge to Monte Carlo left a hole of nearly £30,000.

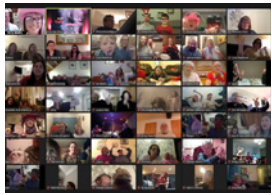
It is impossible not to be humbled and frequently surprised by people's kindness and generosity in a world so often full of outrage. Mention Martha Trust and the wallets open wide! The suggested £5

people who have lost loved ones and the darker days make it harder to remain cheerful.

The end of one year brought a natural pause and a period of reflection but like the burgeoning shoots and the budding hyacinths I can feel the stirrings of another plan emerging.

Watch this space!!

DIARY DATES



Zoom Comedy Bingo Saturday 27th March 7pm

Enjoy two games of bingo, an auction, and of course lots of laughter!
Entry costs £10 per adult, children are free.



KM Big Bike Ride Sunday 18th April, Gravesend

The Big West Kent Bike Ride starts and finishes at Cyclo Park, Gravesend and takes in the beautiful Kent countryside. There is a 100km and 50km route to choose from.
Entry costs £40 - £35 if you use discount code 'MTCOTY'



KM Busters Charity Firewalk Friday 30th April, Holiday Inn Ashford North TN26 1AR

Walk across hot coals in aid of Martha
Entry costs £25 - £20 if you use the discount code 'MTCOTY'



Martha Trust Golf Day in association with John Shepherd Friday 18th June, Walmer and Kingsdown Golf Club

Join us for 18 holes of golf at this magnificent course set high up on the famous White Cliffs of Dover with amazing sea views.
£180 for a team of 4 (£140 members) or £45 per person (£35 members).



Music on the Farm Sunday 27th June, in the fields of Solley's ice cream parlour

Enjoy this great day out with family and friends whilst being entertained by a variety of excellent local musicians as well as plenty of activities to keep the children entertained.
Bring a picnic or enjoy food and drink from one of the on-site vendors and bars as well as Solley's ice cream!
Tickets cost £30 for a Family ticket (2 adults, up to 3 children under 16), £12 for an adult and £5 for a child.



**Music4Martha Deal
Saturday 1st August, The Square in Deal, outside Dunkerley's, The King's Head and the Port Arms**
Come along and enjoy an afternoon of live music.
Free event.



Monte Carlo Madness 4th-7th September 2021, Dover to Monte Carlo

Our intrepid teams will be setting off from Dover for Monte Carlo in our 2021 car challenge – Monte Carlo Madness in cars worth no more than £200.
We'll organise your channel crossing, accommodation and flight home and in return, we ask you to pledge to raise £1,500 to help transform the lives of people with profound disabilities.



German Music Night Saturday 2nd October, St Mary's Arts Centre, Sandwich

The Bettesteiner Footstompers are bringing the spirit and joy of the Munich Oktoberfest to Sandwich. Tickets cost £25 each and include a Peach Schnapps on arrival, all your drink and food – beer, wine and soft drinks, sausages and live music.



Martha Trust Golf Day at Prince's Golf Club Thursday 14th October, Prince's Golf Club

Join us for 18 holes of championship Links at one of the country's top clubs.
£340 for a team of 4 or £85 per person.
There is a members' discount available.



**Christmas Fayre
Saturday 27th November, The Guildhall, Sandwich**
Browse the stalls, enjoy a cup of coffee and some homemade cake and sing along to your favourite Christmas Carols as we get you in the mood for Christmas.
Stalls cost £15 for a standard and £20 for a corner (L-shaped) stall.

**Find out more or book online at
www.marthatrust.org.uk/events or call 01304 610448**

On behalf of our residents and the team at Martha we would like to say a huge thank you to each and every one of you who have supported Martha over the past six months.

Everyone who bought a Christmas raffle ticket, with special thanks to The Cuckoo N1, All Green Oven Clean, Town and Country Garden Service and all the local businesses who donated a prize. Our Christmas raffle raised £1,827

The team at Men's Style by Aaron who held a contactless event and raised £119!



Long term supporter John Shepherd for his ongoing support and to his golf club – Canterbury Golf Club for their generous donation of £3,600



The Mark Benevolent Fund working in the provinces of Kent and Sussex for their donation of £16,908 for 14 specialist beds across all three of our homes



Our Facebook and Twitter followers – we reached the milestone of 3,000 Facebook followers in February!

The KM charity team and the Editor of the East Kent Mercury. We are extremely honoured to have been made 'KM Charity of the Year 2021'



Solley's for their continued support – we simply couldn't do what we do without support like yours!



Hardman's Solicitors who have extended their support of Martha into 2021 as their Charity of the Year! We are excited to have their support in the coming year



Feel Good Fashion for supporting Martha in October donating 20% of all sales to their two chosen charities that month raising £355 for Martha!



The Hospital Saturday Fund for their generous grant of £10,000 towards the costs of our Person Centred Software (PCS)

Everyone who has supported us through the Dover Lotto, you have helped raise £915 in 2020



Our Lockdown Heroes

Our fearless fundraiser Phil Allen took on a 36 mile ultra marathon in aid of Martha raising £1,158!

Pat Wilson who fundraised throughout 2020 making masks in aid of Martha and has raised an unbelievable £10,826!

Kimberley Janes who held lockdown raffles raising £146



**Thank you to our
amazing teams at Martha
and to our dedicated
supporters**



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