



Childhood First



# Fundraising Newsletter

Spring 2023

# A message from our CEO

## Dear Friends

We at Childhood First have welcomed in the new year with four out of our five homes at full capacity. We have also completed work on a new, five-year strategic plan which sets out how, together, we can continue to offer safety, stability and nurture to some of the most traumatised children in the country. I look forward to sharing more about this with you in the coming months.

I want to thank you, on behalf of all of us at Childhood First, for your continued support. As you will read over the coming pages, your support continues to enable the organisation to give our children and young people what they need. From the expansion of our Placement Family Support service, to improved outdoor



environments funded by a hugely successful Christmas fundraising campaign, our work is made possible thanks only to your generous donations.

We are immensely grateful to each and every one of you and it gives me great pleasure to share this newsletter with you, which I hope goes some way in communicating the impact that your generosity has on the lives of the children and young people in our care.

With warmest regards and gratitude

**Gary Yexley**  
**CEO**



# Your Impact over the last twelve months

A BIG thank you to our:



## Challenge Event Participants

Our terrific team of runners, trekkers, and triathletes have raised over **£68,434!**



## Supporters and Donors

Our regular donors' continued generosity has raised over **£9,622!**



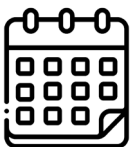
## Friends' Committees

Our Kent and Norfolk Friends' Committees have raised over **£18,209!**



## Trusts & Foundations

We have received over **£62,600** from Trusts & Foundations so far!



## Events & Campaigns

Our events and seasonal campaigns have raised over **£100,933!**

Thanks to your support, we raised **over £250,000** over the last 12 months!

**Thank you!**

# 2022 Christmas Campaign Update

Last Christmas, we held one of our most successful matched funding campaigns to date, '**Healing Hurt Minds**'. Our aim was to raise £50K to improve the outdoor recreational spaces across our five residential communities and school.

Thanks to your support, we exceeded our target and raised an incredible **£77,671!**

**You have helped purchase for our communities and school:**

**Outdoor pool!**



**Astroturf 3G pitch!**



**New bikes!**



**Bike storage!**



**Tyre swing sets!**



**Therapy hut!**



**Thank you again for your support!**



# London Marathon 2023!

Our fantastic team of 24 runners took on the TCS London Marathon on Sunday 23rd April. Even the wet weather didn't dampen the runners' and spectators' spirits in this 26.2 mile challenge!

Altogether, Team Childhood First raised over £42K for the children and young people in our care!

## Some of our runners:



**Jenny**  
New York, USA



**Rahim**  
London, UK



**Abbie**  
Dorchester, UK



**Antonio**  
Surrey, UK



**Anurag**  
Virginia, USA



**Laura**  
Gloucestershire, UK



**Anna and Emma**  
London, UK



**Trish**  
Gloucestershire, UK

**Thank you to all of our marvellous 2023 marathon runners!**

# Friends' Committees Updates

## Kent Bridge Tea!

Friday 3rd February 2023

**Our Kent Friends' Committee hosted a Bridge Tea at Benenden Village hall to raise funds for Greenfields School outdoor play equipment.**

The Bridge was followed by a delicious spread of sandwiches, cakes, and scones - all lovingly homemade by our Kent Friends' Committee members.

There was a raffle with some fantastic prizes available, from luxury hampers to fresh flowers to gift experiences, and the event raised an impressive **£1,577.77!**

A huge thank you to all the guests and especially to the members of our Kent Friends' Committee!



## New Norfolk Friends!

**We are delighted to announce the Norfolk Friends' Committee have two new members; Alex de Bunsen and Louise Beazley.**

Alex has been a Family Magistrate for many years and so is very familiar with the experiences of children and young people in care.

Louise's experience as an active member of the Youth Offending Team parole board has helped her to develop a good understanding of the challenges faced by severely traumatised children and young people.



*'From working as a family magistrate, I have witnessed first-hand the effects that early childhood trauma can have on children and young people's lives. I'm delighted to join the Norfolk Friends' Committee to help support the vital work the charity does.'*

- Alex



# Community Events

## Festive Fun!

December 2022

**Our Kent and Norfolk Communities celebrated the Christmas period by hosting their very own yuletide events.**

In Norfolk, there was a wonderful Winter's Eve hosted by Merrywood House. The event was Christmas market themed and the children and young people each had their own stalls. The Grinch himself made an appearance!

Meanwhile, in Kent, Greenfields School hosted their amazing annual Christmas show. Despite the nerves, all of the students gave brilliant performances, from Ghostbusters to the Spice Girls. Even the adults got involved with a Backstreet Boys tribute act!



## Easter Eggcitement!

April 2023

**Oakwood House hosted an Easter Egg hunt for the children and young people in all three Kent communities.**



The staff hid a whopping 160 eggs around Oakwood House for the children to find (which of course, they did!)

After fun and games in the garden, everyone came together to have cake and hot cross buns.

All the children got to plant a sunflower each to take home. At the end of summer, they will see whose flower has grown the most!



## Meet Karen!

**Karen is one of our dedicated new Placement and Family Support (PFS) Workers based at Greenfields House in Kent.**

### ***How long have you worked at Childhood First?***

I have worked at Childhood First since April 2022. It feels unbelievable that it has been a year as I still feel relatively new but am quickly becoming part of the furniture!

### ***What does your role as a PFS Worker entail?***

My role involves organising and facilitating statutory meetings between the children, their families, and external professionals. I am involved from the initial referral process through to supporting transitions when a child moves on from our care.

One of the main strands of my role is to plan, organise, and supervise contact between children in our care and their families.

Here, I facilitate telephone and video calls as well as accompanying and supporting the children on external visits with their family. This can be a difficult experience for the children, and for many, just leaving the house can be a challenge. To help make it a positive experience, I work closely with the children to think about an activity they would like to do with their family, meaning I take part in

various things from pottery painting to trampolining! Outside of the contact time I will work with the families to understand how the child is coping emotionally and what changes can be brought to contact to make it as beneficial as possible. I provide a link between the house and the family which is separate to any support they receive from the Local Authority.

### ***What is your favourite thing about being a PFS worker?***

My favourite element of my role is being able to engage with the children on an individual level and in a more neutral role to that of our Therapeutic Care Workers. As I don't work shifts, I can often meet the children in a different space to those who have been up all night or are facing conflicting demands at the house. I feel privileged to be able to build a trusting relationship with each of the children and act as an advocate for them during family time itself or in meetings.

### ***What's the most challenging element of your role?***

The most challenging thing is striking a balance between supporting the family and advocating for the child. At times, I can be in receipt of strong transferences from the children as my role means I become a physical representation of their family between contacts. However, seeing a child re-build a healthier relationship with their family is incredibly rewarding.



# Picture Gallery

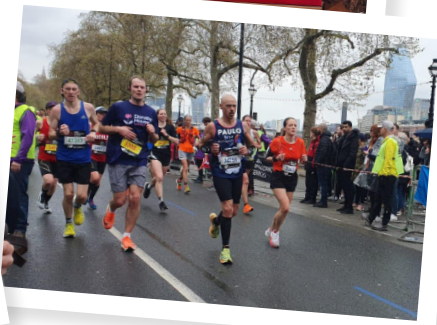
Afternoon Bridge Tea  
February 2023



Oakwood Easter Egg Hunt  
April 2023



TCS London Marathon  
April 2023



Merrywood Winterfest  
December 2022



# Make your gift go further

## Regular Giving

Transforming a one-off donation into a monthly gift enables us to help us to plan for the future and continue to expand our services. This is vital for to meet the increasing demand from children in need of our specialist care.

For example, if you make a one-off £50 donation, why not turn it into £5 a month? Not only does it cost you less in the short-term, but also makes a bigger impact to us as guaranteed income!

**£5 a month** could help purchase a bicycle for a child or young person in our care, helping them to stay active.

**£10 a month** can help to fund theatre and cultural trips for the children and young people at our

**£25 a month** would help cover the cost of our Placement & Family Support Team to help a child and family whilst in our care.



easyfundraising

Did you know that whenever you buy anything online – from your weekly shop to your annual holiday – you could be raising free donations for Childhood First with easyfundraising? With no catches or hidden charges!

There are over 7,000 brands on board ready to make a donation – including Amazon, eBay, Argos, John Lewis, ASOS, M&S and Booking.com – and it won't cost you a penny extra to help us raise funds.

### All you need to do is:

1. Go to <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/childhoodfirst>, and join for free.
2. Every time you shop online, go to easyfundraising first to find the site you want and start shopping.
3. After you've checked out, the brand will make a donation to us at no extra cost to you whatsoever!

## Remember to Gift Aid it!



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Your £1 donation → results in → £1.25 donation to us

If you are a UK tax payer, your donation is eligible for us to claim gift aid.

This means that we receive 25% of your donation from the government without any cost to you!



## Some ways you can help...

The funds we secure from our generous benefactors and trusts are absolutely essential in enabling us to expand and develop our services and build more beds.

We are enormously grateful to all those who support our life-changing work for traumatised children and young people.

### **Celebrate**

Whether it be a birthday, anniversary or wedding - help mark your special occasion with a celebratory fundraiser to create a lasting impact.

### **Challenge yourself**

Runners, cyclists, swimmers, adventurers (and all the above) can push themselves in one of our challenge events to raise funds and awareness for the meaningful work we do!

### **Corporates**

From setting up payroll giving to selecting us as your charity, partnering with Childhood First has the potential to create long-term impact for the children and young people in our care. So why not get your business involved or start a conversation with your employer?

### **Remember**

If you believe, as we do, that a loving childhood is the most valuable thing a child can be given then please consider leaving us a gift in your Will. Your gift will be a legacy of love for some of the most neglected and disadvantaged children in the country.

## Get Involved & Contact

If you are interested in supporting childhood first in any of the capacities detailed above please get in touch on

[fundraising@childhoodfirst.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@childhoodfirst.org.uk) | 020 7928 7388