

our house

newsletter autumn 09

Featured in this issue:





Contents

Chief executive's message	2
Richard House SummerFest 2009	3
Changing times	4
Funday takes off	5
The right experience	5
Liz's Story – a mum's reflections	6–7
Donate don't dump	8
Joe Cole visit for Dribblethon	9
Hiscox team paddle their way to victory	10
Mayer Brown cycle to success	10
Christmas is a-Coming	11
Festive fun run	11
Your chance to win up to £5,000!.	12
Make a free Will	12
Events listings	12

With thanks to volunteer photographer Andrea Di Prima for her contribution to this edition

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Chief executive's message

Change is inevitable and is a part of life whether we like it or not. What often comes with change are exciting new things and new beginnings. We see this first hand at Richard House with our work with the Young Adults Group which continues to be a great success.

When speaking to a group of young people recently, one thing was made clear to me when one of them said: "There is more to life than being fed from one end and pooing from the other." His words not mine!

All this is important, of course, because what is the point unless you have a purpose and meaning to life. Like everyone else these young people want to lead productive, full and ordinary lives. We, at Richard House, are constantly thinking of ways in which we can develop our services to ensure children and young people are sustained so they can live as normal a life as possible.

Transition from childhood to adulthood is difficult, but even more so for children with life limiting or complex health care conditions. Therefore, I am excited we have received a grant from the Samuel Sebba Trust to carry out a needs assessment to explore how to establish support to improve the transition of young people from children to adult services. Whilst these young people continue to need palliative care, they also want to live and experience further education, work, independent housing, social activities, and so on, just like everyone else. I am hoping our young people will lead some of this work and let us know what their needs are.

There is great emphasis placed on home care support for children with complex health care needs. From the autumn of 2009 we are planning to pilot a home care service for children and young people. This will complement our existing services and fill the gaps in our service provision. We will be targeting two boroughs to see how well received and effective this work would be when offered by Richard House.

Income generation, including fundraising, is meeting targets at the moment. Due to the recession we are conscious of the possible downturn in our income and therefore are especially grateful for all the support offered to us during these challenging times. The fundraising team and our shops have been working hard to make sure we are united and working together to achieve our financial targets.

It is my pleasure to let you know over the Summer period we have been very busy. The building is a hive of activity with children, young people and their families. I hope this continues as we develop our work to meet their needs, enabling them to have meaningful, positive experiences and create lasting memories.

Our heartfelt thanks goes out to all our supporters and volunteers for standing beside us in these times.

Best wishes, **Peter Ellis**



Richard House SummerFest 2009



We held our annual SummerFest on a gloriously sunny Saturday in August.

Families, supporters and the local community all came together on 8 August at Richard House Children's Hospice to enjoy a fun-filled day, with face painting, Indian dancing and the weird and wonderful strains from the Lost Orchestra.



This year we wanted to open the doors to our extended Richard House family so we invited the general public to join us on this happy occasion and with over 250 people attending it turned out to be a great success.

Bollywood dancers, steel drummers, Justin Timberlike and Silly Millie the clown gave amazing performances on the day. Attendees were also entertained with rides on Sammy the Snake land train and were able to get up close and personal with classic motorbikes from the Virago Roadrunners Club 13 Motorbike Club.

Local public services including the Fire Service, Police Community Support Officers and the Transport Police helped to support the event along with backing from MasterCard and their team of volunteers.

Kids were in their element stroking animals from a petting farm and receiving face painting and henna tattoos. And no one went hungry with thanks to Kebabish from Manor Park who provided lunch.





Changing times

Care Team Leader Neil Williamson will be jetting off to South Africa this September to be a guest speaker on the topical subject of transition at the Children's Hospice International 20th World Congress.

Neil, 30, will be talking at the event in Cape Town about the importance of implementing successful transitions and his experiences of Richard House's Young Adults Group, which he set up when he joined the care team 21 months ago.

Like many children's hospices, Richard House is only able to support children up until the age of 19 and from then on try and help them as they move into new places of care. This can be very difficult as one of the main problems with

transition – as it is called – is that there is no buffer or preparation stage for the young adults and in many cases the style of care is very different and not set up for young people.

“The idea is understood but there is a struggle to make it into a reality due to a lack of resources, mainly the funds to employ someone to coordinate the changes. At the moment we are working with local adult hospices to create a solid plan to enable the young person to transfer from Richard House to their local adult hospice.”

“

This was quite a big step for many of the youngsters as this was the first time they'd been on holiday without relatives

“The challenge is to try and smooth out the differences between children and adult hospices which exist mainly because adult hospices generally focus on end-of-life care where children's hospices care for very different types of conditions with very different needs.”

In addition to this the Young Adults Group for Richard House whose patients are aged 17 to 25 years aims to alleviate some of the concerns of transition by empowering these adolescents and encouraging them to have greater autonomy, independence and responsibility with their care and life in general.

“When we asked the young adults what they wanted from the group they all agreed information on gaining employment and an outlet for them to be able to socialise were really important to them.

“The group regularly has visits to cocktail bars, karaoke sessions, meals out and the highlight so far was a weekend away to Blackpool.

“This was quite a big step for many of the youngsters as this was the first time they'd been on holiday without relatives. However, it was a great success with us enjoying everything Blackpool has to offer including a night out clubbing.”





Funday takes off

The annual London City Airport Funday on Saturday 4 July was yet another great success for Richard House and the airport. London City Airport raised a staggering £41,645 for Richard House Children's Hospice over the course of the year, including during the fun packed day.



Five children from Richard House dressed up in fancy dress costumes to join the festivities which raised a staggering £41,645 for Richard House Children's Hospice

A crowd of 25,000 from the local community flocked to enjoy the free sports day themed event, with a variety of activities from egg and spoon races to sumo wrestling. The jaw-dropping air show wowed the audience with breath-taking stunts, and West Ham United Football Club gave football enthusiasts a few top training tips.

Richard House was represented by 50 hard working volunteers, including a group from the chocolate company Cadburys, who helped out on the toy tombola and shook collection buckets on the day. Five children from Richard House dressed up in specially made fancy dress costumes to join the festivities, which included face painting and badge making.

The fantastic sum raised by London City Airport could pay for two play and care workers for a whole year, providing care for approximately 90 children visiting Richard House.

The right experience

The Care team have been busy over the last few months providing the children who use our services with a wide range of experiences.

There have been a number of pamper days for our girls with reflexology, facials, hand-massages, make-up, henna tattoos, Reiki and nail and hair-styling.

The Zoom-in-Arts company came in to do a series of sessions with the children. The company consisting of five soon to be graduates from East 15 Acting School provided a series of workshops for people living with a terminal illness based around the concept of 'legacy'.

Victoria, from Breathing Space, did a dance and movement session. With the emphasis on sensory, Victoria used materials to make waves and feel air moving, going outside to the sensory shed to play with water, stones and shells and to listen to the wind chimes in there.

The young adults went to Lewisham Bowl. There have been a number of trips to the O2, the cinema and a swimming session.

There was a boat trip down the Thames and a trip to London Zoo, courtesy of the charity group Daytrippers. There was also a jungle experience as a couple of our children went on a trip to Woburn Safari Park.

And of course who could forget care team leader Neil Williamson's explosive show in homage to the TV programme, Brainiacs. The experiments included Alka Seltzer grenades, layered liquids, making slime, a vacuum powered bazooka and squeezing an egg into a bottle – some of which worked.



Liz's story – a mum's reflections



Reflecting on her feelings from this time last year Liz Forbes remarks on how astonishingly different her thoughts and emotions are when she hears four words . . . Richard House Children's Hospice.

In 2008 the hospital caring for Liz's son Josh had proposed that it had come to a time in his care plan when he would be better suited to specialist palliative care.

"I couldn't believe it, a hospice! At the time my perception of a hospice was that it was a place to go to for the end and how could I not when Josh had come in for End of Life Care," commented Liz from Brixton.

However, in the months that have passed Liz and her family's initial concerns and fears of a hospice have now been replaced with feelings of faith, trust and love for Richard House, which Liz's nephew

calls "Auntie Liz & Josh's Yellow House."

"This really feels like a home-from-home for us," remarks Liz, "a little bit of heaven where we have the chance to continue having a normal family life which wasn't possible whilst Josh was receiving care in hospital.

"During Josh's several stays in Richard House's residential care we have been able to take up residency in one of the family flats. This means we are available when Josh needs us but are also able to completely relax and enjoy the time we have together such as watching a DVD, reading a book or taking a stroll around the grounds because we know we're in good caring, capable hands here from people who not only care for Josh but for every single one of us.

"Having the flat here means so much to us as a family. Whilst Josh is receiving care in Richard House it means I have the option to hand over as much or as little of his care requirements as I like and can enjoy just being his mum again instead of also being his full-time carer."



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Liz's son Josh, 12, had been like every other fun-loving, lively, energetic four year old but during the eight years after receiving his initial diagnosis his severe epilepsy has made this adorable young boy regress and because of the escalating seizures he has been on the brink of death far too many times for his tender years.

"Over time as Josh's seizures have got worse he has started to regress so needs much more care and attention. This is something they understand at Richard House. It's so different from when he was in hospital where the administering of his care needs would be dependent on a schedule. Here at Richard House they give him the things he needs, like physiotherapy, regardless of what time of day it is.

"And it's not only Josh who they care for they also look after the whole family. There have been times when things have been bad and I can be standing there looking at my Joshie and the next thing I feel is a pair of arms wrap around me and give me the biggest hug. The staff here know when to approach you and when you may need a moment to yourself. They all have the biggest hearts and its one of the reasons why Josh has made such a huge improvement recently.

"All of the people around him are amazing and won't let him vegetate. They support him and encourage him to do things and because of that Josh tries harder and now he is getting better again and we are able to take him home which means so



much to us as a family,” adds Liz a mother of five.

“However, when he does deteriorate this is the only place I want him to be because Josh is comfortable and relaxed here. The people of Richard House have a wonderful way of dealing with death and their compassion stretches beyond the immediate family to the other families in the hospice but that is because once you come here you become part of the larger Richard House family.

“I know that if it wasn’t for Richard House Josh wouldn’t still be here and we wouldn’t have been able to celebrate Josh’s 12th birthday. Realistically we know Josh may never celebrate the milestone birthdays of 16, 18 and 21 but we know that when these occasions come we’ll have the happy memories that Richard House has given us of our time together.”





Donate, don't dump!

'Donate, don't dump!' is the message that's resonating throughout the land in the wake of the BBC's behind-the-scenes look at the world of charity shops: 'Mary, Queen of Charity Shops'.

Mary Portas's entertaining and shocking experience in the programme has invoked a renewed appreciation for the hard-working staff and volunteers of our charity shops, and perhaps most importantly, Ms. Portas has begun to educate the public in the importance of donating only quality goods to charity shops, from where they are lovingly prepared and presented, before being sold to discerning bargain hunters.

In one episode, Ms. Portas may well have taken a leaf from Richard House's book when she invited businesses to hold 'donation days'. For in recession-hit London, one of the ways in which Richard House's retail team have been encouraging a better quantity and quality of stock

is by promoting work-place collections, where staff can divest themselves of unwanted goods, whilst supporting their local children's hospice.

One such collection took place on the 22 July, a date forever etched into the memories of the staff who came from HSBC branches across East London to participate in 'The Apprentice', a highly competitive challenge event that saw four Richard House shops hosting two competing teams of HSBC staff, who had collected an

amazing array of donations, and whose objective was to set up a table within the shops, and raise as much money as possible. A fantastic time was had by all of the customers, volunteers and staff who were caught up in the buzz of the event, and after providing a welcome boost to the day's takings, the exhausted but elated staff from HSBC retired to a boardroom in their Canary Wharf HQ, for an Alan Sugar style grilling...

They needn't have worried though, because Jonathan Waddington from HSBC, who played the role of Alan Sugar, said of the teams that: "It was great to see everyone filled with good humour, pride, and a little healthy competition after their apprentice-style challenge – The final result: You're all hired!"

The volunteers and staff of our shops took all of the drama in their stride, which is no surprise, given that several of them have now taken on the additional challenge of undertaking a level 2 NVQ in Retailing, where they are diligently studying everything from Health and safety legislation to the intricacies of visual merchandising, much of which they will be putting to use as our shops prepare for the seasonal changeover – many a creative display of Autumn fashions are sure to be in evidence over the coming months.





Joe Cole visit for Dribblethon

England and Chelsea footballer and Richard House Patron, Joe Cole is right behind Dribblethon, a new Richard House event for 2009.



At the time of going to print a number of schools, including Portway School in Stratford and Eastbury Sixth Form in Barking, were looking forward to starting the new school year by getting the ball rolling for Richard House. The recently crowned Miss Galaxy International – formerly Miss Essex and Miss England – has also popped into the Hospice to add her support and a bit of glamour to Dribblethon.

To register for Dribblethon visit www.richardhouse.org.uk/supportus/dribblethon/. To find out more contact Viv Talbot on 020 7540 0213 or email vivt@richardhouse.org.uk.

Joe said, “Whether you want to sign up and take the ball 100 yards or show off your fancy footwork by dribbling a marathon and getting a team together, this is a really fun way to support Richard House. And no matter what distance you cover, by raising money for Richard House, you’ll be improving the lives of life-limited children and their families.”

Dribblethon is a brand new initiative aimed at encouraging as many people as possible to dribble a football for Richard House. The idea was inspired by the efforts of Chris Rowe, who will be dribbling a ball from Billericay to Upton Park, the home of West Ham United –

a distance of 26.2 miles during Children’s Hospice week (19–26 September).



Whether you want to sign up and take the ball 100 yards or show off your fancy footwork by dribbling a marathon and getting a team together, this is a really fun way to support Richard House





Hiscox team paddle their way to victory

Twenty-eight Hiscox employees took to French waters this June to complete their Ardeche Canoeing Challenge for Richard House.

The Hiscox employees paddled a distance of 65km down the Ardeche gorge to raise over £19,000 for Richard House. The triumphant group celebrated their success in

style dressed as heroes and villains for an evening of wine tasting and fine dining in the old village of Aguez.

Richard House's Corporate Fundraiser, Fenella Bain, took part in the challenge. She said: "It was an amazing trip and the Hiscox team really pulled together to complete the challenge and have a lot of fun on the way to raising this fantastic amount for Richard House Children's Hospice."



Mayer Brown cycle to success

On 26 June, 31 Mayer Brown cyclists left London and set off on their long journey to Paris. Taking in some amazing scenery along the way, the challenge culminated in champagne celebration under the Arc de Triomphe.

The Mayer Brown team raised an amazing £50,000, already exceeding their fundraising target for the entire year! The international law firm chose Richard House as their Charity of the Year for 2009 and we are thoroughly enjoying working with them.

Well done and thank you to all who took part.

■ Further good news has seen us named as one of BGC Partner's chosen charities for their annual Charity Trading Day on 11 September. The brokers in Canary Wharf will donate the proceeds of their day's profits to 26 charities.

Last year was a great day out for the kids that represented Richard House as it gave them a fantastic experience of the buzz on the trading floor and the chance to mingle with a host of stars and celebrities that were there on behalf of the various charities.





Festive fun run

Christmas is coming early to children's hospices this year when hundreds of runners will be dressing up as Santa for a novelty 2km course along the Thames.

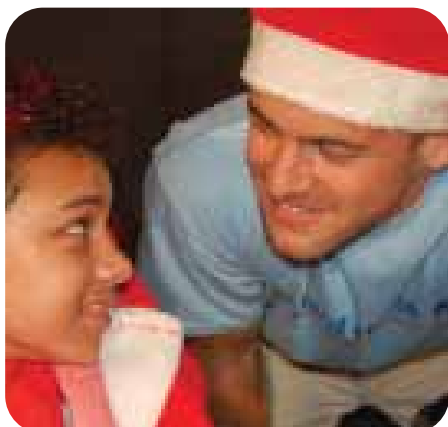
Richard House are very excited about being able to offer places in this year's Santas on the Run event on 3 December 2009.

The festive themed race is organised by Children's Hospice UK and takes place in the early evening so seasonal supporters can walk, skip, run or jump the course after work or lectures.

Costumes are supplied on the day so all participants can be merry and bright for the race on the South Bank. The event will start outside the OXO Tower and will head down the river to the National Theatre and back again.

It is a fantastic opportunity to keep our supporters active during the festive period and help raise the profile of Richard House at the same time.

If you would like to fill a pair of stockings on the day or to find out more information please contact Andy Butler, Richard House Events Assistant, on 020 7540 0204 or andrewb@richardhouse.org.uk



Christmas is a-Coming



Christmas may feel like a world away right now, but here at Richard House preparations for the festive season are already beginning.

The Wishing Stars appeal will run for a second year this Christmas. From mid October you will be able to buy a Richard House Wishing Star for £2. Add your own personal wish or message to the star, before hanging it on one of our Christmas trees displayed at local shopping malls, churches and cemeteries. Check our website www.richardhouse.org.uk from mid October for more details about where you can buy stars from and where Wishing Star trees will be displayed. Contact community Fundraising Manager Viv Talbot on 0207 540 0213 or email vivt@richardhouse.org.uk for further details about Wishing Stars.

Click a Carol, the innovative video based Christmas initiative featuring children and staff from Richard House, is being run for a second year this Christmas. For a donation

of up to £2500, your company can email all your contacts a *Click a Carol* video featuring Joe Cole singing his best Christmas wishes.

To find out more about *Click a Carol* visit www.clickacarol.com or contact Alex Speke on 020 7540 0253 or email alexs@richardhouse.org.uk

Finally, if you need to find that special outfit for your Christmas party or a gift for your loved ones why not make a visit to one of Richard House's seven shops to see what's in store. There are items to suit every age from clothing to books and you never know what treasures you may find in these Santa's Grottos.

Christmas is also a great time to start recycling and donating any surplus items. Whether you've been given new goods to replace the old or have gifts that you don't need they are all welcome to be sold through our seven shops and help raise funds for the hospice. And why not make it a New Year's resolution to have a regular rummage throughout the year and donate your excess goods to our shops on a frequent basis.



Your chance to win up to £5,000!

From 19 September you can be in with a chance of winning up to £5,000, while helping Richard House Children's Hospice.

Candis magazine and Children's Hospices UK are working together to run a national lottery which shall begin in Children's Hospice Week, 19-26 September. All proceeds from the lottery will be shared amongst the 42 Children's Hospices in the UK.

Richard House Children's Hospice have been given 5,000 books of tickets with all proceeds from ticket sales coming directly to Richard House. Books contain 15 tickets at £1 each, and give you the chance to win fantastic prizes of an amazing £5,000 first prize, £2,000 second prize and a third prize of £1,000.

Tickets will be available for purchase from Richard House Children's Hospice, all of our seven shops and from Richard House seasonal stalls selling wishing stars and Christmas cards. Unfortunately Richard House staff and volunteers cannot take part in the lottery.

Events

To enquire about any of the events listed please call Andy on 020 7540 0204, email events@richardhouse.org.uk or visit our website: www.richardhouse.org.uk/supportus/events/

Dribblethon

19-26 September

Put your footie skills to the test and see how much money you can raise by dribbling a ball on behalf of Richard House. For more information please turn to page 9.

5-a-side Football Tournament

2 October

Battle it out with your team-mates to beat your rivals and become the 5-a-side football champions in 2009!

London Power League, 6pm, supported by Weil, Gotshal and Manges.

Registration fee: £180 per team

Sponsorship target: £250 per team

10th Birthday Ball

4 November

The event where glamour and goodwill collide. A champagne

reception, and a three course meal prepared by award winning chefs precedes dancing and an auction with spectacular 'money can't buy' items up for grabs! The Brewery, Chiswell Street, 7pm. Single Tickets: £150

Santa's on the Run

3 December

Stick on a white beard and Santa suit and head to the Southbank to take part in this 2km fun run.

Southbank, 7pm

Registration: fee applies

Sponsorship: £15

Go Red

12 February

Wear a red dress, hold a red themed tea party or host a red wine tasting evening. Whatever it is just make sure the colour is red and you are raising money for Richard House!

Make a free Will

Would you like to leave an everlasting gift to your loved ones? Between 26 and 30 October 2009 we will be running our second Make a Will week where you have the opportunity to write a Will or Codicil free of charge and can even leave a legacy to Richard House.

We have a number of solicitors in London and Essex who are offering the service and there is no obligation to include Richard House in your Will although we do ask for a donation as a gesture of goodwill.

You don't have to be a millionaire to leave a legacy as donations of any size are greatly appreciated at Richard House. To find out more information please contact Karen Duncan, Trusts, Statutory & Remembrance Fundraiser on 020 7540 0206 or karend@richardhouse.org.uk or contact one of the participating solicitors below and book your free appointment during Make a Will week:

Andrew J Kidd, **Silverman Sherliker LLP**, tel: 020 7749 2700

Keith Darvill and David Farr, **Kenneth Elliott & Rowe**, tel: 01708 707 821 (David)

Beverley J Browne, **Wiseman Lee**, tel: 020 8215 1174

Zareen Ali, **Sheridans**, tel: 020 7079 0101

Howard Anthony Jacobs, **Grower Freeman**, tel: 020 7723 304

Genevieve Gallagher, **Mullis & Peake**, tel: 01708 784047