



The Children's Sunshine Home



Annual Report 2006/2007



Laura Lynn
Now part of
The Children's Sunshine Home

Our Mission

The Children's Sunshine Home provides high quality home support, respite and residential services to children and the families of children with life limiting and life threatening conditions.

Our Philosophy of Care

To treat each child as an individual with dignity and respect and to enable them to enjoy a quality of life. Each family is central to the care of their child.

Our Vision

'Excellence in Paediatric Palliative Care'
Develop Ireland's first Children's Hospice

Our Values

- Dignity
- Respect
- Compassion
- Hospitality
- Excellence

Our Service

Founded in 1925, The Children's Sunshine Home responds to the needs of the times. We work in partnership with families, the Health Authorities and other voluntary agencies.

Quality of life for every child



Chloe



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*Barry Andrews TD with Philomena Dunne, CEO,
The Children's Sunshine Home*



Professor Drumm with Niall and his mum



Chairman's Overview

George Balmer
Chairman, Board of Management

Little brings more excitement to a family than the arrival of a new child. And that's just how we feel at The Children's Sunshine Home when another child arrives either for respite or step-down support. Our 'family' is extended by the arrival of not just the child but also the child's parents or guardians, extended family and of course the support team involved.

It follows therefore, that every effort is made to create a 'home from home' environment at The Children's Sunshine Home. We value 'hospitality' and 'compassion' alongside 'excellence' and 'quality of care'. And this is evident in the attitude, energy and dedication of our staff and supporters, who have worked particularly hard during the last year.

Testament to the success of their efforts is The Children's Sunshine Home's growth in activity, reputation and professionalism that has earned us many encouraging compliments. I'm proud to record my thanks to everyone who has been involved - the direct carers of our children and young adults, our finance and administration team, our fundraising team, volunteer workers, and all others who have become interested and involved in our activities.

Reaching families as early as possible is of great benefit to all concerned. It gives us an opportunity to encourage, support and educate the parents in the specific needs of their child. And this in turn gives them confidence to move forward and care for their child, where possible at home. It also sets up a bond between families and ourselves should further support become needed in the future.

We have always recognised the importance of the family home and we continue to emphasise this in the support and services which we offer. Far from being bound to the perimeter of our premises, our caring approach extends to wherever the child is at any given time - whether this be in the care of a hospital or at home with the family.



The Children's Sunshine Home, Leopardstown.

I reported last year that children had started to come to us as a step down facility between hospital and going home to their families. This service has expanded and I am delighted that our maternity hospitals are now referring children to The Children's Sunshine Home on a regular basis.

This is part of the holistic approach to childcare favoured by The Children's Sunshine Home and will continue to be foremost in our development plans. In working along side the other service providers we constitute an essential element of the team required to provide an individually personalised care plan for each child in need.

During the past twelve months An Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, and Professor Brendan Drumm, Chief Executive Officer of the Health Services Executive, have visited The Children's Sunshine Home. The support shown by these distinguished visitors was both welcome and confirmation that our work and vision for the future are on track. Both were free with their time and the visits were caring and largely informal at their requests. Professor Drumm's clear and helpful advice concerning the direction in which the care of our children is progressing has been influential in our plans for the future.



An Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern with Nicholas.

The Children's Sunshine Home's Hospice Project

The Children's Sunshine Home's mission is to provide an excellent and appropriate service that responds to the needs of the time. In recognition of the need to reach more families, we've embarked on the Hospice Project that will extend the current services and build Ireland's first children's hospice, to better meet the needs of Irish children with life limiting or life threatening illnesses and their families.

Last year's report outlined the building plans to accommodate this, and recent visitors will have seen a rise in activity in our grounds. The temporary building now in position will accommodate teenagers and young adults. The unit, although temporary, is of the highest standard and suitable for the care of these young people.

This is the commencement of the building programme which will conclude with the opening of our three new bungalows each to accommodate eight children at any one time and Laura Lynn House which will operate as a children's hospice and palliative care service.

Phase 1 of the building programme – the four new buildings – requires a budget of over €11 million. Our main building, over fifty years in continuous use, is becoming tired and the Board is committed to its replacement within about seven years as Phase 2 of our development plans.

Having regard to the extent of the investment required and the time schedule of the development plans, the Trustees of The Children's Sunshine Home deemed it important to review the value of our site on Leopardstown Road and its best use in furthering our objectives. Expert advice has been sought on the question of a possible relocation as an alternative to extensive development on this site over the next seven years and this is under current review.

And what of the future?

Our vision for the future is continued "excellence in Paediatric Palliative Care" including the development of a children's hospice.

This will require the holistic approach to care referred to earlier, and a renewed focus, as an Employer of Choice, on staff recruitment, support, development and retention.

Regarding the hospice, we are now a few steps closer to realising this vision. We will sustain the support and awareness generated to date, and keep the great momentum going which has been created by ourselves and the Laura Lynn Children's Hospice Foundation which has now joined us in this project.

Our vision for the future includes ensuring that sufficient services and accommodation are provided either in Dublin or elsewhere, as appropriate, to support Ireland's children with life limiting or life threatening conditions.

We are facing the future with confidence and enthusiasm and I thank, most sincerely, everyone who is sharing our vision.





Strategic Review

Philomena Dunne
Chief Executive Officer

A total of 57 children availed of our services in 2006. And because of the specialised nature of the services provided we have seen an increase in the number of queries from as far a field as Cork, Galway and Donegal. In 2006 we had 17 new admissions of children for step-down and respite services, many of which were young infants. And we saw three children leaving our service – either discharged or transferred to other more appropriate settings. Sadly five of our children died in the last year.

One of the most striking features of The Children's Sunshine Home in 2006 is that it hasn't stood still. This is driven by the ever changing needs of the children and families referred to the service, and also the constantly changing needs of children already with us.

Our families

While the needs may have changed over time, our focus on the family has not. Both in terms of the day-to-day services and our development plans for the future, the family lies at the heart of all we do at The Children's Sunshine Home. We believe that if we support the family to care for their child, then ultimately the child remains at the centre of care. It has also resulted in ensuring that families are empowered to care for their own child with whatever supports are necessary. It has been wonderful to see children coming to us for step-down services from the Maternity Hospitals and eventually going home to be cared for by their parents with extended support from ourselves and those available in the community.

This year all our families attended 'person-centred' planning meetings and review meetings which focus on the needs of the child and set plans in place for the coming months for the whole team, including the family, to work on.

And we are delighted that with our assistance a national support group has now been established for bereaved parents called Annam Cara. This group is run by parents for parents. We have also set up bereavement support for families who require it through a one-on-one counsellor.

Our children

In keeping with our philosophy of ensuring that children remain part of their local community, all of our children under five years old have been referred to their local early intervention programme. We have also ensured an increase in inter-agency meetings for families in order that they receive all community supports that should be available to them.

As a result of increased availability of Physiotherapy and G.P. intervention, we have seen a decrease in our in-patient admissions to hospital. And at last all

our children now have Department of Education involvement and the majority attend Special National School daily.



Robert.

A Review Group has now been put in place chaired by the Health Service Executive (HSE), to look at identifying an appropriate model of service for adults with profound disabilities. This group is comprised of representatives from the HSE, staff, parents and suitably qualified external persons. We look forward to the report of the review group in 2007, which will be presented to the HSE and the Board of Management. Key to this review is the invaluable input by parents and families of the young people, thus ensuring that we are looking at the individual needs of each person throughout the process.

Our staff & structure

In 2006 The Children's Sunshine Home was the overall winner of the HSE National Innovation Awards. This accolade is testament to the importance and uniqueness of the service we offer. It reflects the professionalism and forward looking ambitions of The Children's Sunshine Home, and reiterates the need for a National Paediatric Palliative Care programme, which is why this is a key intended outcome of our development plans. Winning this Award was clearly a great achievement and has put us on the map with other health services.



Mary Harney TD, Minister for Health and Children, Philomena Dunne and Professor Brendan Drumm, HSE

Just as we need to keep moving forward on the services and care we provide, we have also put a lot of energy and effort into developing and improving the internal functions of The Children's Sunshine Home. We have also upgraded our financial and IT systems to increase our efficiency and effectiveness.

With our ambitious extension plans, we are extremely mindful of the effect this will have on staffing requirements. We recognise that being an 'Employer of Choice' is vital in the highly competitive health care market in Ireland. So looking to the future, we engaged the services of an external consultant to begin a staffing review which should be completed in 2007. We are delighted to have attracted some very high calibre staff to our team in 2006 and will continue with a strong recruitment drive into the future.



Caoimha and Michelle

We were also delighted that with the support of the Irish Hospice Foundation we were in a position to recruit and appoint Jane Flynn as Fundraising and Marketing Manager. Jane has worked very closely with Sharon Smurfit in very successfully raising our profile and held many very successful fundraising ventures in 2006.

Overview

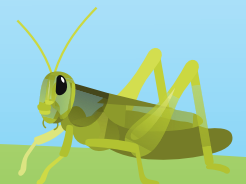
With the Laura Lynn Children's Hospice Foundation now on board there is a tremendous collective amount of active support across the country. Looking outward, we have a growing profile and wider net of awareness and support on which to call in the coming 12 months. Looking inward, we have created an environment that encourages continuous learning and actively seeks best practice, both of which are underpinned by a strict adherence to excellence in paediatric palliative care.

Strategic Objectives

- Develop appropriate respite and step-down services for young infants and children, and, where required, residential service for children with profound intellectual disability
- Provide comprehensive community based palliative care services for children
- Develop home and family support for children within our remit of responsibility
- Address the needs of teenagers and adults who come through The Children's Sunshine Home
- 'Be leaders in our field of expertise'
- Embrace the relevant priorities as outlined in the HSE Transformation Programme 2007-2010
- Review and evaluate as we proceed and ensure that we adopt a research based approach to all developments
- Identify and embrace best practice in Paediatric Palliative Care

Priorities for 2007

- Move development programme to the next phase
- Provide temporary extensions to the service to accommodate children more comfortably during the development programme
- In keeping with being an 'Employer of Choice' – successfully recruit and retain appropriate staff in keeping with service priorities
- Complete the external staffing review report and implement recommendations
- Up-skill staff in keeping with Team Based Performance Management and Individual Performance Reviews
- Network with Stakeholders effectively
- Commence the implementation of the findings from the Review Group on Adult Services





Family Centred Services

Shirley Devitt

Clinical Services Manager

We are ever conscious that families do not want to have to avail of our services and that the initial contact with them must take place in a highly sensitive manner and as efficiently and non-intrusively as possible.

On receiving a referral at The Children's Sunshine Home, we make contact with the family within two weeks. This introduction takes place at a venue decided by the family either in the hospital, family home or another venue. At this stage we assess the baby/child and family needs and agree to the aspect of the service most appropriate to meet them at this time.

Menu of options

The menu of options are:

- Full Time 'Step-Down Services' for three months from admission, which includes home support. This service supports the transition to home from the maternity or acute children's hospital for the child and their family
- Respite Services provide short-term planned breaks for the child and the family
- Crisis Care provides immediate placement for a child in the event of an emergency within the family unit. Parents can contact the service at any time day or night if in crisis to ensure that a 'life-line' is available to them if required
- Palliative Care Services provide comfort care and support to the child at times of critical or acute illness and also at end of life stage. Parents can choose whether this service takes place at home or at The Children's Sunshine Home



Cate

- Services for Over 18's. We are a children's service provider and as such do not provide services to young people over 18 years of age. However, we have a number of young adults living at The Children's Sunshine Home for many years. We are presently working with families and the HSE regarding the future needs of adults over 18 years who come through our services
- A multi-disciplinary team supports all aspects of the services



Nicholas

- Bereavement Support Services are available to all families attending the service
- Children's Residential Services provide either part-time or full time care for children if required

Admission procedure

For admission families are asked to complete an Application Form, Care Plan, Service Agreement and Documentation from Department of Health and Children. They are also asked to send us relevant reports such as Medical Reports. Once this stage is completed and the child deemed suitable for placement, the family are then offered a place for their child. An annual review takes place to ensure that we are adequately meeting the needs of the child and their family. At any stage the family may withdraw from the service or if placement becomes inappropriate we may refer the child on to a more appropriate setting.

In 2006 we provided services to 57 families - from 2003 to 2006 we provided services to 99 families

A Family Journey

Alec's Story
Oonagh, Alec's mum



When Alec was born, it was a huge shock for my husband John Paul and myself to hear that he had a condition that would leave him severely handicapped. 5 years earlier our family had been devastated by the death of our daughter Ellen, who we were told had an almost identical cat scan to Alec.

One doctor told us that no one could say exactly how this would pan out. This gave me hope, and Alec's character to me seemed determined and quite cranky which reassured me of his survival. Alec made it quite clear when he wasn't happy with something.

Alec had a lengthy spell in hospital. It soon became clear that Alec would be dependent on oxygen, would require a lot of medication and quite a bit of medical paraphernalia 24/7. My stomach churned. I shook with fear and dread. I was totally ill equipped to deal with this responsibility.

I can't remember exactly when The Children's Sunshine Home stepped in, but I remember meeting Shirley and Breda in hospital and we had lunch in the hospital canteen. They worked with children like Alec every day. They gave me so much support. They explained to me that Alec could be fed through a tube and would get adequate nutrition this way - he is only just two now and looks at least twice his age.

Alec shares a room in The Children's Sunshine Home with another little girl. The atmosphere there is relaxed and happy, and the staff are as warm as you'd expect to find at your own home.

The nursing staff provide excellent care to Alec which allows me to enjoy some quality time with him and his older brothers, John and Peter. John really enjoys The Children's Sunshine Home and often reads to the other children, while his younger brother, Peter can often be heard chuckling away playing with the physiotherapy balls, which of course, he shouldn't do.

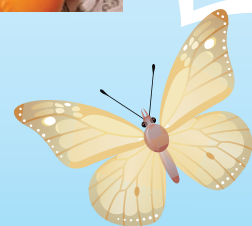
The Children's Sunshine Home is like an oasis – where you can be with your child, listen to music, watch a DVD or sing and play with your child. There is an early intervention programme each morning where we sing familiar songs with the children, explore the senses, and recreate a seashore scene with all the associated sounds, textures and smells.

And it's true, nurses really do know how to party: the staff never fail to make a fuss of someone on their birthday, at Halloween, Easter and of course, Christmas.

I would never have believed I could laugh so much in the midst of all of this, I hope we all continue to do so, especially, Alec.



Oonagh and Alec



Finance Report

The Children's Sunshine Home receives annual statutory funding from the Health Services Executive (HSE) as well as other miscellaneous income and donations from our very generous benefactors and supporters.

In 2006, the service had a total income of €4,488,719. We would like to acknowledge our friends and supporters who donated revenue donations of €87,717 and Capital Donations towards The Children's Sunshine Home Hospice Project of €1,243,655.

The cost of running the service in 2006 amounted to €4,304,499 of which €3,504,025 represented staff costs. Non-pay expenses totalling €800,474 were incurred chiefly in the following areas of capital maintenance, medical equipment, IT investments, recruitment and overhead costs.

To all our supporters and benefactors throughout the year, as always we say a big thank you.

INCOME	2006	2005
Health Authority Grants	4,209,278	3,965,152
Superannuation deductions	104,924	89,338
Other Income	41,681	35,391
Total Operating Income	4,355,883	4,089,881
EXPENDITURE	2006	2005
Pay Expenditure	3,504,025	3,336,930
Overheads	800,474	534,326
Total Operating Expenditure	4,304,499	3,871,256
Operating surplus/deficit for the year	51,384	218,625.00
Other Donations	87,717	115,751
Investment Income	42,119	29,736
Total Surplus for the year	181,220	364,112

All donations have been individually acknowledged throughout the year. And a comprehensive list of voluntary donations is available on request.

We thank the Health Services Executive for their support of The Children's Sunshine Home throughout the year and look forward to their continued support as we embark on our exciting development programme.



Jane McKenna, Philomena Dunne and the Hilton in the Community Foundation

Fundraising

The Fundraising focus for 2006/7 has been The Children's Sunshine Home Hospice Project.

As plans were drawn up and permission sought for the 4 buildings that will make up the extended services, national palliative care programme and Ireland's first children's hospice, races were being run, flowers arranged and golf played in every corner of the country and spanning all ages.

Inspired by the need to help families and children, our supporters have rallied together and contributed a staggering €1.25 million (2006) towards our €11.3m goal.

Our sincere thanks go to the corporations, schoolchildren, sports clubs and local communities, for their generosity of time, money and spirit.

We were delighted with the support we received from Mondial Assistance, Bank of Ireland, Microsoft, AIG Manchester United, Dr. Michael Smurfit, Hilton in the Community Foundation and the Leopardstown Lions to name a few. And spearheaded by our tireless fundraiser Sharon Smurfit, we also hosted several events of our own: Arnotts sponsored our Mothers Day Lunch and Canada Life, The Tiger Trust

Summer Party. Both events were a resounding success with goodwill and donations present in equal measure.

Not only did all of these events raise funds but also awareness of the services we offer. And by spreading the word we hope to reach, and to help, more families and more children.

With our fundraising and marketing manager Jane Flynn now on board we have a co-ordinated and dedicated capability to maximise the interest and support garnered so far. The goal being to generate the funds required to complete the first stage of the Hospice Project. Our now regularly updated web site carries the details of all future events, and some pictures of past ones too.

So our plans for the future: more of the same, recognizing each and every effort as a valued contribution to our end goal.



Tania Meighan of Arnotts & Philomena Dunne, Arnotts Mother's Day Lunch 2007



Participants of the Mini Marathon 2007



Leopardstown Lions Race Night 2006



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The Children's Sunshine Home is a registered charity and if you would like to help us in any way, please let us know.

Our charity number is - CHY2633