

Abigail's

Annual Report 2019



Lady Astor of Hever – Abigail's Footsteps Patron.

Abigail's Footsteps understand the long-lasting and significant impact from baby loss, I am pleased to report this year the charity took on the task of addressing the lack of mental health care available to families. The charity has always worked to improve standards of care given to bereaved parents, and now by offering fully funded counselling from a specialist baby loss counsellor, the charity is increasing the care and support they provide. Since the launch of the programme in May they have supported 30 families.



Looking to the year ahead, Abigail's Footsteps commemorates its 10th anniversary in 2020 and to coincide with this they are delighted to announce the launch of Abigail's Angels Bereavement Training programme. This funded training for professionals, is designed to ensure families receive the best possible care following the death of a baby.

Thank you to everyone that has supported Abigail's Footsteps this year and we hope to have your continued support in what will be a very special year for us.

Kamal Aggarwal – Abigail's Footsteps Chairman.

It has been an extremely busy and gratifying year for all of us involved with Abigail's. We have subsidised bereavement training to over 117 professionals, provided over 120 face to face counselling sessions to families and supplied 7 Abi cots to hospitals up and down the country.



We have been delighted to welcome Becky Hopkins for fund raising to help Faye Hill with operations. Both have hit the ground running and have made an enormous difference to our day to day capability.

I am pleased to confirm that our financial position continues to be strong and that we are confident that the charity operates in an open and transparent manner with solid governance at its core.

We look forward to continuing the good progress of 2019 into 2020, a very special year as Abigail's celebrates its 10th birthday.

Finally, and as ever, there are many people I would like to thank for their support, hard work and dedication. Our patron, vice presidents and trustees continue to give their valuable time, guidance and support. Our fundraisers, supporters and volunteers never fail to amaze and humble us with their quite extraordinary determination, devotion and commitment. Finally, to our sponsors and donors, both private and corporate for their continued goodwill, generosity of spirit, time and resources. Our sincerest gratitude to all of you for everything you do to make what we do possible.





This year was the big launch of our new initiative to make counselling services more accessible to bereaved families.

After Baby Loss Awareness Week this year the Alliance, of which Abigail's Footsteps is a member, published a report **"Out of Sight, Out of Mind: Bereaved parents falling through the gaps in mental health care"**, which revealed that 60% of bereaved parents surveyed felt they needed specialist psychological support for their mental health but were not able to access it on the NHS. With this in mind we started funding specialist baby loss counselling through Lifecare Counselling in 2019.

We could not have started this programme without funding from Kent Community Foundation, Colyer Fergusson Trust, Rank Foundation, The Whitehead Monckton Charitable Foundation, ASDA Community Scheme & TESCO Bags of Help, so a massive thank you to everyone who has helped to get this project off the ground. With a big thank you to Bluewater Shopping Centre who allowed us to use 'The Place of Quiet' to hold the counselling sessions. We have already funded over 120 private counselling sessions and we look to grow this further in the coming years in our aim to help families not just in Kent but across other counties in the UK.



 The counselling sessions have changed me in ways I never thought about, I am now calmer, nowhere near as anxious as I was after losing my baby and now learning to live with my loss and cope with life. 

-Testimony from a mother, baby was stillborn at 39 weeks.



January

A great start to the year with a donation from the Brian Mitchell Charitable Settlement for £3,000.

We are so very grateful for this and would like to say thank you to every one of the trustees. It's the generosity of donations such as this that allow the charity to function and operate to provide the good work we do.

It was a successful start to the year with the Glitz & Glamour 80s Charity Ball at Priestfield Stadium in February.

Attendance numbers were good, and we raised over £5,000 from the evening. Vice President Cheryl Baker sang a few numbers and The Vizitors were a hit ensuring the dance floor was packed all night long. The promo film from the evening was great and will be useful for further promotion of our events.

We had the pleasure of sponsoring the 9th Neonatal Conference in London on 5th February held by Child Bereavement UK, we also subsidised 20 places for student midwives to attend.

During the first six months of 2019, we funded 58 professionals to attend the following courses: 'Supporting parents through pregnancy loss and the death of a baby' in Manchester, 'The challenges of supporting parents through the neonatal experience' in Birmingham and 'Considering the Impact on healthcare professionals, when a child dies' in Glasgow.

February



March



Our Vice President Cheryl Baker took on a great personal challenge and ran the London Landmarks Half Marathon with friend Susie and daughter Natalie. They were joined by Nadene, Melissa, Ben, Steve, Phil, Karen, Becky and Ben.

Thank you to Abacus Blinds Maidstone and Thameside Mortgages for sponsoring the team running vests for the event. The team collectively raised over £5,000 which is a great achievement and we would like to thank Cheryl for being such a supportive Vice President for Abigail's Footsteps. A big thank you to Spec Savvy Opticians at Chatham Dockside for donating £1,200 to hit our fundraising target this year and for offering to be the official corporate sponsor for LLHM 2020!



Cheryl, Susie and Natalie



With the change of season we held an afternoon tea at the beautiful Chilston Park Hotel in March, as well as glorious weather we were lucky to have music performed by Cheryl from 'Vintage Jukebox'.

Our Vice President Cheryl Baker also had the opportunity to show off her lovely medal from London Landmarks Half Marathon to charity Co-Founder Jo Ward.



April

Karen Joyce was a great fundraiser for us this year,

after completing the LLHM she went on to run the London Marathon in April raising a massive £2,600 which took incredible strength and determination.



A massive round of applause for KAREN JOYCE who raised over £2,600 running the London Marathon in memory of her son Micky.

Don't these boys look amazing! A huge thank you to the managers and players at Hempstead Valley Colts U10's for helping raise awareness and supporting Abigail's Footsteps by having our logo on the away match kits.



In May, Due to the great fundraising efforts of two families we delivered two Abi Cots to St Thomas' Hospital London.



Vicky Smart completed a skydive to raise funds in memory of her Granddaughter Isabella-Rose.



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Charity Golf Day
July 2019

*The day raised over
£7,000 for the charity*



*On a scorching day we hosted
another successful Charity Golf Day
at The Nevill Golf Club in Tunbridge
Wells.*

It was a fun day, with lots of enjoyment for all the players that took part, the support for the event meant we raised over £7,000, a fantastic achievement which we could not have done without the help of our Vice President Craig Chalmers and the generous contributions from Ping for our raffle prizes and to Alpine Action Adventures for donating a very generous auction prize.



*Thank you to all our generous corporate supporters,
we couldn't make the difference we do without your help,
it really does mean a lot to have your support.*



Abigail's



In August, We partnered up with Dinotropolis at Bluewater for a special raising awareness day.

Giving back to families that have suffered baby loss, to come and enjoy a free day out on us. It was also a chance for us to thank our local supporters, volunteers and fundraisers.

The kids (and adults) had a great time!



We were so grateful to be the chosen charity for 'Kent Bat and Trap Charity Cup' held in August at Lordswood Cricket Club in Chatham, the event raised over £1,500 and Cheryl Baker went along for the presentations.



*The two teams raised over
£3,000 between them*

September



Two teams battled hard at the KM Events Dragon Boat Race at Mote Park but...

unfortunately the Warriors and Argonauts, who were made up of employees from Timbergroup UK, lost in the knockout stages of the competition. It was a fun day had by all the families that joined us to cheer them on, and the two teams raised over £3,000 between them.



Saminder Matharu and his colleagues from Building Materials Nationwide Ltd completed a gruelling 5k Tough Mudder, they raised over £3,000 which meant Sam & Tara could donate a second Abi Cot this year in memory of daughter Mimi. A wonderful achievement for everyone involved.



We would like to say thank you to all the schools in the local community who continue to support Abigail's Footsteps in so many ways.

Special mention to St Andrews in Rochester who raised £1,980 from a Read-A-Thon and Borden Grammar in Sittingbourne who raised £1,557 during Rag Week. The children and parents at both schools made a big difference to helping our counselling programme for bereaved families.



This year Abigail's Footsteps has continued to provide Abi cooling Cots to hospitals across the country...

including Grimsby Hospital, Watford General Hospital, North Devon Hospital, Darlington Memorial Hospital in County Durham and Stoke Mandeville Hospital, further demonstrating how far our reach has become in helping support hospitals with equipment.

Thank you...

To Avenue Tennis for hosting a Quiz Night which raised £620. This was Becky's first fundraiser for Abigail's Footsteps We are so lucky to have Becky join the team and hope she thrives as Fundraising & Events Manager for our charity.



October



It's because of the extraordinary efforts of great supporters like Nadene Hilt who raised £800 from a raffle that mean so much to us.

We could not support all the families we do without volunteers like Nadene who ran London Landmarks Half Marathon and Royal Half Parks for Abigail's Footsteps this year.

We're wondering what her next challenge might be!



"Wave of Light" at Rochester Cathedral

Tuesday 15th October we joined with Rochester Cathedral to open the doors for 'Wave of Light' welcoming everyone that wanted to light a candle in remembrance of a baby that sadly left us too soon. A special thank you to Ben Gibbs & his team at Visual Elements for lighting up the Cathedral pink and blue for Baby Loss Awareness Week. As it will be our 10th anniversary in 2020 we are hoping to add a service to this event and look to welcome more families to this special remembrance.

 We would like to say thank you to all those who have and continue to support us in so many ways 



Thank you to KEiBA for making us their joint charity of the year and donating a huge £1,817 from the Awards night.

Cheryl Baker visited the KM Group offices to present a certificate from Abigail's Footsteps and had a cheeky moment where she went live on air to the shock of DJ Andy who was presenting a link to KMFM listeners!



Cheryl Baker visiting the KM Group

Andrew Johnson completed his walk of 170 miles from Llanwddyn to Nottingham, by arriving at the City Ground and being greeted by Chairman Frank Clark!

£4,768 for Abigail's Footsteps, we are very grateful on behalf of all the families this will help.



Andrew Johnson greeted by Frank Clark



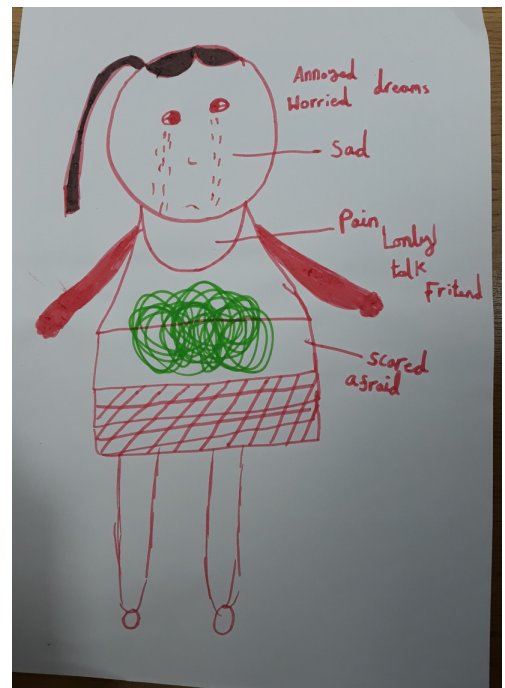
November



The biggest event and fundraiser for the year was our sold-out concert, BeatleMania at Rochester Cathedral. An outstanding tribute of so many Beatles classics from Counterfeit Beatles, The Rokit Choir and guest performance from the amazing singer Jamie Johnson, we rocked the cathedral!

Thank you to our volunteers on the evening that gave up their time to help out selling raffle tickets and serving at the bar.

In partnership with another local charity we funded a 1-day therapeutic workshop at Demelza House in Sittingbourne. The workshop offered children & families affected by stillbirth and neonatal death an opportunity to meet others in a similar situation, in a safe, supportive environment to experience creative ways of remembering, and to develop coping strategies and resilience for the future. We have already discussed the possibility of a further two courses in 2020.



👣 Having the time to stop and just focus on our baby was so special, normally we try and push it to the back of our minds to try and carry on with daily life. 👣

-Testimony from an attendee



Looking forward to the year ahead...

Abigail's Footsteps commemorates its 10th anniversary year in 2020 and to coincide we are delighted to announce the launch of Abigail's Angels Bereavement Training.

This funded training for professionals will be provided by Paula Abramson, principal and founder of Bereavement Training International. High-quality support and care for families following the death of a baby is an important element of the role of professionals. Abigail's Angels specialist training for professionals is designed to ensure families receive the best possible support and care. We will of course continue to help deliver crucial equipment to hospitals who have a need for it and to work with local groups to support the provision of much needed bereavement suites wherever possible.

We will also be looking at further funding for specialist baby loss counselling sessions, to continue the programme and develop them from the initial stages we started in 2019. As part of delivering this expert service with the best in their field, we are delighted that Naomi Marston and Paula Abramson have agreed to be Ambassadors for Abigail's Footsteps. We welcome them to the team.



Naomi Marston



Paula Abramson

We are delighted to announce that we have been chosen to be 'Charity of the Year 2020' for KM Group Medway Messenger and Family Business Place. We are also very excited to be working in partnership with Leeds Castle, where we will host Walk for Abigail's in September. We will commemorate all the hard work we've achieved over the last 10 years with a Charity Gala, details of all our 2020 events can be found on our website - www.abigailsfootsteps.co.uk



👣 Our sincerest gratitude to all
of you for everything you do to
make what we do possible. 👣



Trevor Adams - Trustee & Treasurer - Trevor is a banking professional with a degree in Financial Services, he joined Handelsbanken as Branch Manager in 2008.



Sam Collinge - Trustee - Sam is Bereavement Support Specialist Midwife at University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust, she is also a member of The All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Baby Loss and a huge asset to our charity.



Finally, and as ever there are many people I would like to thank for their support, hard work and dedication.

Our patron, vice presidents and trustees continue to give their valuable time, guidance and support. Our fundraisers, supporters and volunteers never fail to amaze and humble us with their quite extraordinary determination, devotion and commitment. Finally, to our sponsors and donors, both private and corporate for their continued goodwill, generosity of spirit, time and resources. Our sincerest gratitude to all of you for everything you do to make what we do possible.

Abigail's

Providing support for bereaved families

