

## Making connections to make a difference

2018 was another busy year for Friends of Rosie, as we continue to widen our network, connect with more corporate supporters, and further raise awareness for childhood cancer research in the North West.

We've welcomed a new Trustee, launched a new website and branding, and created new fundraising materials to help attract more supporters. The two research projects we are currently funding (see page two) continue to show great promise. We look forward to sharing the full year reports with you during 2019 as the projects come to a close and the research results are formally published.

Furthermore, thanks to our amazing supporters, we are in a position to fund a brand-new research project this year and have recently issued a grant call to research institutions in the North West to apply for funding.

Alongside these priorities, our attention is also focused on continued efforts to track and assess the effectiveness of the research projects we fund. Friends of Rosie is at the outset of the research journey and it can be a long, slow process of discovery. Our aim continues to be getting innovative, new research ideas off the ground, giving researchers initial results that they can then use to gain large scale funding from other charities and organisations. This allows the research to go on and make a real difference to children with cancer.

With that in mind, we are spending some time this year tracing back through the 23 research projects we have funded, since 1991, to assess exactly how

they have gone on to make a difference. It is essential to us and to our supporters that we all see progress. That's why we're here and why we hope you'll continue to support us. With so many charities and causes funding research projects, making different claims, and each with different areas of focus, we want to help our supporters to connect the dots and really see the difference you are making.



In terms of fundraising, we hope to attract more corporate support this year to help us fund even more projects. To that aim, if there is just one thing you could do to help us this year, please share our name and details with any of your business contacts. We are proactively contacting many businesses across the North West, but word of mouth and recommendations make a huge difference. You could also recommend us as a charity of choice in your local supermarkets and high street retailers. Many have forms you can complete in-store or online.

With your continued support, we'll make a difference to children with cancer.

## New Trustee, new website, new look

Manchester is now internationally recognised as a pioneering city in the fight against cancer and we at Friends of Rosie are helping to raise awareness of the need for more dedicated childhood cancer research in the UK.



It's a little-known fact that childhood cancer receives less funding in the UK than any other type of cancer. While this is mainly due to its relative rarity in comparison to adult cancers, the lasting effects of cancer treatments have a far greater impact on a child's growing body.

To mark Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, in September we announced the appointment of a new Parent Trustee, Katie Cutler. Katie's son Arthur, from Bolton, was diagnosed with Acute Myeloid Leukaemia when he was just 16 months old and was treated at The Royal Manchester Children's Hospital. Says Katie, "Arthur is thankfully two years in remission now but has been left with lasting effects having been diagnosed at such a young age. There are still hundreds of promising research ideas that don't receive funding and never even get off the ground. We need to change that."

We also proudly launched our brand-new website, with simpler donation options, lots of fundraising ideas and information about the research we fund. Many parents across Manchester and the surrounding areas have shared their child's cancer story with us in a section on the site called 'Rosie's Friends' to help raise awareness of the need for more research.

Says Communication Manager, Helen Griffin, "We've had the kind support of Manchester brand agency, Truth, who have helped to define our brand proposition and revitalise our brand, alongside the creation of a new fundraising pack. Wigan-based web development agency, Attain Digital, have also done a fantastic job with our new website helping to make donating and fundraising more accessible.

"We're delighted to have been able to make these improvements without spending any of our supporters' money, ensuring their donations go on research, not on marketing."

The website was funded by the Manchester Guardian Society Trust and the branding work was done pro bono by Truth in celebration of their 10-year anniversary. The Lee and Bakirgian Family Trust have once again funded this newsletter, enabling us to update our supporters. Our grateful thanks to all three.

Please visit our new-look website at [www.friendsofrosie.co.uk](http://www.friendsofrosie.co.uk)



# Our research projects

## Extra £65,000 for bone cancer research

Our project, researching the treatment and improved detection of osteosarcoma in children, was last year awarded a further £65,000 to fund a second year of research.



There is an urgent need to develop new therapies that target metastatic osteosarcoma. Once osteosarcoma has spread to other parts of the body, called metastasizing, fewer than 30% of patients survive five years after diagnosis – a survival rate that has remained virtually unaltered over the last 30 years.

Says lead Friends of Rosie-funded researcher, Dr. Katherine Finegan, from The University of Manchester, "This project is researching the role of a protein called, ERK5, which is believed to advance the spread of osteosarcoma tumours. We are researching the effect of inhibiting or removing ERK5 on the progress or spread of tumours.

"So far our research has critically revealed that it's no good to just slow down or block the activity of ERK5, it needs to be removed altogether for effective anti-tumour activity."

Via a simultaneous project, Dr. Finegan and her team have developed a compound that degrades ERK5. To date, this has shown positive results when tested on osteosarcoma cells.

With these two facts verified, the team have then gone on to create a robust process for monitoring the progression and spread of the tumour. They generated a modified cell which has its ERK5 levels depleted so that the function of the ERK5 protein could be determined. Using these adapted cells meant the team could capture and measure the effects of ERK5 on immune-driven tumour responses.

Says Chair of the Friends of Rosie Scientific Advisory Board, Professor John Hickman, "The first year of this project has enabled the development of an effective measure for the way osteosarcoma tumours develop and spread and the reasons why this happens. With this additional year of funding, Dr. Finegan and her team will conduct further experiments to give enough statistical data; improve the imaging methods to detect the spread of tumours; and test the effects of standard chemotherapy versus chemotherapy combined with the presence of the ERK5 protein.

"It is our hope this further year of research data will enable this project to achieve larger-scale funding that could ultimately change the outcomes for children diagnosed with osteosarcoma in the future."

## Positive preliminary results for brain tumour project

For the past 18 months, Friends of Rosie has funded a cutting-edge research project to improve treatment options for children with incurable brain tumours. As it moves into its final research phase, we can share some of the positive preliminary results in using immunotherapy to shrink or destroy brain tumours in children.

This project is being conducted at the Manchester Cancer Research Centre under the supervision of lead researchers, Professor Robert Hawkins and Dr Gray Kueberuwa.

Says Dr Kueberuwa, "The aim of this project is to investigate the possibility of using a child's own immune system, called immunotherapy, to fight their brain tumour. There are many types of childhood brain tumours that don't respond well to conventional treatments and so are currently incurable. This research is looking at the potential of immunotherapy to give children a life-saving alternative where chemotherapy and radiotherapy has failed.

"While the path to progressing this approach for use in patients has many challenges, preliminary results so far have given us a hope that this goal is achievable in the future."

### Brain tumours are particularly resistant to drug therapy

All projects funded by Friends of Rosie are reviewed by an independent scientific advisory board to ensure that money is being spent on the most promising areas of childhood cancer research. Following a recent review of this project, Professor John Hickman, Chair of the advisory board, commented on the potential long-term outlook for the research:

"Brain tumours are particularly resistant to drug therapy. This project investigates the possibility of a different approach by harnessing the body's own immune system to attack the tumour. Immunotherapy has recently had an impact against incurable tumours, such as melanoma and some lung cancers.

"The brain has previously been considered to be an immune sanctuary, with suppressed immune activity and few immune cells. Despite this, Professor Robert Hawkins and Dr Gray Kueberuwa have successfully isolated immune cells from childhood brain cancers and expanded their numbers by growing them in the laboratory.



### Hope for the future

"Preliminary data suggests that these expanded populations of immune cells recognise tumour cells and kill them. Ongoing work will investigate the effectiveness of these expanded populations of immune cells to selectively affect tumour growth in the laboratory, without effects on normal cells, with a long-term view to eventually reintroducing them into the brain for therapeutic gain. This will involve many further steps before a therapeutic use will be possible."

The project is due for completion in Spring 2019, after which a full scientific report will be published to share the great potential of this approach. The project may enable the development of a key new area of childhood cancer treatment and could save the lives of children with brain tumours in the future.

## Altrincham FC support

Thanks to the lovely people at Altrincham Football Club, Friends of Rosie was chosen as the match day charity at their home game to Southport on Saturday 19 January 2019.

Our volunteers were out in force on the day shaking buckets at the turnstiles and around the bars, both pre-match and at half-time. Five-year-old, George Griffin, led the team out on the day as team mascot to represent the charity.

A total of £434.24 was raised thanks to the generous Altrincham FC supporters. A big thank you to the club for your support and to our amazing volunteers for giving up their time to fundraise.



## Novo Property Group conquer three peaks

In October a 17-strong team from Novo Property Group took on the Yorkshire Three Peaks challenge to raise money for childhood cancer research.

The team reached the end of the challenge with time to spare and certainly enjoyed a well-deserved celebratory drink at the peak. Huge congratulations and thanks to the whole team who raised a whopping £2,690 for Friends of Rosie.



## Raising awareness amongst K-Club members

Jennie Johnson, an active Patron of Friends of Rosie and CEO of Kids Allowed, spoke on behalf of the charity at a K-Club women's business lunch event back in March.

The K-Club bring together a group of highly experienced advisers to businesses across Greater Manchester and Cheshire.

Jennie's attendance at the event was great exposure for Friends of Rosie and we give our thanks to her for her continued efforts to raise awareness for childhood cancer research in the North West. 25% of all ticket sales for the event were kindly donated to Friends of Rosie.



## Altrincham Concert Orchestra

The Altrincham Concert Orchestra have again shown great support for Friends of Rosie, dedicating their summer and Christmas concerts to the charity.

Under the baton of Mike Haslam, their annual Christmas concert, held at the Altrincham United Reformed Church, raised more than just the roof, with £600 donated to charity by the generous audience. The orchestra played a most entertaining and varied programme of popular music, including a beautiful violin solo by Clare Woodward.

The summer concert, held in July, raised £307.77. Thank you to everyone who attended these events and supported Friends of Rosie.



## The amazing faces of Ward 84

Sunday 22 July was a day full of fun, memories, celebration and, for some, a few hours of light relief from the hospital, at the annual Ward 84 summer party

Held once again at the impressive Victoria Baths in Manchester, the party is organised by a dedicated team of volunteers via the Faces of Ward 84 community group. Its aim is to give the children and families of the oncology ward at The Royal Manchester Children's Hospital (Ward 84), a special day to have fun together with friends, siblings and family. It's also a poignant time to come together and remember those children who lost their battles with cancer.

Friends of Rosie was privileged once again this year to be invited to attend this fantastic event and run the craft table. We made book marks, cards and generally got messy with glitter and glue!

A huge thank you to Clair Beswick and all the organisers for inviting us to attend.



## Easy ways to donate online

We've introduced several new ways for supporters to more easily donate online including – AmazonSmile, Facebook Donate and PayPal.

When you shop with AmazonSmile, you can donate and help us raise more money for childhood cancer research. It's the same Amazon and the same products. Just go to [smile.amazon.co.uk](http://smile.amazon.co.uk) and select the Friends of Rosie Children's Cancer Research Fund as your charity of choice. Amazon will donate 0.5% of the net purchase price of eligible purchases to us, at no extra cost to you.

If you'd like to make a one-off or regular monthly donation to Friends of Rosie, you can do this quickly and simply via PayPal. Just click the 'donate' button on our website.

You can also donate on our Facebook homepage.



## Cracking Easter egg raffle third time running

Friends of Rosie signed up supporters across Greater Manchester and Cheshire to take part in our third annual Easter egg raffle fundraiser. The huge handcrafted eggs were once again provided by Bury-based master chocolatier, Slattery.



With the help of local and national businesses, schools and community groups, we raised almost £3,500 during Easter 2018.

Says Friends of Rosie Trustee, Lisa Larkin, "This was our third annual Easter egg raffle with Slattery and we're delighted to gain more supporters and raise more money. Huge thanks go to everyone who supported us this Easter."



The full list of supporters who ran Easter egg raffles is: Kids Allowed, Investec Wealth & Investment, RMS PR, Bridgewater School, Hale Preparatory School, Brown Bag Animations, The Riverside Café Audenshaw, The Manchester Cancer Research Centre; The University of Manchester, Deans Court Chambers, CVS Vets, Premex Services, Liveseys and St Cuthbert Church Withington.

## Festival raises thousands for childhood cancer research



The family and friends of five-year-old, Joshua McCormack, held a fundraising festival in May, called JoshFest, to mark what would have been his seventh birthday. Joshua died from a very rare brain tumour in January 2017.

A whopping £3,541 was raised through the event, £1,100 of which has been kindly donated to Friends of Rosie.

Said Joshua's mum, Nicola, "I realised that not all cancer charities are transparent, which is why I chose Friends of Rosie. Being mainly a volunteer-led charity, I felt reassured that almost every penny raised would go directly into funding research."

This year's JoshFest will be taking place on 15 June 2019 at Rochdale Football Club.

## Have a Snack shop



Max Edwards, aged 9, from Prestwich was inspired to fundraise for childhood cancer. He decided to create his own 'Have a Snack' shop outside his father's fish and chip shop, selling homemade cakes and drinks.

Max was also helped at his cafe by twin brother Charlie, who lent a hand with the finances for the venture. The pair raised over £200 for Friends of Rosie and Breast Cancer Research.

Max's mum, Olivia Edwards, said, "Max wanted to support childhood cancer as, in his word, children should have a long life and not a short one". Well done to Max and Charlie.

## Mini Mancunians – Emily & Abigail

Emily and Abigail Burrows completed the 2018 Mini Manchester Run for Friends of Rosie and raised a whopping £587.25!

Emily was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukaemia (ALL) in 2013 and has since been a patient on Ward 84 at The Royal Manchester Children's Hospital. She was 4 years old at the time, Abigail was just a week old.

Today, thankfully, Emily is doing great and has amazed her family and friends with her resilience and bravery. Her mum, Lou, said she couldn't have done it without her little sister by her side.

Both girls said they were proud to raise money to help other children get better and we're very proud that they chose us!

## Shaun smashes Three Peaks Challenge

A massive well done and thank you to Shaun Peake who completed the Yorkshire Three Peaks Challenge in April in support of his nephew, Jacob.



Shaun did Jacob and all of us proud by completing the challenge in 10 hours and 4 minutes raising over £1,000. Said Shaun, "I didn't realise it would be so tough, but I'm pleased with my time, even though there were moments when I thought about getting a taxi home!"

Fantastic effort and a huge thank you to Shaun.

## Alcohol-free fundraiser

Kendra Haigh started this year with a goal of staying alcohol-free for as much of 2018 as she could, in memory of five-year old Joshua McCormack.

She stayed alcohol-free for eight months and raised a fantastic £300. Said Kendra, via her fundraising page, "Cancer shows no mercy, affecting adults and children alike. So instead of reading the stories, with tears in my eyes, I decided to actually DO something to try and make a difference."

## Richard's Prudential Ride 100



On one of the only wet and windy days we saw during July, Richard Woodhall set out on the Prudential Ride 100 London to Surrey in support of Friends of Rosie.

Richard did Friends of Rosie proud on the day, despite getting soaked and having to fight the windy conditions. He raised a fantastic £676.25 for which we are hugely grateful.

Said Richard, "It was a wet and windy ride but also lots of fun and I'm really pleased to have raised so much for Friends of Rosie to help children with cancer. Thank you to everyone who donated."

## Mrs Mary Smith leaves lasting legacy

We give our sincerest thanks to the late Mrs Mary Smith of Paisley, and her family, for her extremely generous legacy donation of £12,805.

This is an amazing amount to leave to children's cancer research and will make a huge difference to the innovative research projects we fund.

If you or a member of your family would like to let your memory live on via a donation to Friends of Rosie in your will, please just get in touch.

## Easy ways you can help

If our newsletter inspires you to become a friend of Rosie, here are some simple ways to help:

- ✓ **FUNDRAISE** via the Virgin Money Giving website
- ✓ **NOMINATE** Friends of Rosie as your charity of choice at work or at your child's school, nursery or college
- ✓ **DONATE** via bank transfer, by cheque or via PayPal
- ✓ **GIVE** your time to support our charity events
- ✓ **SHARE** your experience of childhood cancer

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T: 0161 834 7333 • E: [info@friendsofrosie.co.uk](mailto:info@friendsofrosie.co.uk) • W: [www.friendsofrosie.co.uk](http://www.friendsofrosie.co.uk)

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