

Together

Autumn/ Winter 2023

Time
together

Find out how Acorns
helps Marwah and
has become part of
the family

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acorns

Your local children's hospice

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We are stronger, because of you

When a child you love has limited time it's important to make every day and every moment count. At Acorns Children's Hospice our nurses, care teams, and volunteers create a world where children can be children and enjoy every moment. This is all possible because of your support.

Whether it's enjoying a splash in our accessible pool with their siblings or socialising with other children during our arts and crafts workshops, your support helps us to create precious moments for our children and families.

Thank you

Part of our family

Marwah is a happy, bubbly little girl, who has a great sense of humour. She enjoys spending time with her family and especially likes parties and sparkly dresses.

When Marwah was born, she was a perfect little girl, absolutely perfect. Although I was induced at 34 weeks everything seemed normal when we took our baby home.

However, it wasn't long until I started to notice that something was wrong when I was getting her dressed. She screamed every time I lifted her arms.

It wasn't a hunger scream, it was pain. She wasn't drinking milk properly either, so she wasn't growing like my other girls did when they were babies.

For weeks doctors and midwives told me I was being paranoid, but I knew something wasn't right, so I took her to A&E. I sat there and cried and cried. I refused to leave until a specialist came to see Marwah. Finally, someone listened to me.

Test after test came back negative. Everything was 'normal'. Eventually, my husband and I were told to undergo genetic testing and we got our answer – hyaline fibromatosis syndrome.

Continued...

Marwah's condition requires her to have oxygen support

£175 could give
a child like Marwah
and her family
a session of
hydrotherapy at
Acorns.

It's a life limiting condition that affects many areas of her body, including the skin, joints, bones, internal organs and gums. Because symptoms of the condition present later, there were no real signs but I just knew there was something wrong.

Marwah is not able to sit up or turn over. She can hardly do most daily things, so it gets difficult for her. She is on oxygen to support her breathing and she requires constant care. At night, we have to get up and turn her every 15 minutes. It's always constant.

Acorns first came into our lives when Marwah was four months old. At first, we came to just use the hydrotherapy pool twice a week. It really helped Marwah and it helped me.

Afterwards, she sleeps through the night meaning I don't have to get up to turn her so I have a full night's rest too.

Acorns is so supportive of our family and our cultural needs too. They're very considerate. Even with things like going in the pool. They never question the clothing we wear, and they always tell us if there's a male pool spotter and ask us if that's okay.

We access other services now too. We go to their Stay and Play sessions which Marwah loves as she has made friends there.

And Acorns comes to us at home. The Outreach service is amazing. Marwah loves her visits from Laura the Outreach Nurse. Together they'll plant seeds, make cakes, and paint. Marwah loves looking at her own work, and seeing the plants grow.

They do so many things for us as a family and offer so much support. You don't know all that they can do for you until you're actually there.

I do all of Marwah's care at home. She is too precious for me to let anyone else care for her. But at Acorns I'm able to let go. I get a rest from giving care and I'm just Marwah's mum.

When Marwah was diagnosed, I didn't know where to go. Then Acorns came into our lives. I'd be lost without them. They are not just a service. They are part of our family now.

Nizet

Marwah's mum

A very *big* thank you!

Thanks to the support of our local community – people like you – all these magical moments have been made possible for the children and families at Acorns.

Talk about a show-stopper!

A slice from the Acorns bakery, anyone? The children and staff at our Black Country hospice have been whipping up a storm.



Celebrating in style

Children and staff at Acorns in Birmingham got crafty to celebrate the Coronation, making lots of lovely decorations including these very fetching hats!



Special visitors

Shetland ponies Lollipop and Moomin stopped by Acorns in the Black Country to say hello. The children had a great time making friends with them.



Drawing dragons

Our Care team always looks for opportunities to get out and about with the children. Jack, Owen and Isaac enjoyed a countryside walk from our Three Counties hospice.



Ice cream anyone?

What better treat on a hot day, than a lovely ice cream. Children at our Three Counties hospice enjoyed some wonderful treats in the sunshine.



Blowing bubbles

Back in Spring we had bubbles galore, and as you can see little Louie enjoyed every second.



Fun down on the farm

Daniyal went on an exciting trip to a farm park, which was full of sights, sounds and smells and of course some lovely animals to pet.



We are so grateful to everyone in our community who donates and chooses to raise money to support the children and families we care for. If you want to support our work, please get in touch with our team on **01564 825 037** or email supporter.services@acorns.org.uk

Peaceful sanctuary for quiet contemplation

There's a special space within each of our beautiful hospice gardens; a precious place where families can go to remember. Our Memorial Gardens offer families a peaceful sanctuary, where they can reflect, find solace, and draw strength from the cherished memories of their loved ones.

Nestled within the peaceful grounds of each of our hospice gardens is a special space; a place that provides comfort and a quiet sanctuary for families at Acorns who are bereaved of their child.

Visitors to our Memorial Gardens will know of the warm embrace of these simple yet profound spaces. These gardens belong to our families and represent precious lives lived and the spirit of children who have left an everlasting mark on their families' hearts.

For many families who have lost a child visiting a resting place can be too painful. But at Acorns, our gardens offer a place where love and memories can continue to bloom.

Families will often simply sit in the garden in quiet contemplation.

Some families may visit the gardens to mark special anniversaries or birthdays, bringing with them friends and other relatives to share the moment of remembrance and celebration of their children.

At the centre of each of our Memorial Gardens is a gentle stream in which stones engraved with the names of children who have sadly died have been delicately placed.

Families are given the opportunity to remember their child in this way if they wish, and it forms an important part of the ongoing therapeutic support our specialist teams provide.

Parents Vikas and Reena chose to have their little boy Aum's name inscribed on a stone, which was then placed in the Memorial Garden at our Birmingham hospice.

"Aum's stone is just amazing. We come in and once a year, the girls tie a thread on his stone which is part of a religious festival called Rakhi. It's nice because we get to be with him and remember him in his home. It doesn't feel sad when we come here. He's missing and he should be here, but Acorns really do him justice. It just feels like they're family." - Vikas, Aum's dad.

Our peaceful memorial garden at the Three Counties hospice

Our Memorial Gardens are a living tribute to the everlasting legacy of so many remarkable children. They serve as a powerful reminder of the support we provide to all of the families that need us, at every stage of their child's life and beyond.



Sarah

**Acorns Family Services Manager & Organisational Lead for Bereavement
Acorns for the Three Counties**

Supporting Siblings

At Acorns we have a dedicated Sibling Support Team that facilitates group sessions and offers one-to-one therapeutic support to over 200 siblings every year. Jess is a Sibling Worker at our Black Country hospice.

I can't believe how quickly the past year has gone by. I could write a book on how much has been happening. Today, I wanted to share some of this with you.

Throughout the past year I have delivered one-to-one sessions offering both pre and post bereavement support which I have felt absolutely privileged. The children are so brave, and I want to support them as much as possible.

This year I have also held Sibling groups. I've learnt that doing the activities together one by one enables me to have valuable conversations, but more importantly means the children can speak to each other and share their experiences.



It amazes me how some of the children who have not met each other before can, by the end of the session, be like the best of friends.

It's important to provide a safe, fun, calming environment for them as they have so much to cope with at home. I have facilitated groups with Christmas, Easter, Autumn, and Summer themes all with a

therapeutic element which have allowed the siblings to express their feelings and emotions in a comfortable environment. This is something they love; they look forward to attending and it really does show.

Jess
Sibling Worker





Help us be Stronger Together

'You'll never forget that moment. The diagnosis. Everything stops...'

This is the powerful opening of our new film, Stronger Together.

Stronger Together takes you on the emotional journey of the children and families who inspire everything we do at Acorns. Its moving words tell their story, while the visuals capture the very essence of Acorns and our lifeline children's hospice care.

This heartfelt film also highlights how people like you play a pivotal role in making sure these families never face such an unimaginable journey alone. It is a powerful reminder that we are stronger together and that only with the help of our supporters can we continue to be there for local children and families when they need us most, now and long into the future.

Find out how you can be stronger together for local children and families by visiting acorns.org.uk/film, where you can also meet the little stars of our film and take an exclusive look behind the scenes at the making of Stronger Together.

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Find out more and play at acorns.org.uk/Lottery



GAMBLING COMMISSION

BeGambleAware.org[®]



Our Business Ambassadors

Acorns Business Ambassadors like Amy play a key role in raising awareness of our work and fundraising within the West Midlands. Let's hear more from her.

I was one of Acorns first Business Ambassadors back in 2021. Having worked there at the charity, I have seen first-hand the support they provide to children with life limiting and life threatening conditions, and their families.

I was thrilled to become a Business Ambassador and share the amazing work the charity does within my network. I love getting involved in fundraising activities. I've volunteered at events, sold raffle tickets, and taken part in the Fire Walk and Bubble Rush.

As an Ambassador I help share news about Acorns work, activities and events to my network, encouraging them to come along and support the charity; including asking people to nominate Acorns as their Charity of the Year.

Through my work at Convera, I've created a way to help businesses raise money for Acorns, whilst they do their everyday activities and support businesses do more for charities.

Hopefully many will never need to lean upon the services of Acorns - but for those that do, showing them as the compassionate, and highly specialist care givers they are and helping raise funds to enable the great work to continue, is something I'm proud to do.

Being an Ambassador is a real honour. It sounds odd saying that I enjoy helping people understand the reason the charity exists.

I like sharing the importance of their support, because sometimes it can be an emotional conversation, but that's nothing compared to the emotions Acorns families go through.

I really enjoy knowing that I'm helping spread the word about the incredible work Acorns does and in turn helping raise money to enable that work to continue.

Amy

Acorns
Ambassadors





Thank you!
Your support
means we are
stronger
together

£15 allows us to take a sibling on a trip out

£32 could pay for a child to have a half hour session with a hospice Physiotherapist

£100 could provide an overnight stay at a hospice for a family

Can you help with a gift today? Visit acorns.org.uk/togethergift



Acorns Children's Hospice, Drakes Court, Alcester Road,
Wythall, Birmingham, B47 6JR



supporter.services@acorns.org.uk



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