

# BE INSPIRED!

70 Years of Caring  
Supporting  
Heart Survivors  
Give in Celebration!



Chest  
Heart &  
Stroke

# Inside Your Be Inspired!

Meet Maureen McCourt – NICHs Health Promotion Nurse	3
NICHs 70 Years of Caring	4-5
Celebrate in style with NICHs's wedding favours	6
Why make a Will?	7
Supporting heart survivors - Joe and Kevin	8-9
Events Round Up	10-11
Community Round Up	12-13
Corporate Round Up	14

If you would like to update your name, address or other details, please contact our Supporter Care Team on **028 9026 6709**, or email **[supportercare@nichs.org.uk](mailto:supportercare@nichs.org.uk)**

Cover Image: Kerri and Joe Degnan and Jenny Bristow who attended NICHs's 70th anniversary event 14th June 2016.

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Maureen McCourt, NICHS  
Health Promotion Nurse

## Meet Maureen McCourt, NICHS Health Promotion Nurse

**As NICHS celebrates its 70th anniversary this year, our very own Health Promotion Nurse and committed marathon runner, Maureen McCourt is celebrating her 70th birthday. Maureen shares her NICHS journey with us today:**

"I decided to return to nursing in 1994 and began working at NICHS through a government funded scheme. Health checks were becoming very popular at the time and in 1995 NICHS decided to make these a permanent part of its Health Promotion Programme. I was employed as their first full time Education Nurse. Twenty years on I'm still here and I still love what I do.

I travel to a lot of places carrying out health checks for NICHS, which is great, because I love travelling. Health checks involve working one to one with a client, measuring their blood pressure, cholesterol and body composition as well as discussing medical history and present lifestyle. I also explain and discuss results and provide guidance on how to make any lifestyle changes needed.

What I enjoy most about my work is helping people develop a healthy lifestyle and as a result better health. I find it so fulfilling and rewarding when I meet a client again who has made positive lifestyle changes, or is now receiving much needed treatment from their GP.

The most important health promotion message I tell people is that it's never too late to make changes; be it quitting smoking, reducing alcohol intake, eating healthier, being more active, or managing stress. Small changes equal big differences to health and wellbeing.

I know from experience that spreading a positive health message and providing health checks are really important. I have personally seen the difference they have made to thousands of people's health over the years.

Although we do charge a nominal fee for health checks, they are subsidised by the generous donations made by our supporters. Donations are always needed and so very worthwhile. And that begins with you and I.

**Thank you so much for helping  
NICHS make such a life changing and  
lifesaving difference."**



Belfast City Hall was bathed in red on the 14th June to celebrate 70 years of caring.

# NICHS 70 Years of Caring

**On 14th June 1946 at 5.30pm, 16 volunteers met together in a borrowed room in Belfast City Centre. Their aim was to educate people about tuberculosis and support people suffering from the disease. This was the first meeting of the organisation that would become known as Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke.**

Their first act was to organise a public meeting to educate people about TB. Within three months they had agreed that as well as raising awareness of the disease, the organisation also become involved in the welfare of people already suffering from TB. They set up an Advice Bureau to give practical and sometimes financial support to TB patients and their families and champion their rights

with the authorities. They also worked within the sanatoria, organising handicrafts, talks and film shows for the patients who were often there for years. When the patients finally left the sanatoria, they offered advice on finding employment.

It is fair to say those 16 volunteers changed Northern Ireland and our aims have stayed relatively similar

over the past 70 years. Nowadays our mission is to prevent chest, heart and stroke illnesses in Northern Ireland and care for those affected by them.

Today we provide a support network for people whose illnesses account for nearly 40% of deaths in Northern Ireland. We have contributed to the reduction of premature heart deaths by almost 60% from 1984-2014. We have also been instrumental in the establishment of dedicated Stroke Units across Northern Ireland.

Although we have been at the forefront of the fight against the biggest health risks Northern Ireland has faced in the last 70 years, the battle is far from over. The fact that many more people are surviving heart attacks and strokes and living with respiratory conditions, means that our support services for families are in more demand than ever before.

NICHS is the only local charity tackling heart disease, stroke and lung disease. In seven decades, every penny we have raised has been spent in Northern Ireland for the benefit of local people. Over the past 70 years, thousands of people across Northern Ireland have supported us with their time, their money, their loyalty and their affection. We are deeply grateful to each and every individual – those who have gone before and those who continue to support us today and tomorrow.

It is thanks to the people of Northern Ireland that a vision to eradicate TB was able to expand to include other killer illnesses.

You and donors like you have helped change Northern Ireland for the better. Everyone at NICHS is extremely grateful for your kind support of the people who need us most.



Miss Ireland arriving at the 70th Celebration thanks Richard Vance for his Smart Car birthday gift to NICHS.



Darren Day, Roisin Starkey and Malachi Cush - star performers at NICHS's 70th celebration.



## Clogher couple raise £4,000 for NICHS after finding love

**When Isabel and Colin Gilmore got married in 2014 they chose to mark their special day not only with NICHS wedding favours but by also asking their guests to make a donation to our work instead of giving wedding gifts.**

NICHS is close to the couple's hearts for several reasons. Isabel lost her father, Edward very suddenly in 1979 when he suffered a massive heart attack aged just 54. Isabel and her mum Elizabeth were absolutely devastated but decided to put their energy into something positive and began fundraising for NICHS. Unfortunately, Isabel endured further heartbreak in November 2011 when her beloved mum suffered an abdominal aortic aneurysm and passed away unexpectedly.

Isabel's parents have been a major inspiration to her throughout her life and it was a huge comfort to her when the couple realised Colin had in fact met Isabel's mum many years before the couple would themselves meet.

As a young man Colin had found himself hospitalized for several months following a serious car accident. One day a lady who had been visiting a patient in the bed opposite came over to say hello and recognising his need for company stayed some time.

Colin did not see her again until Isabel showed him a picture of her mum. Colin was shocked and amazed to see it was the same kindly lady who had sat down to keep



Isabel & Colin Gilmore on their wedding day.

him company at his hospital bed all those years ago!

Isabel and Colin felt it only fitting that a lasting tribute to both Isabel's parents should be a central part of their wedding celebration.

**"We can do something for others by supporting the care and prevention of these types of conditions and illnesses. Knowing that we could do this in memory of mum and dad at a very special time in our lives, made our wedding celebration much more meaningful."**

Following their wedding, the couple presented a tremendous £4,000 to NICHS. We would like to thank Isabel and Colin most sincerely for their brilliant fundraising effort and for sharing their very touching story.

If you'd like find out more about how you could make your wedding day even more meaningful by supporting NICHS, contact us for a sample pack of our new vintage-themed favours and centrepieces or visit [www.nichs.org.uk/weddingfavours](http://www.nichs.org.uk/weddingfavours).



Wedding Favours available from NICHS for your special day.

# Making your Will

**A Will helps loved ones take care of your estate and gives peace of mind they're acting in line with your wishes. Without a Will, the process can be especially difficult, stressful and time-consuming for friends and family.**

At NICHs we encourage everyone to contact a solicitor or professional advisor when making your Will. At the same time, why not give some thought to leaving a legacy of hope for generations to come through a gift to NICHs?

Considerations when making a Will:

- 1. Consult a solicitor or financial expert:** This will ensure you get the best advice for your personal circumstances and your Will is legally correct.
- 2. Make a list of beneficiaries:** Decide who you would like to benefit from your estate whether family, friends and/or charitable organisations.
- 3. Make a list of your assets and of your debts:** Assets include property, vehicles, jewellery, insurance policies and bank accounts. Debts include mortgages and outstanding loans.
- 4. Decide on Executors:** They will be responsible for sorting out your estate and can be relatives, friends, banks, solicitors or accountants.

## **5. Review your Will periodically:**

Every 3-5 years is recommended but this depends on your circumstances. You can easily change your Will by adding a codicil, or legal statement of intent to your Will. Your solicitor can help with this.

We understand it's important that loved ones are provided for first, but if you are able, please do consider remembering our work with a gift in your Will. Such a gift could leave a legacy of hope and care for generations to come.

If you would like to receive information on making a Will or leaving a gift to NICHs please write to Alison Vidamour at NICHs's Belfast Office address or email [avidamour@nichs.org.uk](mailto:avidamour@nichs.org.uk).



**"I recently revised my Will and one change was to leave a gift to Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke. I want to know**

**NICHs's services will continue to be provided in the future. I know that whatever happens, I will be able to help people after I am no longer here."**

Gillian Parker

# Support heart survivors like Joe and Kevin

Joe Degnan, Aged 3  
July 2016



**This year NICHs have committed to investing £800,000 to help people affected by heart conditions and illnesses. This summer we are asking the people of Northern Ireland to join us in supporting heart survivors like Joe and Kevin and make a donation to our Heart Care Fund.**

All donations will go towards a range of life-changing and potentially life-saving projects including our Activity Groups, Taking Control Programmes, and research projects like the study underway at Ulster University to develop a simple eye test to identify heart disease as early as possible. We are also contributing a further **£32,700** to the 3 year Baby Hearts Research Study, the results of which will be available April 2017.

Look out also for our STOP Campaign which aims to raise awareness of the symptoms of a heart attack.

## Heart illness in Northern Ireland:

- 12 people suffer a heart attack every day in NI.
- 2,385 lives were lost to heart disease in NI in 2014.
- Over 200 babies are born each year with congenital heart disease in NI.
- Almost 75,000 are living with coronary heart disease, that's 4% of the population.



## Joe's story

As a supporter of NICHS you may well be familiar with little Joe Degnan from Larne. Joe has been part of the NICHS family since his very first few days and happily, this summer Joe celebrated his 3rd birthday. **Happy birthday Joe!**

Already in his short life Joe has had to undergo two life-saving surgeries on his tiny heart. Joe was born with double inlet left ventricle which meant he suffered a lack of oxygen in his blood and to his major organs. For his first operation at 2 days old Joe had to be flown by air ambulance to Birmingham and underwent surgery

for five hours. Joe's mum describes the experience as 'agony'. Joe on both occasions has also had to fight a number of post-surgery complications. Kerri told us, **"The whole experience was hard, completely life-changing and very humbling. Joe teaches us something every day. I'd do anything to help ensure no other family has to go through what we've been through. That's why I have supported NICHS this past three years, fundraising for their Heart Care work and sharing our Joe's experience. Anything to make a difference."**

## Kevin's Story



Kevin from Derry-Londonderry. Heart attack survivor, June 2015.

In July 2014 Kevin from Derry-Londonderry started experiencing terrible heartburn. In fact it lasted for three days and at times he was bent

double with pain. Eventually it eased, although a dull ache remained.

Unknown to Kevin he had a blockage which was slowly shifting from his heart to his brain. On Saturday while at work Kevin suddenly lost the ability to speak and his face started drooping on one side. Thanks to having seen the FAST Campaign Kevin's boss knew the symptoms of a stroke and rang 999. The ambulance arrived quickly and Kevin was treated in Altnagelvin Hospital's A&E Department. Blood tests showed a high level of troponin in his blood, which meant he had had at least one 'cardiac event.'

Thankfully Kevin responded well to treatment and by Sunday evening he had

no stroke symptoms. Once the stroke had been dealt with, attention turned to Kevin's heart. On Monday he was taken to the Cath Lab to have a stent inserted. Within 2 weeks he began his Cardiac Rehab.

Happily today Kevin is fit and healthy, and taking measures to ensure a heart attack or stroke doesn't happen again. He considers himself to be extremely fortunate that the quick action of his boss, and the dedication, skill and caring of the staff at Altnagelvin Hospital has given him a second chance.

That is why Kevin is backing our Heart Campaign this summer to make people more aware of the signs of a heart attack and save lives right here in Northern Ireland.

**If you would like to support survivors like Joe and Kevin, please make a donation to our Heart Care Fund today. Please use the response slip enclosed and return your donation in the Freepost envelope enclosed.**

# Events Round Up



Sandy Row Falcons and Oompa Loompas, May 2016.



Benone Runners, March 2016.

## Benone Run to Remember

Every year, hundreds of runners take on a challenge in memory of loved ones who have been affected by chest, heart and stroke illnesses. So far, 2016 has been no exception, with NICHs supporters '**Running to Remember**' at events all over the country throughout the year.

On Easter Saturday 150 runners braved the wind and showers to take part in our annual Benone Beach run. A special mention must go to Oliver Cook from Antrim, who finished first in the 10km run and Ian Keys from Limavady, who came first in the 5km run. Well done to you both!

A huge thank you also goes out to the 280 NICHs runners, walkers and '**relayers**' who took part in the annual Belfast City Marathon on 2nd May. Thanks must also go to the Sandy Row Falcons, an incredible troop of cheer leaders whose enthusiastic cheering at Whitla Street Fire Station helped carry our weary runners onto the finish line!

We would like to say a massive thank you to all our runners. Together, you really have gone the distance and the thousand of pounds you have raised will truly change lives!

### Upcoming Events:

**4th September** – Waterside Half Marathon, Derry

**18th September** – Belfast Half Marathon

**24th September** – Run Mucker Run, Ballymoney

**30th October** – Dublin Marathon

**16th November** – Run in the Dark, Stormont Estate

[www.nichs.org.uk/runtoremember](http://www.nichs.org.uk/runtoremember)



Team Walkie Talkies.

## Ordinary people who Step Up can make a big difference

Our new **'Step Up'** Challenge Event Programme is about ordinary people doing something extraordinary together. Launched in January 2016, the programme offers a range of new walking, cycling and trekking events with a challenge suitable for all levels of fitness and ability.

Cathy Reavy, from Comber, pictured above, first left, was among the first to sign up her team of **'Walkie Talkies'** to NICHs's Step Up Trek. Cathy was just 26 when she was diagnosed with Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy - thickening of the heart muscle. Cathy was working as an Air Traffic Controller at The City Airport, her dream job and at the time was probably the fittest she had ever been. Unfortunately, as

a result of the diagnosis Cathy had to deal with the loss of her job.

Against all odds, after treatment Cathy has continued her active lifestyle and hasn't looked back. She says she's changed her outlook on life and feels there is a big world out there to explore and enjoy.

Cathy and the Walkie Talkies will be taking on the Step Up Trek and 5 of Northern Ireland's county peaks on the weekend of 9-11 September.

We wish them all the very best with their exciting challenge ahead!

You too can Step Up for NICHs and make a difference to local lives by taking part in one of our many events such as the Causeway Challenge Walk, North Coast Cycle, or Europa Hotel Abseil. Please visit [www.nichs.org.uk/stepup2016](http://www.nichs.org.uk/stepup2016) to check out the full range of events on offer.

# Community Round Up



Glengormley Support Group members June 2016.

## Celebrating 30 Years!

In April 2016 NICHs's **Glengormley Fundraising Support Group** **celebrated** its 30th year, having raised a staggering cumulative total of **£373,000**. This fantastic achievement has only been possible because of the hard work and dedication of the incredible volunteers who devoted their time and energy to help others in need. Whilst the group has now taken the decision to retire, we know their support for NICHs is unwavering. Everyone at NICHs is so very grateful for the group's incredible commitment and support.

## Lorraine's Charity Swim



Determined stroke survivor, Lorraine Adams, set herself the challenge of enlisting 70 people to each swim one length of the Aurora Swimming Pool in Bangor to mark NICHs's 70th anniversary. Lorraine

and fellow stroke survivors, family and friends took the plunge on 27th May raising a grand total of **£2,529.30**

Lorraine is now planning to undertake a parachute jump for NICHs and we wish her every success with this latest adventure!



## Trek Peru!

Deputy Ward Sister, Diana Parker, from Altnagelvin Hospital, Derry-Londonderry, has been busy organising a wide range of events in her community to raise funds to take on a once-in-a-lifetime trekking challenge in Peru! Diana has already raised thousands of pounds for NICHs through her hospital fundraisers and is now planning a sponsored climb in the Sperrins in September.



If you are interested in joining Diana on her trekking challenge to Peru next May 2017, please contact Grace for further details on **028 9032 0184**.

## Ticker Tea Parties



Jenny Bristow

This summer, Ireland's Good Food Ambassador Jenny Bristow joined forces with NICHs to help raise awareness of the symptoms of a heart attack. Together, we've been encouraging schools, community groups and workplaces to host a **Ticker Tea Party** and urge friends, families and loved ones to pay greater attention to their heart health.

NICHs's own support groups were the first to get involved, with a host of parties organised during the week of our 70th celebrations. Ballycastle and Kilkeel's Fundraising Groups organised Ticker Tea events which collectively raised more than **£1,000**.

There is still time to sign up to host your own Ticker Tea Party. NICHs will send you a party pack, including posters, fundraising tips and recipes for some of Jenny's favourite healthy tea party snacks to help get the party started. To register now, contact fundraising on **028 9031 0184** or at [events@nichs.org.uk](mailto:events@nichs.org.uk).





# Corporate News

## Musgrave

Musgrave Wholesale Partners has announced a new three year partnership with NICHS and hope to raise over **£150,000!** Local convenience retail brand Mace and wholesale brand, MarketPlace are hosting events and collections across all their stores.



Sinead Magill, NICHS and Trevor Magill, Musgrave Wholesale Director May 2016.

## Progressive Building Society

Staff in Progressive Building Society, Wellington Place recently presented NICHS with a cheque for **£1,000** as part of their charitable giving scheme. This brings the total donations raised by the Society over the past year to **£5,835**.



Victoria Ross, NICHS, receiving cheque for £1,000 from employees at Progressive Building Society June 2016.

## Translink

Employees from Translink Short Strand Depot in Belfast got into the swing of fundraising by hosting a golf day in aid of NICHS with over 40 golfers participating in the event and raising a fantastic **£2,250**.



Sinead Magill receiving the cheque from Translink's keen golfers at Short Strand Depot May 2016.

# STEP UP & RIDE

**1st October 2016**  
**70km/100km**

NICHs's **70th Anniversary Cycle** will take in the best of the stunning North Coast. Starting and finishing in Portballintrae, you'll pedal your way through Bushmills, the famous Dark Hedges, the Antrim Glens and the notorious Torr Head, before passing the Giants Causeway on the way home.

Both routes will involve challenging climbs and descents and will be fully signed, with rest stations and a celebration at the finish.

Find out how you can step up in 2016 and get involved:

**[www.nichs.org.uk/stepup2016](http://www.nichs.org.uk/stepup2016)**



**£30.00 entry**  
**plus sponsorship**

**includes Tech**  
**T-shirt & Medal**

# Your Legacy Of Hope And Care - a gift in your Will to Northern Ireland Chest Heart & Stroke

**A gift in your Will to NICHHS could not only help your loved ones, but leave a legacy of hope for generations to come.**

In Northern Ireland almost half of all adult deaths are caused by chest, heart and stroke illnesses. NICHHS are working to change this through funding research and caring for those who are affected by devastating health conditions every day.

A gift to us in your Will could be invested in critical local research that will change the future for families at risk from our biggest killers.

**The smallest investment can lead to the biggest breakthrough.**

Please visit our website to see how our Medical Research Programme has already supported groundbreaking projects and is committed to many more over the coming years. [www.nichs.org.uk](http://www.nichs.org.uk)

**For a leaflet or further information on leaving a legacy to NICHHS, please call us on:** 028 9032 0184, or write to NICHHS Gifts in Wills, 21 Dublin Road, Belfast, BT2 7HB