

Bear Tidings



Newsletter of the
Association for the Welfare of Children in Hospital

AUTUMN
2007



Welcome

We hope you like our new style newsletter. We plan to update you on what is happening in the world of child health at least twice a year.

It is all change at the top with Edwina Hart AM becoming the minister for Health & Social Services. She has already overturned the plan to site adult neurosurgery in Cardiff, but we wait to see whether her proposals will be accepted, and how it will work out.

AWCH is concerned that any diminishing of adult services at Morriston Hospital will have an adverse effect on children's services.

We will continue to press the minister for statutory help with travelling expenses, as these costs mount. Read inside about some of the families the AWCH Travel & Emergency fund has helped.

AWCH aims

- To raise awareness of the needs of sick children and their families in the health service in Wales
- To provide information and support to children, young people and their parents/carers
- To work with professionals, other voluntary organisations, parents, and children and young people themselves to promote quality health care for sick children in hospital, the community and at home.

Contents:

- p1. **AWCH new Leaflet
Welcome
AWCH Aims**
- p2. **Teddy Bears Picnic
AWCH Play Ambulance
Hospital Survey**
- p3. **AWCH Helps Families
Play in Hospital**
- p4. **About AWCH
AWCH Ambulance Flyer**

8th Teddy Bears Picnic Gnoll Country Park

After an initial sharp shower, which sent everyone scurrying for the café, 2nd Aug, 2007 opened up into a bright summer's day. Once again Sarah Isherwood had organized a great day out. Children and their families all enjoyed themselves and AWCH benefited by £300. Shannon, Sarah's daughter, said, "I came here first as a baby, now I'm old enough to help".

Thanks Sarah for such a fun way of raising money for us.

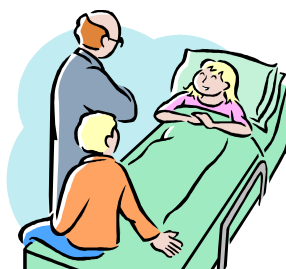


Play Ambulances - Helping Children become familiar and unafraid if they have to see a Doctor or attend Hospital.

AWCH helps to achieve this by lending out two Play Ambulances to Swansea Primary Schools.

The Ambulances are large enough for children to sit in and are equipped with Doctor's and Nurses' uniforms, instruments and hospital related story books. They are suitable for Reception and Nursery classes and many of the Swansea schools have created Hospital or Doctor corners for realistic role play.

*For further information or to book the Play Ambulance for your school:
tel: Clare Lamb 01792 205880.*



WHAT WAS IT LIKE?

Has your child recently had a spell in hospital?

Were you able stay overnight?

Were you told all you wanted to know?

Were you comfortable?

Did you have any problems?

Did staff talk to and involve your child as well as you?

Were you both involved in making decisions?

AWCH and The Parent Network NPT are carrying out a survey to find out how you and your child felt about your hospital experience. We know policies have changed over the years, but are they happening on the ground?

To enable us to press for changes which you feel are still necessary, we really need to hear how it really is from anyone who has had a hospital experience within the past 2 years.

You, or anyone you know, child, young person, parent or carer, can take part by filling in a survey form which may be found in participating hospitals or on-line - you might even be lucky in the prize draw!

To find out more about the survey and to access the questionnaires go to www.theparentnetworknpt.org.uk

AWCH HELPS FAMILIES

Grants from AWCH's Travel and Emergency Fund have been given to nearly 70 families over the past year, mainly through requests from social workers. These are three stories of those who have desperately needed our help. Names have been changed to preserve anonymity.

Cerys is 10 months old. Her week-old brother shouldn't even be here - he was born 3 months premature and is in baby special-care. It will be 4-6 weeks before he is well enough to be transferred to their local hospital. His mum, believing that 'Breast is Best' for her newborn, visits daily to bond with the baby and take in bottles of her milk. This entails a train journey and then two buses. As yet Sara is unable to manhandle Cerys' pushchair on and off the buses so has to take a taxi. On at least one occasion, not having the taxi-fare, she took the hour-long walk from station to hospital. This, a mother who had given birth only a week before.



Tom is premature and very ill on the neonatal ward. His parents have a train journey from Aberystwyth to Swansea and 2 buses to the hospital. His young teen-age mum only receives child benefit so they are struggling to meet the cost of travel and food.

All the parents are grateful; one mum said, "I would never have been able to visit my baby without AWCH help .

Lucy, 4 months old, has been in hospital since her birth and is still on a high-dependency unit. Her parents are both young and disabled. Their daily visits constitute a round car trip of around 100 miles costing about £10. Normally able to manage, having received only one emergency payment since a still-unresolved major 'hiccup' in their benefits, they are very distressed at the prospect of not having the finances to visit Lucy.

Play in Hospital

Ann Jones Play Specialist

Play is at the very centre of a healthy child's life. From the earliest age, playing helps children to learn, relate to other people and to have fun. When children or young people are admitted to hospital, they are at their most vulnerable. They are not only ill, but are also separated from their friends and familiar surroundings. Play can really make a difference.

- ❖ Creates an environment where stress and anxiety are reduced.
- ❖ Helps the child to cope with illness and hospitalisation.
- ❖ Helps the child to regain confidence, independence and self-esteem.
- ❖ Provides an outlet for feelings of anger and frustration.
- ❖ Helps the child to understand treatment and illness. Through play, children are able to effectively learn the sensory and concrete information they need to prepare for hospital procedures and treatment.
- ❖ Aids in assessment and rehabilitation.
- ❖ Reduces the need for sedation for some procedures.

Association for the Welfare of Children in Hospital

www.awchwales.org.uk
email: awchwales.org@tiscali.co.uk
tel: 01792 205227

Registered Charity No:222294

Executive Committee

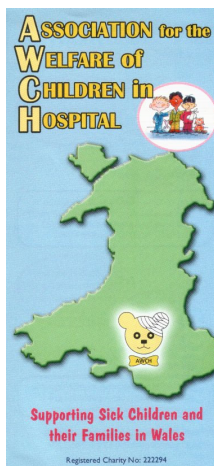
Caroline Crimp MBE - Chairman
Ennis Roberts - Hon Treasurer
Judy Evans - Hon Secretary
Clare Lamb - Minute Secretary
Mary George - Anne Jones - Jan Williams

You can support us in our work by becoming a member of AWCH

Subscription Rates are:-

Individual Membership - £7.50

Family/Group Membership - £10



PLAY AMBULANCES AVAILABLE FOR LOAN (Swansea Area only)

Suitable for
Nursery & Reception classes

*Also a great contribution to
schools curriculum topics such as
'People who help us' &
'Ourselves'*



Now taking bookings for School Terms 2008

Only £5 per entire term. tel: Clare Lamb 01792 205880.