



Merry Christmas

from the Footsteps team



Newsletter / December 2014

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featured news...



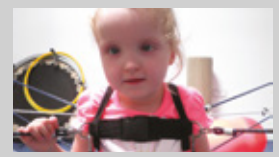
The fundraising footsteps of Keeley Cullen's family



Boswells go bonkers for Footsteps



Grab your place for the 2015 British 10k



Olivia's determination to walk to her local park

FOOTSTEPS



Dear Footsteps team,

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

After my operation I was a very unconfident girl who didn't like to use my right foot.

This year thanks to all your support and work I achieved 74 steps independently. I'll be running soon. You're all heroes.

Lots of love,
From Emily

MERRY CHRISTMAS from the Footsteps team

As we approach the end of another year, the Footsteps Centre has provided intensive physiotherapy sessions to 155 children in 2014. 90 of these children have received grants from Footsteps Foundation towards the cost of the therapy, and 84 children have received grants towards the cost of specialist equipment, including free memo shoes.

There is limited availability for sessions in 2015. Please contact Kirsty on 01865 340376 or email kirsty@footstepscentre.com for further details.

Gosia and Filip are expecting their second child in January so we wish them all the best for the New Year, along with Asia, who is expecting her third child in March.

We wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and look forward to seeing you again in the new year.

Christmas card designed by Emily Farruku
Age 11



Apply for your 2015 grant now

The Trustees of Footsteps Foundation have been busy processing family grant applications for 2015 sessions. If you would like to receive a grant from Footsteps Foundation, we request you apply at least two months' before your child's first booked session of the year. Please visit <http://footstepscentre.com/footsteps-foundation/apply-for-a-grant/> for the application guidelines.

£51,000 has already been committed to families for 2015, so please get your application in as early as you can.

Fund a footstep and help begin a journey

Log on to www.justgiving.com/footstepsfoundation/Donate



Footsteps in action



A BIG 'Thank You' to our volunteers



Over the past couple of years Footsteps Foundation has become involved in more and more fundraising events and activities within the local community. This year alone, we've raised lots of money through events including the Wallingford Car Rally and the Thames Run, not to mention concerts, quiz nights and craft fairs. We would have struggled to take part in all of these events without the support of our dedicated fundraising committee and wonderful volunteers.

Our fundraising committee is made up of Footsteps mums, students and local residents. As well as meeting on a monthly basis, they have baked, borrowed, stood in the wet and cold and volunteered their friends and families...all for Footsteps Foundation! Each and every one of them is an asset to the charity and we are lucky to have them as part of the Footsteps team. On behalf of all the families that benefit from the support of Footsteps Foundation, we would like to say a BIG THANK YOU to everyone who has volunteered their time and support over the last year, with a special thanks to our fundraising committee stars: Nikki, Jenny, Lydia, Caroline, Tara, Sharon, Sarah, Sam, Phoebe, Molly, Megan, Emma, Caitlyn, Ben and all of their families who show up in force to support our events.

Holly's marathon mission

Holly Bayliss took part in the Bournemouth Marathon in October and chose to raise money for Footsteps Foundation. Holly knows Keeley who attends Footsteps so wanted to support her and other children in need through their intensive physiotherapy at Footsteps. She's raised a smashing £550 and she's not stopping there... I hear that Holly now plans to take part in the London to Brighton 100km challenge next year and she's chosen to support us again... Good Luck Holly!

Zumba-thon success!



Talking of wonderful volunteers, Footsteps mum and fundraising committee member Lydia Coppola recently organised a charity Zumba-thon event to raise money for Footsteps Foundation and Charlton-On-Otmoor School. Lydia organised some great local zumba instructors to lead the way and locals showed their support by taking part in the two-hour zumba-thon and entering the raffle. Many treated themselves to the selection of cakes on offer after all the hard work! Thanks to Lydia and her team of helpers, made up of other Footsteps mums – Sharon Parr, Tara Aitken and Vicky Lamb, the event raised a fantastic £345, half of which Lydia donated to Footsteps Foundation on the Monday morning as her daughter began her three-week therapy session at Footsteps. A huge thank you to Lydia and her helpers for all their hard work!

Volunteers get pouring pints for Footsteps

For the second year running, Footsteps were invited to get involved in the Choko Beer Festival, which takes place annually on the last Saturday in September. Footsteps dads, Julian and Stuart, kindly volunteered their services behind the bar, which resulted in a £500 donation to Footsteps Foundation. There's nothing like team work to pull in the funds!

Free legal advice for Footsteps families

Irwin Mitchell LLP is a national law firm dealing with a full range of legal services, from birth injuries, through to challenging local authority decisions, and estate planning.

Some Footsteps families are already using their legal services and the firm has generously donated prizes and sponsored the printing costs of our brochures and leaflets. If you are interested in seeking free legal advice, or would like more information please visit <http://www.irwinmitchell.com/> to find your nearest office.

Christmas helpers and carol singers at Millets Farm



Over the course of a wet and cold November weekend, a number of Footsteps mums, dads and children, as well as some local volunteers, helped us to raise £280 through our bucket collection at Millets Farm. We had 11-year old Ella singing carols to attract the donations, Charlotte, Izzy and Thomas dressed in Santa hats and Footsteps t-shirts and little Sophia just charmed everyone with her cute smile! Everyone did a great job and no one was dampened by the miserable weather. Thank you to everyone who volunteered their time over the weekend – we couldn't have done it without you!

There's no stopping Chandlings...

The staff and pupils at the Chandlings School have been busy raising lots of money for Footsteps Foundation since the start of the academic year in September. They have held second-hand uniform sales, non-uniform days, cake sales and they just recently organised a Christmas Bazaar... the children have been selling joke magazines and Footsteps wristbands. Since September, the school have raised a smashing £2,624 for Footsteps Foundation and I'm told there is more on its way!

Watlington Christmas Market raises £200

We are spreading even more thanks to Footsteps mums and volunteers – Jenny, Caroline and Lydia, all of whom ran the cake stall and raffle at the Watlington Christmas Market in November to raise money for Footsteps Foundation. The local WI and Watlington mums all joined forces to bake cakes and thanks to everyone involved, the team raised just under £200.

Grants

Footsteps Foundation has recently received grants from the following trusts:

- The Helen Jean Cope Charity
- CHK Charities Limited
- The Joyce Chapman Charitable Trust
- Tesco Charity Trust
- The Freemasons' Grand Charity

A big thank you to all community groups, schools and businesses for their recent fundraising activities

including: Boswells of Oxford Limited, Chandlings School, Mercer Lewin, Southern Electric, Didcot Runners, Abingdon Preparatory School, U & I Fuels Ltd Service Station, Choko Beer Festival, Footsteps Limited, Rotaract 1070, Poyry Management Consulting (UK) Limited, St. Botolph's Church and Swyncombe PCC, Watlington Primary School, Millets Farm, Watlington Craft Fair and Frontier Holidays.

Follow in the fundraising footsteps of Keeley Cullen's family

This issue features the fundraising activities of seven year old Keeley Cullen and her family who have been fundraising for Keeley's therapy at Footsteps. Keeley's mum Zara shares her experiences:

What are you fundraising for?

We have been fundraising for Keeley to attend Footsteps at least twice a year.

What are you doing to raise money?

Marchwood Village Summer Fete raised £800 for Keeley by having buckets at the entrance and around the fete and we recently held a two-hour "class-a-thon" at our local David Lloyd Gym. This raised just over £600. A friend has ran the Bournemouth marathon to help raise money for Keeley's therapy and the dad of one of Keeley's class mates is also planning to do the Grim Challenge.

What difficulties have you come across and how have you overcome them?

Our main difficulty was reaching out to different people for help and finding new ways of raising money. I've been lucky that our local pub "The Roebuck" and David Lloyd have chosen "Keeley's Wishes" as their charity of the year.



What have you enjoyed about it?

I really enjoyed taking part in the two-hour class-a-thon; it really pushed my fitness level. Knowing that the 80 people who turned up to take part were there raising money for Keeley is what kept me going.

How much have you raised so far?

Since January 2013 we have raised £1,500 towards Keeley's therapy.

What is your top tip?

We have found that social media and the newspapers are the best way to create awareness for all the fundraising events. I set up a Facebook page "Keeley's Wish" to keep everyone up to date with all the events and Keeley's progress while at Footsteps.

Ben crosses the NYC Marathon finish line...



Ben Peterson's second cousin, Ollie, attends Footsteps and having seen the progress he has made over the past few years, Ben decided to take part in the New York City Marathon, raising money for Footsteps Foundation and helping to support Ollie through his therapy.

Ben crossed the finish line in 4 hours and 25 minutes, which is a real achievement considering the weather conditions on the day. He said: "It was such a fantastic adventure and the whole experience will be unforgettable. The support around the course was unbelievable."

Ben has done a fantastic job with the fundraising, with a current total of £3,500. Ben visited Footsteps following his run, and here's what he had to say: "To meet and see some of the children working so hard, with smiles on their faces and demonstrating such focus and determination was truly humbling. What an inspiration to anyone. I'm certainly inspired and I hope I can do more to support Footsteps in the future." Thank you and Congratulations Ben!

Following the footsteps of Olivia Robinson

In this newsletter we are following in the footsteps of Olivia who has recently finished a three week session at Footsteps and she is working towards her dream of walking to the park at the end of her road.

Olivia's mum Bethane said "Olivia started at the Footsteps Centre back in June 2012 when she was only three years old. Nothing could have prepared either me or my



husband for how she would react to such an intense physiotherapy programme which for that initial block wasn't great! Olivia often cried throughout her sessions which made them hard not only for her but also for the therapists and us as her parents.

Looking back at those early sessions has enabled us to see just how far Olivia has come not only in terms of her physical capabilities but at her increased confidence levels too. Olivia's early sessions helped build her core strength and the techniques used by the therapists helped Olivia learn how to sit for short periods which developed further in to teaching Olivia to sit herself up from a laying position. It's fair to say we were overwhelmed by the results we were seeing in such a short space of time.

Olivia's most recent sessions only go to show how she has progressed, most sessions in the "Spider" comprise of taking in excess of 100 steps and her strength has increased so much that she is able to constantly hold a stable all-fours position on the mat, all this and not a tear in sight!

We are currently fundraising to take Olivia to St Louis for SDR surgery and Footsteps will play a key role in her post-op rehabilitation. We're confident that with the effects of the surgery and through intensive sessions at the Centre that Olivia will reach her own personal goal which is to walk to the park at the end of our street. Something most five year olds take for granted but will be such a proud day for Olivia and us all.

To all those parents reading this at the Centre for the first time who may also be experiencing the same problems we faced in our early sessions, my advice is to stick with it and don't give up. The results you will see are amazing and each and every session will get easier. There is also a great support network from both parents who are going through the same as yourselves and all of the staff at Footsteps."



Fund a footstep and help begin a journey

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Shout outs to some special people



"A big shout out to the Scott family, Diane & Paul Scott and their children Phillip, Samantha & Christian. Phillip needed a new shunt this year - it's been another tough one, but no complaints from any of them. Xx" John McDonough.

"A big shout out to the Windram family. To dedicated parents Gavin and Helen. Courageous and hardworking Grace who is attending Footsteps, her motto being "Never give up!" And her supporting younger sister Amelia's encouragement of "U can do it!" Sending them and all the children, families and staff at Footsteps our Best Wishes at Christmas." Brigitte and Pete X

"Big shout out to Vanessa Wright for always taking Kari here, there & everywhere for all types of therapies and now exploring surgery in America & launching fundraising. Also, I would like to shout out to Jenny Tupper, the most well-presented mum ever! A hard working mum of four, two with disabilities, but she always looks great. She's had an amazing start to her fundraising for her 'special sisters.'" Mikayla Butler.

"A big shout out to our amazing daughter Grace who has just been accepted for an operation at Bristol hospital. Six months ago she didn't reach the criteria for the operation as she wasn't strong enough. She has worked so hard at her physio that she now matches the criteria and will be having the operation in six months' time!" Katy Shiers.



Boswells goes bonkers for Footsteps

As part of the support that Boswells of Oxford are offering to Footsteps Foundation over the year, the team held a fundraising weekend over the October half-term and raised lots of money and awareness for Footsteps.

The team organised a number of activities including raffles and treasure hunts so there was lots going on to keep the children entertained while the adults shopped for Christmas presents.

We think the team look fantastic in their red Footsteps t-shirts. They raised over £200 during the weekend which means their fundraising total since April is £1,673. Well done Boswells and thanks for your support!

Lord Lieutenant Tim Stevenson visits Footsteps

We were delighted to meet Lord Lieutenant Tim Stevenson on Tuesday 14th October when he generously made some time in his schedule to visit us at Footsteps.

He was impressed by the work we do here and was inspired by the children's determination as well as the commitment shown by their parents. Thanks to all the families who took the time to speak to Mr Stevenson during his visit.



How far can you get with a fiver?

Ella, Kitty and Emerline from Watlington Primary School were recently challenged to raise as much as possible with nothing but a £5 note to get them started. The girls came up with the idea of making and selling cups of jelly with squirry cream on top, which put them in second position out of the whole year group, raising a fantastic £60.80. The girls decided to donate this money to Footsteps Foundation as Ella's brother Elliott regularly attends Footsteps and is supported by the Foundation. What a great idea girls!

Lewis loves wristbands

Ten-year old Lewis from Thame recently took some Footsteps wristbands into school to sell among his friends. He raised £43 for Footsteps Foundation in doing so - well done Lewis! If your child would like to take some wristbands into their school, please get in touch and we can send some out to you. Selling 50 wristbands will fund one hour of therapy.



Get your running shoes on, join Team Footsteps

It's that time of year again when you may be thinking about training for a running event or getting involved in a new challenge. We have a limited number of guaranteed entry places for some of the UK's most popular events so please get in touch if you would like more details about any of the following:

The Vitality British 10k London Run (6.2 miles) - Sunday 12th July 2015

London2Brighton challenge (56k/100k) - May 2015

In addition to the London2Brighton Challenge, Action Challenge are also offering three other exciting events in 2015. As a charity partner we can get you all the information you need so if you are interested in learning more, please contact info@footstepsfoundation.com