

50

YEARS

Candlelighters



TEENAGE AND YOUNG ADULT
CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Issue 87

Celebrating 50 years of support for children and families. **Get involved with Challenge 50.** Teenage and Young Adult Cancer Awareness Month.

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Share your story

As part of our 50th anniversary, we'd love to share your stories from throughout the years. Were you supported by us? Did you take part in a big fundraising challenge? Maybe you have a Candlelighters tattoo?! Or maybe you just have a tale you'd like to tell. We'd love to hear from you.

To get in touch with your story, please email us at marketing@candlelighters.org.uk or message us on social media.



Hello

What a pleasure it is to welcome you to the first newsletter of 2026 – our 50th anniversary year! In true Candlelighters style, we have lots planned and can't wait to celebrate with you.

As you'll see in this edition, we've been reflecting on the last 50 years, how things have changed and looking towards what comes next. One thing that's clear, is that the amazing achievements and long-standing support for children and families are thanks to the incredible dedication of countless people over the years – volunteering, raising funds, and helping however they can.

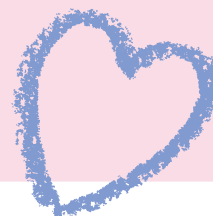
What an honour it is to be part of this wonderful community, still making a difference to children and young people with cancer five decades later. Nothing demonstrates this better than the fact that so many people are taking part in '50'-themed fundraising this year, to ensure support can continue for families. If you'd like to join them, you can find out more about 'Challenge 50' on page 10.

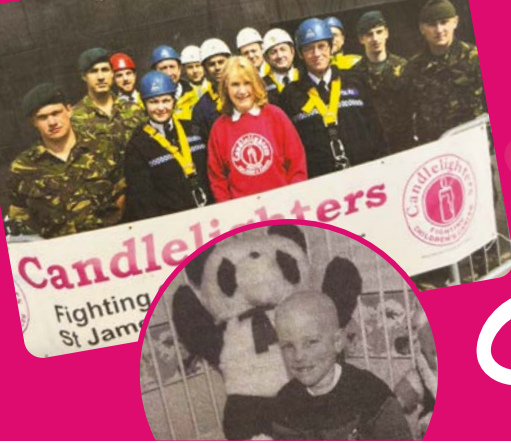
We're not only looking backwards in this edition, we're also thinking about the future, as we always have. As things change for families, our support should change too, as well as the ways we raise vital funds. Being led by the experiences of young people and families is what helps ensure we're moving in the right direction. We were really glad to hear from 15-year-old Finlay again this year for Teenage and Young Adult Cancer Awareness Month in April. Finlay has kindly shared his story on pages 8 and 9, reflecting on his own journey.

As always, seeing the difference we can make to children and families affected by childhood cancer across Yorkshire, thanks to the incredible support received from people like you, makes me exceptionally proud. I hope you enjoy the read and will join me in celebrating 50 years of supporting families.

Emily

Candlelighters CEO





50

YEARS

Candlelighters



The history of childhood cancer is a story many people don't often hear. As we celebrate 50 years of Candlelighters, we want to share the beginning of our story and the progress made in the last five decades. Here's how it all began...

Candlelighters formed in the mid 1970s, during a period when childhood cancer care was fragmented, poorly resourced, and emotionally isolating for families. In the 1960s and early 70s, children were treated on general wards alongside adults. Their diagnoses were poorly understood, treatments were limited, and the risk of life-threatening infections was high. The chance of survival was just 40%.



The creation of the unit brought together a community of people who understood the immense challenges childhood cancer brought. Parents began meeting weekly, and early fundraising focused on providing practical items for the ward, like equipment, furnishings, and treats.

As childhood cancer care developed, so did the charity's role. New treatments and specialised roles emerged, and the number of children treated in Leeds rose. Candlelighters supported early research, helping to improve the understanding and treatment of childhood cancers. The charity also supported the first bone marrow transplant centre outside London, established in Leeds in 1983.

As treatment and survival improved, our services were adapted to meet the needs of families. From play workers and accommodation to buildings and some of the first teenage-specific facilities in the country, we've remained ambitious and determined to put the needs of families at the heart of everything we do. And throughout our history, we've prioritised investing in forward-thinking research, helping to build a brighter future for children and young people.

Now, it costs approximately £2.2m every year to fund the range of support and research Candlelighters provides for families. Care for families has changed beyond recognition, and that's a testament to thousands of kind, incredible people over the years who have volunteered, fundraised and otherwise supported the cause.

And even all these years later, our vision remains the same: to bring light and hope to every family affected by childhood cancer across Yorkshire.



Seacroft Hospital was the leading local centre for childhood cancer and a small team based there recognised that children needed dedicated spaces, safer from infections. A group of medical staff and parents joined forces to raise the £90,000 needed to create their own unit – over £800,000 in today's money.

Initially called Leukaemia Fund for Seacroft, the group adopted the name Candlelighters in 1976, inspired by a similar parent-led group in the United States called Candlelighters. The name symbolises a parent keeping vigil over their sick child by candlelight, and the flame of hope kept burning until a cure is found.

Our family support services began to include financial support and holidays, recognising common challenges faced by families and the emotional burden of treatment. Working closely with the NHS, Candlelighters funded specialist equipment, early infusion pumps, and pump-primed roles such as registrars and pharmacists that later became core NHS roles, helping to modernise care.



Thanks to you

Your generous support enables our team to be there to make the everyday of living with cancer a little more bearable. Here are some of the ways you've helped us to do that recently...



Christmas at Candlelighters

Our Family Support Team work hard to make sure that Christmas is a special time for the families we support. From festive arts and crafts in clinic, to wreath-making workshops with our grandparents and mum's groups; the annual Christmas party is always a favourite and of course, Santa and his reindeers coming to visit!

Spooky Season!

Patients, parents and siblings came together in their best costumes to enjoy our annual Halloween party! Our Family Support Team also conjured up lots of fun on the wards, with biscuit decorating, potion-brewing and making chocolate apples.



CCAM Award Ceremony

As Childhood Cancer Awareness Month ended in September we celebrated at the hospital alongside the play team with a golden awards ceremony. Patients awarded certificates to staff, other patients and parents for being superstars, and everyone topped the day off with pizza!

Sharing the Love

On Valentine's Day we decorated biscuits to share with family, created Valentine's-themed gifts, and made our 'surrounded by love' selfie boards. It was wonderful to get creative with loved ones and share kindness for each other and ourselves.



Takeover Day

In February, we welcomed children to The Square for Takeover Day – a chance to come and 'work' at Candlelighters for a day. From Family Support to Finance, and everything in between, it was an opportunity to learn new skills, find out more about the charity and engage with each other through fun activities.

Thank you!

Your support ensures families do not have to go through the devastation of a childhood cancer diagnosis alone. [Click here](#) to make a donation and provide vital support for families.

How far we've come



The wide range of support we currently provide is a result of years of incredible fundraising support, research, and always working closely with families to understand their needs. Find out a little more about how far we've come...

Family fun days

What could be considered the very first Candlelighters family fun day was held on 2nd June 1976! Patients, parents and siblings got together for a barbecue with music and a raffle. These days, we hold multiple whole-family events each year, giving families a chance to have some much-needed fun and enjoyment together.



The Candlelighters Christmas party

Our Christmas party is pretty legendary, and for good reason – we've been holding them since 1977! This much-loved annual tradition has made countless magical memories for families. Family members will often tell us, even decades later, that they loved attending.

Financial grants

One of the earliest financial grants given out included £40 to help a parent travel to London for their child's bone marrow transplant – a treatment which at that time was unavailable anywhere else in the country. Now we can offer families a wide range of financial support, including a £600 grant at diagnosis, hardship grants, holiday grants, Christmas grants and compassionate grants.



Holidays

Each year, we send around 60 families on a funded holiday to either Center Parcs or Parkdean Resorts. Originally, Candlelighters owned mobile homes at Primrose Valley Holiday Park in Filey, which were looked after by our trustees! In 1992, as part of BBC Children in Need, Anneka Rice helped build three new holiday chalets in Bridlington for our families.



The Square

In 2015, our services were transformed with the opening of our very own family support centre. While ward support remains hugely important, we knew that families also needed a comforting space, where they could take a break from the intense clinical setting. In the first six months, 84 families were supported there. In 2025, we supported 267 families at The Square.

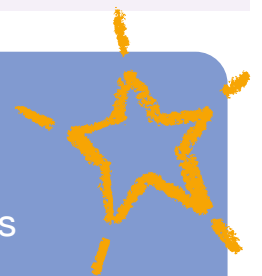


Diggerland 50th Celebration

We're inviting families that have received support from Candlelighters at any time to celebrate our 50th anniversary with a fun-filled family day out at Diggerland, Castleford on Sunday 7th June, 10am-4pm.

To register your interest, [click here](#) by **1st May 2026**. Please request places for people within your household only, and a maximum of two adults per family.

Spaces are limited due to venue capacity. Registering your interest does not guarantee your place on the day. A member of the Candlelighters Team will be in touch to confirm if you have got a place.





Celebrating our volunteers

From welcoming a family to our support centre, The Square, to supporting us at a challenge event, our volunteers are vital. Without them, we wouldn't be able to do what we do. A heartfelt thank you to every single one of our volunteers – for their support, time and commitment to Candlelighters! Meet Jason and Giles, a couple of our incredible volunteers.

Meet Jason

Jason is one of our family event volunteers and, having volunteered at Candlelighters for six years, he's taken on many roles, supporting whenever and wherever he can.

Tell us what your role involves, volunteering with Candlelighters?

"Helping the Candlelighters mascot, Champ, attending

cheque presentations and giving speeches/talks about Candlelighters. Selling Candlelighters items at Christmas fayres and other events."

What inspired you to start volunteering with us?

"It's my way of giving back after all the help and assistance they gave when my son was in hospital."

And what makes volunteering for Candlelighters special to you?

"Knowing I'm helping a great charity out"

What has been your most memorable moment volunteering?

"Helping Champ at the Christmas party!"

And how would you describe Candlelighters in three words?

"Compassionate. Impactful. Community-driven."



Meet Giles

Giles currently sits on the Candlelighters Development Board, helping to increase our engagement within the Yorkshire business community. In total, he's volunteered with us for 16 years!

Tell us about your role volunteering with Candlelighters?

"In my time, I have run 10ks, hosted dinners, organised golf days, taken part in quizzes and engaged on social media, all for Candlelighters. My current role involves meeting regularly as a committee, and separately on a one-to-one basis, to identify new connections and make introductions to Candlelighters."

What inspired you to start volunteering with us?

"Seeing first-hand the fantastic work Candlelighters do and the impact it has."

What makes volunteering for Candlelighters special to you?

"At some point this week, a family will come onto the ward for the first time. Their world will probably have been turned upside down with little or no warning. Knowing what this is like, and having the opportunity to help, is one of the most rewarding things I do."

Candlelighters also has something special in the way it runs its events - they have to be welcoming and fun."

What has been your most memorable moment volunteering?

"Winning a year's supply of Yorkshire Tea at a Candlelighters' dinner. What more can you want?"

And how would you describe Candlelighters in three words?

"Hope. Support. Prevention."



Feeling inspired? Just giving a little of your time can have a big difference to families.

Hundreds of amazing people volunteer with us every year in a huge range of roles.
[Click here](#) to find out more about the volunteering opportunities available.

Donations in memory

From July 2025 - December 2025

Donations in memory are so precious. Whoever your donation remembers, we thank you for this very special way of showing your support.

Abbass	£30.00
Abdul Latif	£31.25
Aidan Wray	£6,600.00
Ajaz Ahmed	£98.44
Alan Dykes	£165.20
Alan Kershaw	£32.81
Alayna Kamran	£31.25
Albie Sugden	£10,000.00
Alex Brennan	£59.06
Alexander Marsh	£37.00
Alfie Musgrave	£150.00
Andrew Martin	£312.50
Arabella Sturgeon	£4,027.16
Archie Vaughan	£550.11
Arnold Roberts	£322.35
Barry Fairburn	£26.25
Belle Ellis	£37.25
Bethany Fitzpatrick	£131.25
Billy Pilotille	£152.89
Blake Holdsworth	£64.06
Bobbie Moore	£1,665.31
Bryan Hollinworth	£401.25
Carol Dickerson	£93.50
Catherine & Corrie	£67.50
Cayde Boon	£225.00
Chris & Chloe Smith	£1,138.27
Chris Loftus & Kevin Speight	£2,762.50
Christian Milner	£3,000.88
Christine Ballard	£414.38
Christopher Dunne	£52.50
Colin Hey	£268.75
Colin Jewell	£303.13
Collette Rhodes	£30.83
Daisy Morton	£7,901.53
Daniel Bayes	£240.00
Daniel Davies-Riand	£485.99
Daniel Gilbertson	£125.00
Daniel Jackson	£75.00
Daniel Roberts	£659.06
Daniel Stamp	£125.00
David Coates	£622.06
David Coopland	£36,000.00
David Smith	£118.00
David Straw	£3.25
Dayle Brayshaw	£419.89
Diane Massey	£116.82
Doreen Barraclough	£199.50
Eileen McDonough	£14.70

Elizabeth Atkin	£23.44
Ella Halliday	£75.00
Elsa McGee	£56.25
Emilia Stephenson	£315.00
Eric & Audrey Doyle	£37.50
Erin Honey Gunning	£32.81
Finlay Nuttall	£450.00
Florence Gomersall	£6.25
Gary Darbyshire	£131.25
George Harker	£62.50
Grace Wheeldon	£251.88
Guy Metcalfe	£7,746.49
Hannah Gibson	£31.25
Harrison Hartley	£196.88
Harry Buckley	£734.25
Harry Taylor-Robinson	£125.00
Harvey Kendrew	£187.50
Harvey Tordoff	£873.75
Hayley Blogg	£44.38
Helen Frampton	£150.00
Helen Megginson	£700.00
Helen Ward	£925.00
Henry (Harry) Hird	£122.00
Ian Varley	£245.00
Isla Greenwood	£827.82
Isobel Wilson	£596.36
Jack & Lucille Sassoon	£125.00
Jack Buckley	£287.32
Jack Gales	£150.00
Jack Johnson	£3,510.75
Jacob Ullah	£1,407.57
James Brook	£37.50
James Williams	£13.13
Janet Elizabeth Oxley	£32.81
Janice Carney	£187.50
Jean & Eddie Thompson	£123.00
John Clark	£250.00
John Cordingley	£82.69
John, Vera & Graham Elliott	£625.00
Joseph Hird	£1,012.87
Joseph Mayman	£293.66
Joshua Kinnear	£37.50
June Davey	£312.50
Kathleen Adcock	£150.00
Kathryn Murphy	£262.50
Kenneth Chapman	£124.00
Kerry O'Neill	£13.13
Laura Hart	£75.00
Laura Loftus	£12.50
Laura Poole	£65.63
Lauren Kisby	£1,215.00
Lauren Young	£270.00
Leila Siraj	£75.00
Leo Spavin	£1,100.00
Lewis Lightowler	£100.00
Lewis Mangham	£500.00
Lewis Maung	£6.25

Liam Duffy	£56.88
Lucy Moore	£166.31
Luke Honeysett	£6.25
Lynn Frampton	£150.00
Marianne Shackleton	£113.75
Marion Busfield	£485.64
Mark Butterfield	£21.97
Martin Wilks	£112.50
Mathew Bower	£156.25
Maureen Bradbury	£32.81
Maxwell Kuc	£65.63
Megan Bell-Walker	£1,166.00
Melanie Laffey	£1,783.25
Micha Harry	£13.13
Michael Foster	£201.38
Michael Norfolk	£915.63
Michael Sayer	£563.20
Millie	£18.38
Moira Wilce	£200.00
Musadique Ahmed	£165.00
Nora Clara Gavaghan	£147.00
Oliver Field	£150.00
Olivia Arnold	£1,913.38
Olivia Crook	£2,121.00
Pamela Yarrton	£32.81
Paris Sloan	£98.44
Paris Somma	£899.53
Patricia Norman	£18.38
Patricia Sugden	£225.00
Peter Rumblow	£176.00
Peter Woodmansey	£125.00
Phoebe Laycock	£493.13
Rebecca Alton	£125.00
Rebecca Varney	£18.78
Rhian Barber	£187.50
Robin Atkinson	£263.00
Rodney Victor Hudson	£25.00
Ronald Hind	£213.15
Rory James Welsh	£1,469.32
Rosie Glew	£729.30
Runa Nandi	£250.00
Ruth Short	£6.56
Saavi Patel	£328.13
Sarah Louise Potter	£67.50
Sebastian Smith	£4,973.75
Shaun David Markey	£1,879.37
Sienna Shield	£286.00
Skye Louise Sutcliffe	£561.54
Skyler Faith Dowling	£5.27
Stuart Reid	£733.75
Thomas Cammack	£32.81
Thomas Hudson	£614.38
Timothy Lloyd Wray	£1,008.50
Tracey Coulson	£131.00
Victoria Granger	£279.38
Virginia Payne	£146.90
Zack Barrett	£193.75

Teenage and Young Adult Cancer Awareness Month



TEENAGE AND YOUNG ADULT
CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

April is Teenage and Young Adult Cancer Awareness Month, and we're helping to share the voices of young people affected by cancer.

Dealing with cancer as a teenager brings a unique set of challenges. At a time when young people should be gaining independence, having new experiences and discovering themselves, a cancer diagnosis turns life upside down.

Last April, we spoke to 15-year-old Finlay, not long after his diagnosis. We've caught up with him again this year to hear what his journey's been like since then, his reflections, and advice for other young people.



Then:

In November 2024, my back started to hurt after I went to the Christmas markets with my family and went on a fair ride. I went to the doctors three times after being in so much pain with my back and painkillers were not helping. Each time I was dismissed that I had pulled a muscle or had a trapped nerve in my back. I ended up going to A&E four times because I was in so much pain that I began collapsing. It wasn't until my mum requested a blood test that we finally got our answer.

My mum and dad told me that I had leukaemia, and I remember the first thing I said and thought was "I am going to die". In this moment, I had no idea if my cancer was curable or what kind of treatment I would be on. Doctors and my family were able to reassure me that my cancer was curable, and it was caught early, so I would be undergoing chemotherapy.



In the first two weeks of starting my treatment, my parents noticed a big change and felt like it happened quickly, in my health, appearance and hair loss. This was not how I felt - the first two weeks dragged for me, and I noticed how the treatment and the cancer was making me feel and this at times made me feel upset. I am now into my treatment journey after undergoing chemotherapy and experiencing the side effects that come hand in hand with it. I can still get upset at times, but this journey has now become the new normal for my family and me, and will be until my treatment is finished.

Now:

One year on, and I am now into my maintenance treatment, which I am due to finish in March 2027. A lot has happened since I shared my story last year!

I had more rounds of chemotherapy on the ward and in clinic. By far the worst side effect that I have experienced was pancreatitis - swelling of the pancreas. I was in a lot of pain and ended up being admitted into hospital for around 2 weeks. Once I was on the mend, I had more chemotherapy to do. I took this in my stride and just got on with it, which is what worked for me.

More recently, I was told that my cancer had a high chance of coming back (relapse). From this, I was offered a clinical trial. Initially, I really didn't want to do it because it involved seven more rounds of intense chemotherapy. This was something that my family, I, and the hospital team discussed for five weeks before I decided that I wanted to give the trial a go. I didn't want my cancer to come back, so it was something I was hopeful for. The trial was hard. Three rounds in, I was admitted back into hospital as my bloods weren't right, and I was neutropenic. I had more tests, more scans and more treatment, but I got better, and I have now completed the trial.



Finlay and our Youth Support Worker, Chelsey.

In maintenance, I have been able to return to doing things that I did before my diagnosis - riding my bike, going out with my friends, and going to a few parties. Life is not the same as it was before, but I am beginning to enjoy doing 'normal' things again.

Throughout all this, Candlelighters have been there for the good days and the bad. Candlelighters help me and my family get through the days of what feels like endless hospital appointments. They are always so positive and can make the days a little bit easier. Chelsey is my favourite. She is the Youth Support Worker. We have been able to have a laugh and a joke when I have been on the ward, and she has been able to handle my banter when I have been the cheeky chap that I am. My family and I wanted to give back, so we formed a Candlelighters fundraising team - Team FinCush.

If I had to give some advice to someone who has cancer, it would be:

- Don't take life for granted
- Always look at the positives
- Keep smiling, keep laughing.



It's your donations and support that help give young people like Finlay the support they need through a cancer diagnosis.

To give other teenagers the emotional and practical support they need to face cancer, donate today.



Challenge - 50 - with Candlelighters

Take on Challenge 50 and
be part of what comes next!

Help support children and families affected by
childhood cancer by taking on a 50-themed
challenge this year.



Find out more



Sally & Vanessa's story

Sally first became involved in Candlelighters over four decades ago, when her daughter Vanessa was diagnosed with bone cancer. In the years following, Sally volunteered a huge amount of her time to Candlelighters, helping to improve support for families, before becoming our first paid member of staff.

“It was 1984 when my eldest daughter, Vanessa, was diagnosed with Ewing sarcoma in her right arm. You tend to go into shock mode and be cross, but there’s nobody really to be cross with. It takes a while for you to realise that the people in the unit are actually the people that are going to help you and are really kind and very, very patient.”

Vanessa underwent nearly two years of treatment, including six months of chemotherapy and surgery to remove and replace the bone, in Birmingham.

“She did have a lot of physiotherapy... that was very, very difficult. Now she has very good movement in it. She can’t lift it above her head, but she can still French plait her hair, which I can’t do with two good arms!”

When Vanessa began her treatment, things were very different to what we know today. She stayed on Ward 15 at St James’s Hospital, which at that time was a mixed ward for the area of Leeds. Children with cancer and their families didn’t have the dedicated spaces and support they do now.

“It was very underfunded at that time, the unit. In 1984, there was one social worker and one health visitor who had to cope with the workload of the social work team



Vanessa (left) while on treatment



Vanessa (right) last November with her younger sister

and, in the case of the health visitor, the outreach nurses. But during her treatment, things did get a little better. Ward 15 was renamed Ward 10 and was entirely dedicated to oncology patients and children with breathing difficulties.”

Vanessa was 14 when she was diagnosed. This year she’ll be 55. She now lives in Guernsey with her husband and their four children and works as a secondary school science teacher.

“Every time something happened, I used to ask, ‘Has that increased the survival rate or decreased it?’. I was obsessed with survival rates. For years and years after, we found it very hard to plan ahead. We thought if we booked a holiday, she’d come out of remission. I don’t really like cooking, but when we’d come into clinic for follow ups, I used to think if I baked a cake and took it in, it would be good news. It was ridiculous, really but it’s what you do.”

“After Vanessa finished her treatment, the patient experience evolved, which I saw first-hand from working for Candlelighters for many years. The introduction of better antiemetics, Hickman lines and Portacaths, and better social support have all been huge improvements.”



Sally (left) and Vanessa, with two of her children, circa 2008

A history of research



While the early days of Candlelighters focused on immediate support for patients and families, it wasn't long before we started to look further and think bigger. We wanted to improve the future for children with cancer. We began to fund research that could improve understanding and treatments, creating lasting change in childhood cancer care.

Here's a look at the research we've funded over the years...



1981: The Children's Tumour Register

£15,000 was given to establish what would later become known as the Yorkshire Specialist Register of Cancer in Children and Young People, which we continued to fund for four decades! The register gathers detailed data to help clinicians and researchers track patterns and trends in childhood cancer.

2011: Stem Cells and Brain Tumour Laboratory

Joint funding with Yorkshire's Brain Tumour Charity helped launch a brain tumour laboratory at St James's Hospital and the first academic neurosurgeon post in Leeds, Ryan Mathew. The project boosted research in an area with little national funding, studying new approaches for aggressive, hard-to-treat cancers.

1992: The Candlelighters Laboratory

With a £1m investment, the Candlelighters Laboratory was opened, led by Professor Sue Burchill, researching neuroblastoma and Ewing sarcoma. A total of £2.9m was given to the lab in the following years, which still exists today and is world-renowned for its translational research, predicting effective treatments and developing new drugs.



2014: The Candlelighters Fellowship

Launched in 2014, a total of £2m was awarded to the Candlelighters Research Fellowship Programme, supporting a new generation of researchers and clinicians working to improve treatment and supportive care.

2023: The Candlelighters Supportive Care Research Centre

Another £1m was awarded to an innovative supportive care research centre, looking at how to reduce side effects for children throughout treatment, which can be traumatic, permanent, and even deadly. Led by Professor Bob Phillips, the centre is making progress in another vitally important but historically underfunded area.

2000: Funded roles

Knowing that the future of research depends on having skilled people to conduct it, we began pump-priming a number of fellows, scientists and clinical posts. This included support for Clinical Fellows in paediatric oncology, DNA laboratory work, and fertility studies - building expertise that would shape practice far beyond Leeds.



With your help, in the last 25 years alone, we have invested over £9.7m in projects that are building a brighter future for children with cancer across the globe. The scope and breadth of projects funded go far beyond what might be expected of a small, local charity – showing determination to lead real change.

The progress made is entirely thanks to the incredible support received from individuals, businesses, trusts and foundations throughout the years. If you'd like to support more world-leading childhood cancer research, [click here to donate](#).

Celebrating YOU



▲ **The Moore-McCloskey family** reached an incredible fundraising milestone, raising **£21,225** over the last 10 years in support of Candlelighters. From bake sales and raffles to a host of challenge events, including '1000 miles for £1,000 in ten months' - that's a marathon a week! All in memory of Melanie Jayne Laffey.



▲ **The Connect Yorkshire** community came together at their annual Business Awards to celebrate Yorkshire businesses, organisations and people, and raised a brilliant **£4,500** for families.

▼ **The Christmas Eve Tractor Run** saw 150 festive tractors and vehicles descend on the Calder Valley, spreading festive cheer and raising a phenomenal **£25,141**, split equally between Candlelighters and Forget Me Not Children's Hospice.



▼ **8-year-old Jessica** raised an amazing **£75** at her local Christmas fair in Bradford, selling lovely handmade bracelets and keyrings. Jessica's fundraising is in memory of her sister, Paris, who sadly died aged 11 and was supported by Candlelighters.



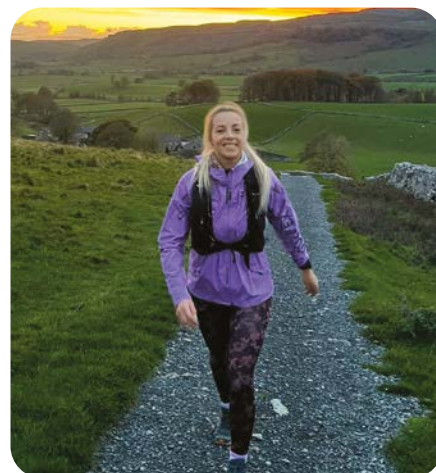
▼ **Team Leeds City College** took on a huge 18-mile walk, from Harrogate to Leeds, finishing at The Square. The team persevered through the weather, walking for over 7 hours, and raising **over £2,100**.



▶ **The Wild Atlantic Way Group** began their huge challenge to cycle over 2,500km of the West Irish coast in 2021 for Team Daisy. They recently completed their third and final stage - a week-long, 700-mile mountainous journey, raising an incredible **£4,317** in memory of Daisy Morton.



▶ **Knaresborough Golf Club** raised **£8,350** after Ladies Captain, Julie Hargreaves, selected Candlelighters as her chosen charity for 2025, bringing the whole club together for events and activities to raise funds and awareness for the charity.



▶ **Layla Hirst** ran a non-stop loop of Pen-y-Ghent for a full 24 hours to raise over **£6,600** for Candlelighters. Layla ran a staggering 100 kilometres and was inspired by her brother Aidan, who sadly died aged 16 after being diagnosed with cancer.



Thank you to every single one of our wonderful fundraisers who help us to provide vital support to children and families. It all makes a difference. Want to do your own fundraising? [Click here](#) to view our Fundraising Pack by or email info@candlelighters.org.uk for fundraising advice!



Keith & Harry's story

Keith became the Chair of our Board of Trustees in 2020, passionately leading the charity alongside our trustees, to set our strategies for providing the best support to families. Keith first came to know Candlelighters 20 years ago, when his son, Harry, was diagnosed with lymphoma.



Harry in hospital

“Harry was three in 2006 when he was diagnosed with Burkitt lymphoma, which is an aggressive form of the disease. We’d gone on holiday because we’d been told he had chickenpox, and the day we arrived, we got a phone call saying, ‘You must get back now’. We were told he had two weeks to live, unless treatment started right away, and even then, there were no guarantees.”

“We were thrown into this world that you just don’t think exists. As a parent, you think you can always be there for your children, you can protect them and help them, but then you’re told there’s nothing you can do – you’ve got to sit back and let the medical teams do it.”



Harry with his big sister Megan

As Harry progressed through treatment, the family began to cross paths with Candlelighters, finding out about support available - whether it was a friendly cup of tea, the parents’ kitchen, or Elaine, our Dinner Supervisor, and her famous trolley!

“Harry went through various treatments, and thankfully got to a stage where they said, ‘He’s going to be ok as far as we’re able to tell’ and that was a massive relief.”



Keith



Harry and Megan at Megan's wedding

Though their journey has continued, for Harry and the whole family, Harry is now 22 years old and following doctors’ instructions to ‘keep fit’. Having taken up Karate and won the British Championship, World Championship and a gold medal at the Commonwealth Games, Harry is now at university and enjoys ultra-distance running.

“For me, the journey means a lot personally. I thought ‘There’s nothing I can do’, but I can do something by helping out Candlelighters. So, I did the Great North Run a couple of times, raised some funds, and I became a trustee. It’ll be 20 years next year since I got involved. And if I sit back now and think, ‘Did I ever think we’d get to this position?’, no, I didn’t. When I think now, what we have – the Family Support Workers, The Square, I mean, it’s just amazing. It’s such a privilege to be involved.”

In his time on the board, Keith has overseen huge developments to our support for families, including opening The Square, Pavilion, and Cottage, as well as new and more comprehensive emotional, practical and financial support.



The whole family at Megan's wedding

“I don’t think we could ever do enough. The stress and pressure families face is just immense. And until you’re in that position, you never truly ‘get it’.





Leave a gift
in your will for
children and young
people with cancer



Leaving a gift in your will means you can shape the future for children and young people diagnosed with cancer. It's one of the most profound and lasting ways you can make a difference. With the help of gifts in wills, you can make sure our support continues for the next 50 years and more.



[Click here](#) to find out more, or get in touch with us at info@candlelighters.org.uk or by calling **0113 887 8333**.

We're incredibly grateful to **The Genia Marzec Trust Fund - Helping Hand to Children** for their generous donation of £100,000. The Trust was established by Genowefa (Genia) Marzec, who passed away from cancer in February 2025 and left most of her estate to help children in need. Genia was born in Poland in 1938 and endured extraordinary hardship from a young age - deported to Siberia as a toddler, she later journeyed through Iran and Africa before settling in Failsworth, Oldham with her mother.

We asked the Trustees why they chose to support Candlelighters, and they told us...

"Candlelighters are a well-established local charity whose work aligns closely with the Trust's mission to help children. We are proud to support their work helping families of children with cancer."

Challenge yourself in 2026!



Register your place in our events now and help support children with cancer. [Click here](#) for more information.

May

10th Rob Burrow Leeds Marathon
10th Leeds Half Marathon

June

14th Leeds 10k
27th & 28th Total Warrior (6k or 12k)
& Junior Warrior (3k or 6k)

July

11th Great Leeds Walk
(10 Miles, 18 Miles or 25 Miles)

August

2nd York 10k

September

5th Yorkshire Three Peaks
13th Great North Run

October

18th Yorkshire Marathon



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 CandlelightersTrust
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Move every day in May!

We all know that movement is important for health and wellbeing. But when living with cancer, movement can become much harder. Research shows that even gentle movements can help keep bones and muscles strong and boost wellbeing and mood during treatment.

So, we're challenging you to get moving every day in May to support families affected by childhood cancer. Lace up your trainers, saddle up your bike or grab your cossie - however you can move, join us to fundraise for children with cancer.

For more information and to challenge yourself this May for childhood cancer, [click here!](#)