

Special Days – written by Wendy Ashton, Eden Valley Hospice

Every day special memories are created at the hospice. From providing people with time to spend with family and friends to helping children access Jigsaw for support and fun, each special memory will stay with the family forever.

As Palliative care social workers here we co ordinate and organise these with the team. Here are some memories we have helped to create at Eden Valley Hospice and Jigsaw.

Parties and Occasions

We recognise that a stay at the hospice may mean patients and their families miss out on special occasions such as birthdays, Christmas etc. Here at Eden Valley Hospice we try to help the patients and the families and friends still celebrate.

In November we held a small firework display in the grounds and a family party with gingerbread and sparkles. All the rooms on the in-patient unit look out onto the garden and chairs or beds were pushed to the doors so everyone could enjoy the firework display.

At Christmas patients find it difficult to go shopping for presents. The hospice is very lucky to have a fantastic community and gifts are donated throughout the festive season. We were able to hand out some adorable cuddly bears along with selection boxes to patients and their families.

One patient told me it was nice to give the grandchildren a gift from him and not one his children had to buy for him to give.

Another patient said her child sought comfort from cuddling up the bear in bed with her.

Special Visitors

We love to welcome all visitors to the hospice, and also make someone's special day by a visit.

I link with the Marketing and fundraising team a lot as they have links and contacts for all sorts of events and themes.

The hospice (and one little boy in particular) recently had a visit from Spiderman. There was a lot of excitement around the hospice waiting for him to arrive and it was lovely to see big smiles on patients and families faces.

Olaf, from Frozen, has made an appearance at a Birthday Party, organised by the hospice, and made it a very memorable occasion.

At Christmas we are lucky to have school choirs sing every year in Day Hospice, and donkeys visiting in their Santa Hats. This lifts everyone's spirits and is annual event not to be missed.

Trips

One young mum told me that she had never had a 'family' holiday with her partner and little child. As a Hospice social worker I helped make this dream come true. With the assistance from the Willow Foundation and Hospice at Home, the family had a successful weekend away at Center Parcs. A memory that will last a lifetime.

Other trips have included going to a Carlisle United match, going shopping or out for dinner. It has enabled a dream and or wishes to come true.