



Press Release

Immediate Release

27 February 2024

Cygnet Staff Fundraise for Charity which Support Children with Learning Disabilities

STAFF at a care service for women in Derbyshire are fundraising for a local charity which supports children with learning disabilities after finding out how much the charity helped the son of two co-workers who has Down Syndrome.

Cygnet Views, on Wellington Street, Matlock, is a 10 bed high dependency complex care service for women with learning disabilities, associated complex needs and who may have behaviours that challenge.

The team at the Cygnet Health Care-run service are raising money throughout 2024 for Footprints Conductive Education Centre; a local Nottinghamshire charity that supports children with mobility and communication difficulties and their families.

Melissa Fox is a Team Leader at Cygnet Views and her partner, Lyndsey Fox, is the Regional Safety Intervention Trainer for Cygnet Health Care. Together, they have two-year-old Archie, who has Down Syndrome. The family have been supported by Footprints for over a year. During this time, he has met lots of developmental milestones, made friends, and his Mums have had the opportunity to network with other families with similar needs.

Footprints offers a holistic education approach to help children with disabilities consciously learn the life skills that come more naturally to others. They encourage the development of physical, communication, social, sensory, self-help and thinking skills, such as sitting, standing, touching, listening, looking, eating and playing.

Lyndsey explained: "Footprints is an incredible charity that gives us so much hope.

"We have used Footprints for the last year, our son attends every week. For us as a family it has provided us with opportunities to meet other families and for Archie to develop his confidence in a variety of social settings exploring different activities.

"We have learnt Makaton and continue to learn to support Archie's early communication so he can express his needs.

"Since Archie was 12 weeks he has been in the swimming pool learning basic water safety and foundation skills to swim, he loves to be in the water and has strong kicking legs. Swimming lessons have been provided by Footprints which will be a valuable life skill."

To kick-start the fundraising efforts, Cygnet Views held a Christmas Raffle and this month had a non-uniform day with a themed blue and yellow dress code, as blue and yellow are the designated colours for Down Syndrome Awareness. So far, the team have raised over £200.

The biggest challenge will be in September when the staff team will take on the Yorkshire Three Peaks Challenge.

Lyndsey described Archie as a "very curious toddler". She added: "He has the cutest smile and loves music and dancing. Archie can be shy however he loves to wave and fist bump when out shopping to anyone that shows an interest in him.

"One of his favourite songs to dance to is 'Uptown Funk' and he's partial to a few sixties tunes, he can use Makaton to sign to Mr Blue Sky amongst other songs.

"He recently has become very confident with his walking which is a huge achievement due to his low muscle tone. One of his biggest challenges is food, we are working through some food texture aversions so he doesn't explore food like a typical child of his age would."

Archie was also born with Syndactyly on both of his hands which means the last three fingers on both of his hands were fused together and didn't separate. He has had several operations over the last year to correct this.

"This was an early challenge for him as he had his hands in bandages for large parts of his earlier development," Lyndsey said. "Both of his mummies were super proud of how he handled that."

Describing how much it means to her family that the team are supporting Footprints, Lyndsey added: "I will be forever grateful to the team at Cygnet Views for taking the time to ask and understand Archie's needs and learn about his support network.

"To know that staff are taking their time to fundraise is heartwarming, when I initially was told this was happening I became quite emotional.

"To know that people are taking their time to show an interest is overwhelming. We know first-hand how beneficial this resource is to families as sometimes families get very little support from other professionals so charity fundraising means so much to the them.

"My wife has been supported at work when he's had to attend medical appointments and reviews, she also feels thankful that the Cygnet Views team has embraced having Footprints as their charity this year.

"Archie brightens the day of anyone who meets him. I am immensely proud of our little family and can't imagine life without him."

To donate to their cause, go to <https://www.justgiving.com/page/cygnet-views-1706805567657>

Ends

Notes to Editors:

For more information, please contact Gemma Attew, External Communications Manager, on gemmaattew@cygnethealth.co.uk or 07718 244811.