

Forthcoming Events....

Adolescent Weekend

May 10th & 11th

Red Kite Ramble

Sunday 22nd June 2014

FOO Summer Party

Sunday 6th July Thame Barn
10.30am-4pm

Shrek The Musical

New Theatre Oxford

Followed by refreshments at the
Old Fire Station

Saturday 15th November 2014 2.30pm

Xmas Party

Benson Parish Hall

Sunday 13th December 2014
3pm -7pm.

Spring 2014



Offering Support To Children And Relatives

A National Charity Which Supports Families
Of A Child Diagnosed With A Brain Or Spinal
Tumour

Pantomime Trip 2014

Thank you to everyone who came along to our annual trip to the pantomime on the 4th January despite the bad weather, 90 people came along. They were treated to an excellent performance of Robin Hood at the Oxford Playhouse.

The show had some great characters in it and was enjoyed by all who came along.

After the show families were treated to tea & cakes at the Randolph Hotel.

We did have a number of empty seats as a couple of large parties were unable to attend and unfortunately we were either not informed or were unable to fill the seats.

I would also like to say thank you to all the staff at the Oxford Playhouse & the Randolph Hotel with all their help both on the day & during the booking process.

This year we are going to try something different and we have booked 100 seats to see Shrek the Musical at the new Theatre Oxford on the 15th November 2014 at 2.30pm. Please look out for further details.

Read All About It.

Firstly we would like start by saying some thank you's, firstly to everyone that sold or bought the Holiday Draw Raffle tickets we will let you know how much we have raised as soon as we know. Also thank you to the families that have either helped us at fund raising events or have actually raised funds themselves, some are listed on the donations page. Most of the funds listed on the pages have either come as a direct result of families running stalls or events for us or from family contacts.

Friends of O.S.C.A.R is changing, some of you may be aware that the 10 hour office admin role is paid, but when it was first created back in the days of O.S.C.A.R it was paid through the O.S.C.A.R charity. In recent years as planned FOO has become more active and for the last year has been making a payment of £150.00 per month to O.S.C.A.R to help cover some of this cost. It has now been decided by the charitable funds dept at the hospital that FOO now needs to take on more of this role. It has been decided that the roles need to be reversed and O.S.C.A.R will be paying FOO a small amount of money per year to cover things such as storage, admin time and insurance. Now that Carol is employed by FOO she can no longer be the named secretary with the Charity Commission. At the family summer party and AGM we will be seeking to appoint a new secretary. We do need three officers' chair, treasurer and secretary for the charity to continue. Being the secretary is not an arduous role as most of the day to day admin will be done in the office and Carol will give whoever takes on the role all the support they need. Please think about taking on the role we meet at the Children's Hospital on the first Monday of the month every other month.

This year we are hoping to develop the charity further by providing extra family events, we have a new PowerPoint presentation to be used at fund raising events, talks etc. We have also applied for funding to help cover the cost of providing emergency over night packs to be given out to families that are admitted to hospital. We have also applied for funding for the adolescent weekend and if we are successful FOO hopes to be able to fully fund the adolescent weekend this year for the first time.

Read All About It...

The committee are also working hard to try and secure some corporate funding from the business community. Funding would not only be used to provide extra family events please see the back page for the latest diary dates, but also to support some of the day to day costs such as our insurance cover this costs £400.00 for the year, newsletter publication at around £300.00 per print run, the phone bill at £35.00 - £40.00 per month or the office rent at £3500.00 per year. All these day to day costs are not very glamorous but they are essential. If you think your company may be able to help us then please get in touch with us.

We now have two patrons these are Jay Jayamohan Consultant Neuro Surgeon and John Howell OBE MP for Henley.

There are a number of ways that you can support Friends of O.S.C.A.R without any cost to yourselves:

Spend and raise: www.spendandraise/friendsofoscar There are 100's of retailers on here just type this address in before going to your online retailer & if they are on the list Friends of O.S.C.A.R will earn commission & sometimes they offer discounts to the purchaser.

Charity Flowers: Make a donation each time someone buys flowers.

Charitecards: make an £8.00 donation to Friends of O.S.C.A.R when you sign up. Then send free cards for a year.

Jewellery, Mobiles & ink cartridge recycling: Envelopes are available from the office or if you work somewhere that uses toner cartridges & they are thrown away please contact the office & I can put you in touch with a company that will come & collect them free of charge.

MAD Make a donation: We have been part of this scheme for some time but the scheme itself is now developing. There are a number of ways you can support us through MAD. The first it operates like the just giving site but it does not charge us to belong to the scheme or any admin fees, so 100% of any donations come to us. The second is you can make a donation to us through the site and then you will get back double the amount back in vouchers of your choice from a number of retailers etc around Oxfordshire and neighbouring counties. They are also about to launch a third scheme which is going to operate in a similar way to the Tesco Clubcard points or Sainsbury's Nectar Point scheme. Please visit their web site for more information www.make-a-donation.org.

Adolescent weekend 2013 **Jukebox Theatre-A Parents View**

We arrived at the Holiday Inn hotel, and within minutes it felt as though our young people had been together forever.

The excitement could be felt in the air, we watched as our precious young people, went off to different rooms and we left - what could we expect when we saw them again just over 24 hours later.

We need not have worried, the organisation that goes into these events is second to none, always something new and exciting, on the edge, but safe is how I would describe the adolescent weekends. We had an inkling this would be special, preference forms had been received prior to the event and choices had been made -singing, dancing, music making to name a few.

As we arrived at the theatre, the young people were just disappearing, only a brief hello. Soon we were in the queue and took a seat, the singing, dancing, music and comedy moments started, each of the group took an active role, the volunteers everyone. You could feel the emotion, tears were in most parents' eyes, we did not want it to end but alas it had too.

An amazing performance from scratch, such a short time to prepare, but so professional entertaining, and such funny moments to boot.

We parents and friends adjourned for a coffee, so proud and emotionally drained - half an hour later our young people finally emerged, some tears had been shed, definitely some crotchety faces , they had worked so hard but achieved so much.

Friendships had been formed and old ones rekindled, they did not want to leave, a real togetherness.

Watching the DVD again bought it all back - as a Friends of O.S.C.A.R parent, thank you to all the people who put the weekends together, especially Erica and Carol, I know how much effort and hard work goes into the preparation, not to mention the responsibility

We await this year's weekend with expectation, we know it will be fantastic, and add yet more resolve and life skills to our precious young people.

David Fake

Friends of O.S.C.A.R Committee member and parent.

Adolescent weekend 2013



Silverstone Half Marathon

Back in September I was contacted by a lady called Sarah Hart who works at the Hellidon Lakes Hotel. We were chosen as their charity of choice a couple of years ago through a Friends of O.S.C.A.R family. Sarah offered to run the Silverstone Half Marathon for us. On the 2nd March 2014. Sarah worked hard to do this as running is not her first choice of sport. The pictures below show Sarah after the race which, she finished in 2hrs and 18mins. Sarah hopes to have raised a huge £600 for us. Thank you Sarah.



Message from the Chair ...

Looking back to move forward

During the latter part of 2013 the committee took to time to reflect on what we as a charity had been doing in recent years. We looked at what we felt we should be doing, including the feedback we had received from you the charity users.

It quickly became clear that 2014 was going to be a proactive year for Friends of O.S.C.A.R.

There are some things we do that are well received by you our users and we don't want to change these. But there are other things we feel we need to put in place to offer more to all our family members.

I think of Friends of O.S.C.A.R as being a family and as such there will always be a connection between its users past, present and future.

This means that we need to find ways of ensuring all our children, whatever their age (some are now young adults) are still able to benefit from what the charity has to offer.

We do have plans to get the young adults more involved with the charity as the year progresses.

Stay tuned to this channel!.....

We also have plans to provide more support to families currently undergoing treatment. These ideas are in the early stages of development but include:

- 1) Hospital Stay Kits for Parents and Children – These can contain toiletries for an overnight stay and toys or gifts to keep the patient or siblings entertained
- 2) Car parking passes for longer term patients
- 3) Assistance towards the cost of meals for longer term patient's families.

Making these things happen takes a lot of resource in both money and time.

Although we apply for grant funding where we can, a large chunk of our money comes through donations. As Carol has mentioned we are looking to have a push for corporate funding during 2014, but the hardest thing is opening the door. If you know companies that you think will be willing to listen to our pleas or if you think we should approach your company please let Carol know and we will action this

The time to organise all these things cannot be supported by Carol's contracted 10 hours alone. All the committee members and other regular supporters provide their time free of charge and as a charity we thank them for their continued support which allows us to continue.

If you can give us the gift of some free time this would be gratefully received. This doesn't have to be on the committee, but could be in the form of attending community events to spread the word and try and obtain more funding, which is something we need to utilise more.

We do have other plans, but enough for now. Let's work together to make things happen.

Elton Riches
Chairman

DONATIONS to Friends of O.S.C.A.R

Katherine Thomey Brighton Half Marathon
£820.10 Including match funding from Lloyds TSB

Fun Day Sale
£43.04

Recycle 4 Charity.
£266.45

St Peter's School
£72.80

Jewellery Envelopes.
£40.25

Eydon Wednesday Club
£167.00

Banbury Town & County Show. (Thanks to Amanda Hancocks and
Carol MacKay)
£25.00

Fun Day Raffle
£75.00

St Peter's Church Didcot Quiz & Chip Evening
£182.78

Alan & Janet Bayley Trail Rides
£847.00

Robinson Family Stall at Tingewick Beer Festival
£452.00

Oxford Nano Ltd
£100.00

DONATIONS to Friends of O.S.C.A.R

Galaxy Hot Chocolate
£300.00

Banbury Xmas Fayre Thanks to Carol MacKay, Amanda Hancocks
and Charlie and Tracy Douglas
£108.00

Jan Bell Xmas card and gift sale
£144.00

Peter Harrison RWE night out Taxi Service
£32.00

Jez Cox and Dave King
Land's End to John O'Groats
£737.00 including gift aid.

Pantomime Raffle
£47.00

Emily Constance Oxford Half Marathon
£445.00

Mrs Gillett
£25.00

Mr D Dunwoody Xmas gift
£50.00

Helen Morrissey and Helen Dunwoody
Coffee Morning
£195.21

DONATIONS to Friends of O.S.C.A.R

Coast to Coast

Paul Watson £429.00
Elton Riches £866.00
Steve Reece £410.00
James Smart £ 341.78

RWE NPower
£2240.00

NCS group Didcot Cake Sale
£90.00

Lauren Holmes Cake Sale
£40.00

Mrs J Wilford Swear Box
£20.00

Lauren Riches Sponsored Bike Ride
£305.50

John and Janice Wilford donations in lieu of wedding gifts
£710.60

Asda Distribution Centre Didcot
£50.00

Dizzy Dogs Event Newbury (Thanks to Sally and William Hings)
£51.50

Kassam Bucket Collection
£602.60 including match funding by Infinium

James Harrison Sky Dive
£450.00 including match funding by Carphone Warehouse

Northwood Prep School
£500.00

Useful Information

The Cinema Exhibitors' Association Card:

If you are in receipt of Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance or are registered blind. You can apply for the above card at www.ceacard.co.uk or ask for a form at your local cinema. There have been changes to the card it now only lasts one year & not three. Everything else remains the same.

The National Blind Children's Society:

Has a wide ranging parent support service for families of children with visual impairment www.nbcs.org.uk tel 08007811444

Airport Guide for those with a disability or reduced mobility:

This guide is available at www.parkat.co.uk/disabled. The guide includes things like travelling with medication along with information for people who have sight & hearing impairments as well as people who have mobility issues.

Audio Books:

Free postal book service, with a section for children. The Calibre Audio Library can also be visited in Aylesbury Buckinghamshire please phone 01296432339 or go to www.calibre.org.uk

Medpac

www.medpac.co.uk provide medicine storage bags in two sizes priced at £5.99 & £9.99. These are bright orange so can be easily found in the bottom of a school bag or medicine cupboard at school. They also come with a ID & treatment card. There is space for a photo of your child on the ID card & space to write information about the drug on the treatment card. These bags are ideal for carrying around EpiPens, diabetic medication or emergency hydrocortisone injections.

Education

A new system for recording a child's academic achievements has been trialled & due to become mandatory from January 2014. Every pupil from the age of 14 will be issued with a Unique Learner Number (ULN). This is a 10 digit number that a pupil or other educational organisation can use. Over the years a child will build up a Personal Learning Record (PLR) of achievements. Every child will be able to access this using their ULN & can use it when making applications for jobs etc. Other agencies will be able to use it for its administration purposes. Other users will include local authorities, education/career organisations, exam boards & funding agencies.

Free e-audio books & e books

Oxfordshire County Council has set up a new free lender service for e audio & e books. For more details go to the Oxfordshire County Council website. If you live outside Oxfordshire go to your County Council web site & see if they are offering a similar service

Driving

If your child is in receipt of the high rate mobility part of DLA they can apply for a driving license at 16. You can book an assessment at one of the Regional Driving Assessment Centres the nearest is at Eynsham near Oxford www.rdac.co.uk or phone 08453371540. For a driver assessment you will need to have a full or provisional licence. They will also help with adaptation's to your car for carers & they have a fully equipped vehicle.

Bus Passes for Disabled Adults & Children

We have recently applied for one of these as a family & have been successful. We did not apply before because I did not feel we fitted the criteria set out on the web site. We then contacted the council & discussed it & we were advised to apply. It is free to apply via your local council web site you will need a letter from your doctor & a couple of passport sized photographs.

Coast to Coast Cycle Ride. Four Men and some bikes



When the festive spirits got the better of Steve and James over the Christmas season, they rashly agreed to come on a charity cycle ride with me. A decision I know they have questioned a few times since that day. Six months later and still wondering how they got in this position, they joined me and our new wing man Paul heading north for the delights of Tyneside.

Day one involved driving or being driven in one vehicle or another, including an attempt to break the land speed record by a taxi driver from Tynemouth to Whitehaven, an experience none of us wants to repeat.

Day two and we were off on the first 55 miles of cycling, commencing with the ceremonial dipping of the rear wheels in the sea at Whitehaven. The terrain was a mixed bag, but our enemy for the day was the weather with temperatures exceeding 30°C as the day progressed.

A well-earned rest at Penrith and we were off for Day three, the big climb. During the day we climbed to over 2000 feet above sea level through some amazing scenery that seemed to be constantly angled in an upwards direction. This was a hard days cycling, which increased our level of acceptance when we were forced to stay in a pub at Eastgate for the night.

Day four, the final countdown, a real contrast as we headed to the eastern coast line, cycling right through the middle of Newcastle, hugging the banks of the Tyne. Several hours later and mission accomplished we only had the long drive home to contend with.

I would personally like to thank Paul, Steve and James for their time, their company and their sacrifice and for putting the fun into a successful fundraising trip.

Elton



London Welsh Bucket Collection

On the 29th September we were invited by the London Welsh Rugby Team to the Kassam Stadium in Oxford to do a charity bucket collection.

As you will see from the picture below we were also asked to provide two mascots for the game.



Pictured above are Naimah Dunwoody and Ryan Ninan with the FOO and London Welsh Mascots. Niamah and Ryan were invited to run out with the London Welsh Team

The collection raised £301.00. We would like to thank all the FOO families and their friends who came and helped collect on the day. Thank you also to everyone at London Welsh Rugby Club for inviting us and there support on the day and congratulations on winning the match. The £301.00 was later match funded by a company called Infinium our thanks to Danni one of the collectors on the day for arranging this

Christmas Card SALE

We will be having some new Christmas cards for this year. So keep an eye on the web site for further information.

Donations To O.S.C.A.R

We would like to say a huge thank you again to Paula Watson who has again sold Christmas cards for us and held her home made Christmas Pudding Raffle. Paula has raised £82.00 for us.

WANTED

Friends of O.S.C.A.R do a number of raffles and tombola's throughout the year at various fund raising events.

If you have any unwanted small items that we can wrap & make into gifts or anything we can use as tombola or raffle prizes we would be very grateful for them. You can either give the office a ring or drop me an email & I may be able to arrange collection or bring them along to the next event that you attend.

Congratulations To:

George Upfield and Luke Dickerty who did very well in their GCSE's and A levels respectively. George got 3A's, 6B's and a C and is now studying for his A levels and Luke got an A and 2 B's in his A levels and is now at Glamorgan university.

Congratulations also to James Crossley (pictured below) who graduated last year from Brookes University and studied for a foundation in art and design.



Contact Details

We have had a number of problems recently where families have moved or changed phone number without letting us know & then contacting us to find out why they have not had information sent to them. If you change any of your contact details including email & mobile number please let us know. Even if you don't wish to continue receiving information we can then take you off our contact list. A quick email to let us know your change of details is fine.

Our contact information is:

Friends of O.S.C.A.R
5 Abingdon Road,
Didcot,
Oxon, OX11 9BL

Phone Number: 01235 816310
Email: carolharrison@utdsl.com

Travel Insurance

This seems to be a problem year round for families we are still keen for you to try Freedom Insurance as they pay us a commission on all policy's sold. Please quote O.S.C.A.R when you phone.

Medi Quote Telephone **0845 8800163**

Essential Travel Telephone **08707353600**

All Clear Travel Insurance. Telephone **08707779339**,
Website **www.allcleartravel.co.uk**

Freedom Travel Insurance. Telephone **08707743760**,
Website **www.freedominsure.co.uk**

Insure & Go. Telephone **08448882787**,
Website **www.insureandgo.com**

One word of advice from a family that has recently been trying to obtain travel insurance please double check all the information given to the company go through it twice if need be. They did find that the information given was not taken down correctly the first time.

If you are having difficulty finding travel insurance please contact the office as I have just been sent a new list of insurers.