

Autumn/Winter 2026

Issue 12

HOSPICE CONNECTION

Your link to us and the care that you support

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St. Francis Hospice

Community Connections

It Takes a Village



There is a saying that it takes a village to raise a child. We have seen that it also takes a village to provide dignified, professional and compassionate palliative care to members of our community.

St Francis Hospice sprang from the vision of Dr Mary Redmond, the leadership of the Daughters of Charity, the support of the government and state health bodies, and the generosity of the North Dublin community, including the Capuchin Friars, who donated their land in Raheny.

I recently had the opportunity to chat with Anne Langan, who in the 1980s was one of the community leaders in fundraising and raising awareness about the proposed hospice. She went on to serve as a volunteer for three decades and still supports the hospice in every way she can.

Anne was attending a celebration of the start of building a new 24-bed, single-patient-room inpatient unit at our Raheny hospice. Viewing the building site, she was reminded of earlier times, when no hospice existed there. She and other local volunteers thought of it as their “field of dreams”, and this vision kept them motivated in their fundraising efforts.



Scan to hear Anne Langan recall how the Hospice began more than 30 years ago – and why she is encouraging our community to help build for the future by supporting Buy a Brick.

The generosity of the North Dublin community has seen not one, but two hospice facilities built, in Raheny and Blanchardstown, and a specialist palliative care service that has touched the lives of hundreds of thousands of people in our community.

As we embark on this latest development, we are confident in the continued support of this wonderful community. The new in-patient unit will provide additional beds, the privacy and dignity of single rooms for all patients, and improved facilities for families and visitors.

The existing in-patient unit, built in 1995 through funds raised by Anne and countless others, will continue to care for patients until the new facility opens in spring 2028. It will then have a new life, housing our expanding Community Palliative Care team and Outpatient and Day Service.

With patient numbers increasing by 88% over the past decade, and our catchment population continuing to grow, St Francis Hospice is committed to innovating and expanding to meet this need, while keeping specialist palliative care free of charge to patients and families.

Achieving this really will take a village. You can help us reach our €10.4m target by donating, running an event, or supporting our Buy a Brick campaign: www.sfh.ie/buy-a-brick/.

Thank you for your continued support. It is truly community caring for community.

Fintan Fagan

Chief Executive Officer,
St Francis Hospice Dublin



“I have my voice back, now I want to use it”



Hospice Connection readers may recall the story of Declan Moore (Spring/Summer 2005), who returned to work after attending St Francis Hospice's Outpatient and Day Service for rehabilitative palliative care. This is the story of his return to St Francis Hospice for symptom management, and his continued advocacy for hospice care.

Declan, now 67, is living with two life-limiting conditions, prostate cancer and Parkinson's. After returning to work in January 2025, he remained well, eventually retiring and travelling to Australia with his wife, Eileen, to visit family.

Between October 2025 and March 2026, Declan underwent chemotherapy. In April, he developed a spinal issue and was in severe pain. The Mater Hospital, where he was being treated, referred him to St Francis Hospice for in-patient care to manage his symptoms.

Even though Declan had built a strong relationship with the hospice team, moving into Room F11 felt daunting. But it wasn't long before his worries were eased. Declan and his family were warmly welcomed by staff and volunteers, and the care team began addressing his symptoms. With adjustments to his medication and support from the multidisciplinary team, he soon began to feel better and stronger.

Another issue Declan had been facing was increasing difficulty using his voice. He had sought speech and language therapy but discovered there were waiting lists of two years or more.

“Instead of two years, it was two days in the hospice when their Speech and Language Therapist came to see me. She knew what to

do to help me, and I gradually regained my voice. I have exercises to do every day to keep my voice strong.”

Speech and Language Therapy was introduced at St Francis Hospice only last year, with the post funded through fundraising. It is a powerful example of how donor generosity translates into high-quality care for patients.

Declan especially appreciated how the hospice truly was a home away from home. He had many visits from family and friends during his 10-week admission. He enjoyed watching World Cup matches in his room with Eileen, their young adult sons Oisín and Fergal, and family dog Ava.

Declan has previously advocated for hospice care, speaking about his palliative rehabilitation experience at a healthcare conference and participating in a Palliative Care Week photoshoot with Taoiseach Micheál Martin. He is committed to continuing this work:

“Now that I have my voice back, I want to use it to help people understand better what palliative care is. It helps people to be the best they can be.”

Recently, Declan and Eileen attended the official launch of Ireland's Biggest Coffee Morning for Hospice, an annual national campaign raising funds for hospice services across Ireland. They shared their story for newspapers and other media outlets, and were photographed with campaign ambassadors Eileen Dunne and Laura Fox. Thank you, Declan, for being such a wonderful spokesperson for hospice care.





“Everybody knows your name”

John and Noeleen’s story is based on a conversation in May 2026 when John was attending the Outpatient and Day Service of St Francis Hospice Blanchardstown.

John Carrick, 88, who attends St Francis Hospice as an outpatient says, “The thing about the hospice is that everybody knows your name, you’re not just a number. Wherever you go, they all say, ‘Good morning, John’.”

This was not exactly what John expected when he was given a referral to the Outpatient and Day Service. “It’s totally different to what I was

expecting. I was expecting doom and gloom, which it’s not, far from it. Everybody has a great attitude and a great outlook on things”, he says.

John, who worked until age 75 in his much-loved career as an ecclesiastical artist and metalworker, especially enjoys the art sessions run by Sheila, a hospice volunteer. He has discovered a talent for painting, much to his delight and that of his daughter, Noeleen. When John arrived home with his first completed painting, Noeleen recognised it as a scene from Connemara, a place John loves to visit. “That one is mine!” she told him with a smile.

Noeleen recalls their previous experience of St Francis Hospice’s care, “My Mam died ten years ago, and she was under the hospice’s care, too,

but at home, so we never actually came to the hospice. The team came out to us at home; they couldn’t have done more for us, and we got to know them like they were our friends. They were brilliant. We felt so supported by them. As an only daughter, I was able to look after Mam at home, which is what she wanted.”

In spite of this positive hospice experience, Noeleen says, “When Dad came here first, we were both apprehensive because hospice is a scary word when you hear it first.” They were also feeling “a bit afloat” after John’s hospital specialists had recommended no further treatments and discharged him. They wondered what would come next.

Noeleen describes the experience of walking into the outpatient department as “like walking into a spa. It’s calm, and there’s a lovely smell of lavender. It’s very relaxing and the people working in it are just off the charts.”

At John’s first visit, Noeleen came with him and they met with a nurse, occupational therapist and physiotherapist for an introduction and assessment. Once they had met the team, they were reassured and felt more on solid ground.

Shortly after that, the hospice nurse was able to arrange for John’s local pharmacy to supply his medications in blister packs. Noeleen says it has made a huge difference in the daily medication management, “It’s less stress for Dad, he doesn’t even have to think about it. He can manage it on his own.”

The hospice has helped John manage his pain, which had been keeping him up at night. The hospice nurse reassured him that he could take stronger painkillers without



becoming addicted to them. “Now I go to bed, I get about six hours sleep every night, and that’s good for me.”

John has also had reflexology for the first time. This is a complementary therapy that uses pressure points on the feet to ease symptoms throughout the body. He recalls his first treatment, saying, “That was the best thing I’ve ever had. I was walking on clouds.”

When John attends the outpatient service, he enjoys

his journeys to and from the hospice with the volunteer drivers who collect him, and he appreciates the warm welcome he feels every time he attends. He says, “I can’t believe the care and attention from all. Felicia, from catering, says to me, ‘I’ll get you your favourite coffee’, and she remembers it from week to week.”

John sums up his hospice experience, “You come in with a wrong conception of what it’s all about, and it’s totally different than what you think. The minute you hear the word ‘hospice’ you think, oh here, that’s the end of that! And that’s the way you feel. But I have to say, it’s not like that at all. It’s just great.”

On 31st August, John was admitted to the In-Patient Unit of St Francis Hospice Blanchardstown, where he died peacefully on Sunday 6th September 2026. May he rest in peace.

Noeleen and her brothers, Ciaran and Gerard, would like to express their gratitude for the professional and compassionate care that they, John, and the rest of the family, received during John’s final days, and indeed throughout his entire time attending St Francis Hospice.

The KeepWell Mark



Workplace Wellbeing Accreditation

At St Francis Hospice, our patients and families are always at the heart of what we do. We strive for excellence in the care we provide, continually looking for ways to improve, embrace innovation and ensure that we maintain the highest standards.

We believe that our team members deserve the same respect, dignity and care that we seek to provide to our patients and families. When our hospice employees, volunteers and contract staff are well and thriving, they bring their best selves to work, including their wealth of knowledge, skills, experience, compassion and commitment.

The IBEC KeepWell Mark provided a framework to help us continually strengthen our approach to workplace health, wellbeing and safety. This accreditation is grounded in best practice and current research and focuses on eight key areas, including leadership, mental health, inclusion and belonging, talent support and development, occupational safety and health, and nutrition and physical activity.

We began in 2023 with an initial assessment. Since then, we have worked steadily towards accreditation, learning along the way and introducing new wellbeing programmes and initiatives.



A Legacy of Care

Every day, the specialist palliative care provided by St. Francis Hospice brings comfort, dignity, and support to patients and families when they need it most. As Declan's story on page 3 highlights, it reaches beyond medical care, offering reassurance, understanding, and kindness during life's most challenging moments. For patients like Declan, it can mean having confidence and reassurance to take that trip to see family living far away.

Thankfully, we often hear from our community that they want to continue making a difference long into the future. One meaningful way to do this is by remembering the hospice in your Will. A legacy gift, of any size, helps ensure that future generations can access the same compassionate and professional care that has touched so many lives.

A legacy gift is also about the values it reflects: generosity, community, and care for others. Gifts in this way help us plan ahead with confidence, invest in essential services and facilities, and be there for patients and families when they need us most.

By remembering St. Francis Hospice in your Will, you can help provide comfort, care, and hope for generations to come. That is a legacy truly worth leaving.

You can learn more by visiting:
www.sfh.ie/how-you-can-help-us/legacy-gift-in-your-will/

We are delighted to have achieved the KeepWell Mark.

It is a reflection of the strength of our organisation and the dedication of our people, and a wonderful example of our values of Collaboration and Excellence in action.

Because when we care for those who care, we create the strongest possible foundation for looking after our patients and families.

Brand-new Suzuki Vitar Hybrid 2027 to be won!



The St. Francis Hospice Annual Car Draw is back, and we are inviting our wonderful community to get involved, support the Hospice and be in with the chance of winning some fantastic prizes!

This year's first prize is a brand-new Suzuki Vitara Hybrid 2027, supported by Gerry Caffrey Motors. There are also two cash prizes of €2,000 and €1,000, along with five €200 gift cards (donated by the Blanchardstown Centre). The draw will take place in the Blanchardstown Centre on 28th January 2027.

Tickets are just €10 each, making them a great stocking filler for family, friends or colleagues this Christmas. More importantly, every ticket purchased is a simple but meaningful way to support St. Francis Hospice and the specialist care provided to patients and their families.

Tickets can be purchased by scanning the QR code or by calling the hospice on **01-8327535/01-8294000**. Our dedicated team will also be selling tickets in Blanchardstown Centre from 16th November to 13th December.

Get your ticket today (one name per ticket), give one as a gift, and spread the word throughout our community. Help us turn kindness and compassion into care.

SCAN HERE



Thank you to everyone who took part in Ireland's Biggest Coffee Morning for Hospice by hosting or attending a gathering. Your support means so much – it is truly community supporting community.

Sunflower Field of Life

Our Sunflower Field of Life once again provided a space of peace, fun, and remembrance for members of our community, with thanks to the Hoey and Bergin families in Ballyboughal.

One group of friends shared their artwork, inspired by their visit to the field. Thanks so much to everyone who visited, took flowers home to enjoy, shared their stories and photos with us, and donated to St Francis Hospice.

I want to make a donation to ensure St Francis Hospice Dublin can always be there when it is needed

Enclosed is my gift of:

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Gift Method:

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OR

Alternatively scan QR code or call **01 8327535** to make a donation / support monthly

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