



A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE WITH THOMAS'S FUND

Background



Thomas's Fund provides music therapy in Northamptonshire for children with life-limiting/life threatening conditions and/or disabilities that means they are away from school or setting for medical reasons. During his lifetime, Thomas, who had a degenerative neurological condition, was unable to continue music therapy at home, when he was too ill to attend school. After Thomas died (aged 10) the charity was set up, by Jan (his Music Therapist) and Lucy (his mum) to provide music therapy at home and in a hospital to those in a similar position. It has run since 2007 with a dedicated team and a wider group of supporters. It relies on fundraising by volunteers; grants and donations and the kind support of people running their own events, benefitting many hundreds of young people and their families at a most vulnerable time.



It is great to know that the Cranfield Trust is there to help small charities like ours, listening carefully to our needs and pairing us with exceptional people.



Jan Hall, Chair, Thomas's Fund

Issue

Like many charities, the COVID pandemic presented challenges for the Thomas's Fund team, to change the way they deliver care, and cope with new administrative and financial pressures. Whilst they increasingly needed a new plan, to secure the service for the longer term, they found this regularly got pushed to the side by the demands of more urgent everyday tasks. They were also concerned at the cost of specialist advice and support. That's why Thomas's Fund came to Cranfield Trust. They were seeking help in developing a vibrant, practical business plan to see through the necessary changes and secure the charity's future; they understood the value of an outside, independent and expert perspective, and contacted the Trust with this in mind.



Solution

Following a recommendation from the Masonic Charitable Foundation, Thomas's Fund chair Jan Hall contacted the Cranfield Trust, and was matched with volunteer Philip Sugarman. Philip's skills and experience in strategy and change for charities meant he was well-placed to support Jan and the team. After initial meetings and a group event, a strategy for change was identified with a plan of action. Jan and her team quickly recruited new resources and people to implement change for Thomas's Fund, across fundraising, finance and communications.

Impact

This project has provided Thomas's Fund with a real momentum of change going forward, making a sustainable future and a vision of handing over stewardship of a growing charity to a new generation of volunteers more achievable in the eyes of the team.

We can at last see a way forward for the charity. It was great to be able to discuss issues with someone apart from the charity, who was empathetic to our challenges and problems. We are positive that the impact from this project will see the charity become sustainable, and continue on successfully, as my colleagues and I step back in the coming years.

Jan Hall, Chair, Thomas's Fund


Cranfield Trust volunteer Philip commented on this project, describing Thomas's Fund and their 'long-standing hard work and commitment to the charity's great cause' as inspirational.



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