

## SPENDING ON THE UNIT

SSNAP's support for all aspects of the unit continues to thrive.

Ranging from the purchase of new equipment, including specialist cots, training dummies and state-of-the-art tools, to funding many of the staff to attend additional training and workshops to improve and/or refresh their skills. We are proud to announce that every single funding request has been supported, which ultimately means the very best professional care is on hand for our babies.

*"Thank you so much for funding my place on the Newborn Behavioural observations course. The course consisted of two days training plus a lot of pre-course learning. Despite working with babies for the last eighteen years, the course gave me new knowledge in how to understand babies and support their families. Moving forward I will now be able to support parents in observing their baby to identify what they like and dislike, while also looking at what we can do to support the baby with these things. Thank you for all your support in my further education allowing me to better practise family integrated care in my role as an Infant Feeding Advisor - I really appreciate it."*

## EVENTS FOR YOU IN 2023

**Sunday 25 June 2023**  
SSNAP Summer Garden Party

**Sunday 15 October 2023**  
Oxford Half Marathon

**Saturday 18 November 2023**  
SSNAP Charity Dinner Night

**Sunday 10 December 2023**  
SSNAP Family Christmas Carol Concert



On behalf of our trustees, staff, volunteers and the babies, parents and NHS staff that we support, we'd just like to say a massive **thank you** to you, our supporters. Without your constant commitment we simply wouldn't be able to produce the wonderful things you've read about in this newsletter. We can't wait to see you at our next event or hear how you continue to support our work - thank you.

Very best wishes

*Martin and the SSNAP Team*

**Martin Realey**  
SSNAP Charity Lead

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Support for the sick newborn and their parents

# SSNAP UPDATE

SPRING 2023

**Our 40th year truly was full tempo and this short publication is designed to give everyone a small insight into everything that has happened. Crucial though is that you take note of the *Save The Date* events at the end, so you don't miss out on the amazing activities taking place in 2023.**

## WHY WE ARE HERE

With all the talk of skydivers and marathon runners, it's often easy to forget why we actually go to such lengths to raise crucial funds. Jessica shares her story....

"At 29 weeks and 2 days, my water broke. I made it to the JR and after confirming they had indeed broken, I was taken through the process of labour and NICU. There was a short delay, but later I was rushed for an emergency C-section and at 29+5 days had little Arabella-Lily, weighing a tiny 3lb, 2oz. She was rushed to NICU with her dad, Luke, whilst I was being sewn up. When I finally got the all-clear to go and see her I was so scared. It was so hard and emotional seeing her for the first time in the incubator with all the wires and tubes. All I wanted to do was pick up my baby girl and squeeze her so tight.

The nurses were amazing. They took us through all the correct procedures. They constantly updated us, with good and bad news. With other children at home, Luke needed to go that night, so I had my first cuddle alone with her. It was so difficult cuddling this tiny little life that should have been inside me, warm and protected. The next morning Luke and I headed to NICU to be greeted by a SSNAP box with everything we didn't realise we'd need. It was such a great help.

In what felt like no time at all, one of the SSNAP Family Care Team was there to check on us, with a smile and a trolley full of snacks. She sat and listened to me whilst I cried and screamed. She didn't judge or shut me up. She was a godsend. Next thing we knew there were gifts for me, things we needed for Arabella, and anything we could ask for. SSNAP arranged accommodation for us at the Ronald McDonald House, supported us with travel costs and ensured we could see our babies at home and in hospital. This even included paying for an after-school club for our other daughters.

Arabella is now 8 months old and is happy and thriving. The memory of her birth is still raw and so traumatic, but we have got through it with the support of the JR and the amazing SSNAP Team. We are just so very grateful. Thank you.



## LITTLE SSNAPLINGS UPDATE

Little Ssnaplings was launched in June 2022, providing time for families to mix and share experiences in a relaxed and comfortable environment with other parents and families who have spent time in NICU.

Our first Little Ssnapling group was attended by five families and seven babies. This group is held in Witney, and we have since added groups in Thame and Wheatley. Our fourth group, and our first toddler group, was then created in Wantage. The four groups offer activities including Baby Massage, Baby Yoga and 'Ride on time' for the toddler sessions. We have reached over 35 families and continue to grow. Tea, coffee and snacks are provided for all our groups, and everything is free.

The four groups run on a monthly basis are:

- **The Redkite centre, Thame:** 10am-12pm  
*First tuesday of the month*
- **The Beacon, Wantage:** 10am-12pm (18 months+ group)  
*First wednesday of the month*
- **The Methodist Church, Witney:** 11.15am-1.15pm  
*Second wednesday of the month*
- **The Maple tree, Wheatley:** 1-3pm  
*Last friday of the month*



If you would like to get involved, then please do email Tash: [tash@ssnap.org.uk](mailto:tash@ssnap.org.uk)

You can also join our Facebook group (Little Ssnaplings) and Instagram @Little\_ssnaplings

## SSNAP CHARITY DINNER NIGHT



For the second consecutive year, SSNAP trustees, staff, members and friends met at the newly-named Leonardo Royal Hotel for an evening of fun and frolics. With pre-dinner drinks sponsored by Mountney Ltd, everyone was well fuelled for the games between courses, iPad silent auction, and a humorous and magnificent live auction and pledge.

Over £16,000 was raised whilst guests danced into the early hours, thoroughly enjoying themselves and raising funds at the same time. You can reserve your tickets for this year's November Dinner by emailing [martin.realey@ssnap.org.uk](mailto:martin.realey@ssnap.org.uk)

## FESTIVE FUN

The SSNAP Family Friendly Christmas Carol Service was a delightful event for all.

On a chilly December Sunday afternoon we were warmed with mulled wine, traditional SSNAP snacks and an abundance of enthusiasm singing. It is hoped that the church in Witney will be filled for our 2023 service on 10 December.



We were very grateful to receive many external donations over the Christmas period and we shared Christmas Day with parents and staff with what has now become the traditional cheese and biscuits to accompany Julia Donaldson story time.

## ANOTHER OXFORD HALF



On a warm October Sunday morning, 182 SSNAP runners gathered with family and friends at the SSNAP tent, with new running vests, Lucozade, bananas and doughnuts to prepare them for the challenge ahead.

It was a victorious day and again the unique SSNAP vests stood out amongst the crowds of runners. Thousands of supporters lined the route, and every ounce of energy was expended to weave the streets of Oxford and get to the final dash to the finishing line. Over £96,000 was raised which will have a colossal impact on the work SSNAP can achieve next year.

Are you ready for the challenge in October 2023? For free entry, support and advice, go to the SSNAP website and click on the link at the top to register.



## RUNNING FOR THE BOYS



Running for the Boys is a fundraising group set up by Paul and Siobhan Masters in memory of their twin sons James & Ryan who were born on 5 August 2020.

James was sadly born sleeping and Ryan's complications meant he passed away on 14 August. The family was supported by SSNAP during their time at the JR and have now become great supporters for other families currently on the unit.

Running for the Boys have completed many events over the last two years. These have included Park Runs, the Oxford Half Marathon and a 4040km challenge in 2022. In total the group has raised **£28,785** across several charities in memory of the boys. Siobhan and Paul welcomed Katie to the world on 3 April 2022, and Paul has just announced he is running the London Marathon in 2023. Thank you to the Masters family and their friends and family for all the vital funds they have raised for SSNAP.

## JOIN THE 3 PEAKS TEAM



It really isn't too late to join the team and undertake the 3 Peaks Challenge this Spring (26-28 May).

With training walks in March and April, advice and specialist guides for the event, you can take on this weekend challenge for just £95. Go to our website [www.ssnap.org.uk](http://www.ssnap.org.uk) and hit the 3 Peaks Challenge link at the top for more information.