

The Josh Evans Trust Fund

Summer Ball (July 2024)

Lucy Robin's Speech

Firstly, lets just say I've been to a few of these events now, since joining the diabetes team 10 years ago, and as ever it's a fantastic evening, and for a brilliant cause!

I've been asked to say just a few words about what the fundraising, from events like this, can achieve.

I work every day with children and young people from Somerset, who live with diabetes. It's not an easy condition to have – children & young people must take injections, think about their food, glucose levels, carry equipment, & listen to alarms, just to name a few things. They & their families can't take a day off from this. Young people can feel very different to their peers, which can be particularly hard when growing up.

The support the Josh Evans fund offers, means we can run fun activities for young people & their families. These might be things like mini football tournaments, dance sessions, basketball, a Christmas party. And once a year, we can offer a 2-night residential trip, for our older teens, at Kilve.

At events like these, young people get to see other people like them, sometimes for the first time. They can realise they're not unique. They can learn from how each other deal with their diabetes. Their parents often learn and gain support too.

We know of several mini-WhatsApp friendship & support groups that have sprung up following events like these – they can keep our young people and their families from feeling alone. From what they've told me, some of our teens have made lifelong friendships at Kilve. We have had so many messages of thanks and appreciation following events like these.

Josh Evans Trust also funds resources, like books, funky pump equipment, and they have helped source donated phones & laptops which can make diabetes technologies more accessible to everyone.

Two years ago, the Josh Evans Trust very generously agreed for some funding to help kickstart a project to try offering a youth worker for 1:1 support for some of our young people. This has really enhanced the range of emotional & wellbeing help we can provide. The feedback from young people has been hugely positive - the pilot has been extended by the trust for a 3rd year recently, and we truly hope that youth workers in health will eventually become a normal standard of care.

For our diabetes team, having a charitable resource like this, supporting our goals, that we can turn to when we need to, is brilliant to maintain morale and allows us to be creative in what we can offer.

So, from the diabetes teams across Somerset, and I know from our families & young folk, thank you again to Tracy & John, to all the myriad organisers of this event & others, and thank you to you all for coming and supporting this brilliant cause.