Children’s heart charity holds first national memorial event for heart children during Children’s Heart Week

Wednesday 14 May, 2014

Birmingham-based national children’s charity, Little Hearts Matter, will bring Children’s Heart Week 2014 to a close with a special memorial ceremony at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire on 18th May at 11:30am. Families from across the country will be meeting to witness the dedication of a bench and tree to the memory of those children who have lost their lives because they only had half a heart.

The dedication, consisting of music, poems and readings, is part of Little Hearts Matters 20th Anniversary programme of events and will see bereaved families hanging heart-shaped decorations on the tree in memory of their loved ones. It is hoped the tree and bench will become a place that families can come and remember their children for years to come.

Little Hearts Matter Trustee and Vice-Treasurer Peter Groves will be providing the music with his brass band, Boldzbrass. Peter lost his first daughter, Stephanie, twenty years ago. She lived only a few days after being diagnosed as having only half a heart following birth.

Peter has said:

“Those of us that have suffered the tragedy of losing a child know that they live in your heart and thoughts every single day, the memorial that is being dedicated this weekend at the National Arboretum will serve as a permanent reminder to all that visit this wonderful place that there have been very special children born who may have only been with us for a very limited time but will live on in our memories for ever.”

Suzie Hutchinson, Little hearts Matter’s Chief Executive, has said:

“Although the number of children living with only half a working heart has improved over the last twenty years, there will always be some children who do not survive the complex treatment that is offered to them. In Little Hearts Matter’s 20th anniversary year we wanted to dedicate something to those children and their families.

All the Little Hearts Matter’s families are special to the charity, none more so than the bereaved parents, grandparents and brothers and sisters. In creating this special memorial we wanted to do something special for them to show that their children are still in our memories too. We hope that a new place to sit, in the beautiful surroundings of the National Memorial Arboretum, will offer them a peaceful place to remember the children who are always in their hearts.”

The dedication will mark one of the few times bereaved parents are able to meet other families that have lost a child due to a single ventricle heart condition, or half a heart, because of the rarity of the condition. Parents will remain on the arboretum after the ceremony for a picnic and the chance to share their experiences.

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For more information please contact:
Joe Stevens, Communications Officer, Little Hearts Matter.
Tel. 0121 455 8982
e. joe@lhm.org.uk
w. www.lhm.org.uk

Notes to Editors:
Little Hearts Matter is the only national charity dedicated to providing support and information to those affected when a child is diagnosed as having half a heart.
Press is welcome to attend the dedication but are asked to please remember the event will be a very emotional time for the bereaved families attending. Case studies are available for interview.
The ceremony will begin at 11:30am and end at 12:00pm, with families remaining for a picnic after the ceremony.

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Children's Heart Week :: Memorial Arboretum :: Charity :: Little Hearts Matter :: Half A Heart :: Hypoplastic Left Heart Syndrome ::

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Little Hearts Matter

T. 0121 455 8982
E. joe@lhm.org.uk
W. https://www.lhm.org.uk

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