

OVER 500 HEART CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES TO CELEBRATE 20 YEARS OF LIFE-CHANGING SUPPORT AT VILLA PARK

Tuesday 18 March, 2014

Birmingham-based national children's heart charity Little Hearts Matter is hosting its biggest ever Family Open Day this Saturday at Villa Park, and will be celebrating 20 years of providing life-changing support to children born with half a heart.

Little Hearts Matter began as a volunteer group set up by parents of children born with the complex heart condition at Birmingham Children's Hospital in the early 1990s. It now provides support to over 3,500 families across the UK and Ireland each year from its offices in Edgbaston.

This is the 18th year of LHM's Open Day, an annual event where families have the opportunity to meet parents and children who also are affected by single ventricle heart conditions. Isabel Baumber, said,

"We will never forget the first event we attended. Our son, Matthew, was only three weeks old and was still critically ill in intensive care at the time. Attending the event allowed us the chance for the first time to see there might be a future for him, as we were able to talk to other parents who understood what we were going through."

Highlights at the Open Day include a keynote speech from Bill Brawn, the national lead surgeon for single ventricle heart disease and Vice President of Little Hearts Matter.

There will also be a panel discussion with two of Little Hearts Matter's youth members about how they cope with growing up with such a serious heart condition as well as three leading national service providers fielding questions around ongoing care into early adulthood - a topic of particular importance considering that due to receiving breakthrough surgery, LHM's youth members are the first generation to reach adulthood with half a heart.

Suzie Hutchinson, LHM's Chief Executive adds,

"Families of children with only half a working heart often feel desperately isolated because their children are so different from their friends. The annual Little Hearts Matter Open Day offers families, from all around the country, a chance to meet with other families who live with the same fears and hopes as themselves. Lifelong friendships are made and so much experience is shared helping families feel less alone."

For more information please contact:

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Notes to Editors

For attendance and the opportunity to interview the speakers, as well as Little Hearts Matter's Chief Executive, Suzie Hutchinson, please contact Joe Stevens as above.

If you'd like to post or tweet the event details, LHM will make sure your post is shared across our accounts.

The Open Day begins with the charity's AGM, and a minutes silence for those sadly no longer with us, at 10am.

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