

Penny Appeal spreads smiles and raises spirits during visit to UCLH

Wednesday 22 June, 2016

International humanitarian charity Penny Appeal spread smiles at University College London Hospitals this week during a special visit to give gifts to children and offer moral support to families.

Penny Appeal arrived with volunteers on the charity's special Serving in the Community Bus, which travels around the UK to reach people in need as part of the Love Thy Neighbour UK programme. The bus was packed full of toys and presents for children and young adults receiving treatment at UCLH.

The charity team spent time with patients on several wards, including the Paediatric Oncology and General Paediatrics and Adolescent wards, and also dropped off gifts for those on the Teenage Cancer Ward and Teenage & Young Adult Cancer Outpatient Service.

Over 130 gift bags were given to patients of all ages, from babies and toddlers to teenagers and young adults, as well as items for the communal play areas and games rooms.

One of the patients they met was Sian Yeatman, who is currently receiving treatment on the paediatric ward. She said: "It was nice, a really big surprise. Please come again!" Sian's mum added: "Amazing present, it was fabulous having you visit!"

Harris Iqbal, UK Programmes Manager at Penny Appeal, said: "It was a truly blessed experience and had a real impact on the patients. They were absolutely mesmerised and so overjoyed that strangers would come and be so generous to them. We feel honoured to have touched many hearts and helped create some special memories."

Haroon Mota, Midlands Fundraising Manager at Penny Appeal, has previously worked at UCLH with the Teenage & Young Adult Cancer Service so he knows the struggles that patients face. He explained: "Illness is difficult for everyone but young people are particularly vulnerable to the emotional and psychological effects. I feel strongly that children and young adults in hospital deserve our time and care and I'm delighted that Penny Appeal is committed to doing so much to support hospitals and hospices across the UK, especially during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan."

Laura Walter, play specialist at UCLH, added: "The patients and staff really enjoyed the visit and the gifts were very well received by the children and young people! During the Christmas season, we receive many donations, but not much during the rest of the year. As UCLH is such a multicultural hospital, it is lovely to celebrate Ramadan, and we want to thank Penny Appeal for its generosity!"

The Penny Appeal visit to UCLH was just one of many that the charity has already undertaken this month, with many more still to come. Staff, volunteers and the Penny Appeal bus have visited Martin House Hospice in Wetherby and Eden Valley Hospice & Jigsaw, Cumbria's Children's Hospice, in Carlisle and handed out hundreds of gifts and toiletry kits.

Find out more about Penny Appeal's UK and overseas work and donate at pennyappeal.org or by calling 03000 11 11 11.

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