



## Little Hearts Matter

### **Support Volunteers**

The support of parent, grandparent, children, teenage and adult members sits at the very heart of the work of the charity.

When a member joins the charity they are seeking a support that they are unable to find anywhere else.

They are in search of information, a greater understanding and most of all care and support from people who understand their journey.

Although the LHM team have travelled the path with many members and have collected knowledge and understanding along that journey they can never say they have lived with the challenges that having a child with half a heart brings.

It is so important to be able to offer members the special support that comes from other members, parents, grandparents and young members who have travelled the same journey.

There are a number of opportunities for members to become Service Volunteers.

### **Telephone support line**

Parent volunteers are there to offer:

- Parent to parent insight into life with single ventricle heart disease.
- To offer a listening ear in times of stress and worry.
- They are able to offer a signposting service to other support or information services.
- Report/refer concerns about members' worries to the main office team.

### **Social media support services**

Parent volunteers are able to offer:

- Parent to parent experience.
- Signpost to other services and LHM information packs.
- Report concerns about members' worries to the main office team.

## **Bereavement support**

Parent volunteers are able to offer:

- Parent to parent support and understanding around the loss of a child to CHD.
- Ongoing social media and telephone support.
- Bereavement representation and support at LHM events.
- Guidance on bereavement publications.

## **Specialist one to one support**

The LHM team like to offer one to one special support especially in the case of a new diagnosis, transplant referral or perhaps a school or diet problem. There are so many skills in our parent group.

## **Are there any restrictions on who can become a Member Volunteer?**

Any member can offer to explore the support service volunteer role.

The LHM service team run volunteering training events where parents can chat to other volunteers and the LHM team to discover if the Support Volunteer role is a good fit for them.

Normally personal experience is a huge asset but the LHM team like to wait until a potential volunteer is at least two years from their own initial, often emotional, experiences before they train to become a volunteer supporter.

All volunteers are able to take a step back from their support role if their personal journey becomes challenging. For example, their child is admitted for surgery, another family member is unwell or stressed or if the volunteer themselves needs a break from the support role.

Some of the attributes LHM would be seeking are:

- Being able to listen.
- Being able to support and care in a professional way.
- Ability to signposting to specialist support.
- Being able to share personal experiences without dominating a conversation.
- Understanding when it is a good idea to seek support.
- The ability to cope with the emotions of members seeking support.

If you are interested in becoming a Parent Volunteer just give Suzie a ring on 0121 455 8982 or email her on [suzie@lhm.org.uk](mailto:suzie@lhm.org.uk)

Thank you.