

SKEGNESS – Sandi Adam’s story (June 2008)

I would like to share my reasons for supporting the Butterfly Hospice Trust. Up until 18 months ago I was a normal mum and took my carefree life for granted. That all changed in November 2006 when my beautiful son Nick, then aged 23 was diagnosed with terminal kidney cancer.

Nick's cancer was very aggressive and his condition quickly deteriorated & although he was adamant that he wanted to stay at home, it soon became apparent that his pain was not being controlled and he would have periods when he was screaming for hours. He was admitted to the local hospital on several occasions to try to find the right level of pain control but after waiting days to see a doctor he was sent home no better than before.

The McMillan nurse advised us that best action we could take would be to get him admitted to a Hospice, for pain management. The Hospice in Lincoln had a bed available two weeks later. The environment was so different from the general hospital and with two hours his pain was controlled. They also arranged for him to see a specialist - something that I had been desperately trying to arrange on his behalf for over six weeks.

The only downside for me and for Nick was the eighty-six mile (86) mile round trip to visit daily.

Nick needed me to be there all of the time he was awake and I wanted to be there for him and for me, but it was, nevertheless, exhausting. On one particular day I found myself driving home for two hours sleep - not even remembering how I reached home. The traveling was also financially draining and if I had not had some savings I don't know how I would have managed. I spoke to many other visitors who, because they had young children, were unable to visit very ill relatives very often.

Having seen both types of care - there is NO doubt in my mind that Hospices offer a total care package for mental as well as physical needs for patients and their carers. Life is all about choices and so it should also be in death. Most people would opt to end their days in the comfort of their own homes and this is how it should be if possible - BUT the reality is that complete pain management cannot always be undertaken in the home and sometimes carers need respite from their 24 hour commitment to loved ones.

The Hospice is an essential service, which needs to be in the heart of the community. Families need to be close when time is precious - when Nick needed to go back into the Hospice, no bed was available and he passed away in the local hospital ward. Shortly before his death he made me promise to fight to improve the care of fellow sufferers and in particular for the needs of younger patients.

So I now find myself on the start of this journey trying to fulfill the promise I made to my boy. We NEED this hospice up and running so please help me to grant his dying wish.

Sandi