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Epsom’s local life savers

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A Covid survivor who was so poorly her children were warned she wouldn’t survive the night and the mum of a young boy who bravely battled leukaemia have thrown their support behind an inaugural event that celebrates incredible NHS staff.

Jan Ehtash, from Carshalton, spent 12 weeks in Epsom and St Helier hospitals after falling seriously ill with Covid – receiving care from a dedicated team of nurses, doctors, and other health professionals.

Sutton schoolboy Jackson Hall, meanwhile, was treated at St George’s Hospital for leukaemia, where paediatric teams went “the extra mile” to support the now-seven-year-old and his family.

Both Jan and Jackson have finished treatment, and they and their families are calling on others to cast their nominations for the very first staff awards at St George’s, Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals and Health Group.

“They are amazing, just wonderful people,” said Jan, 60. “All of the nurses, the doctors, the cleaners, they are just so, so caring.

“When I went into hospital, all I took with me was a handbag with a set of pyjamas, a toothbrush, and a pair of underwear. I had no idea I would be there that long, but quickly started to deteriorate and was told I would have to go into intensive care. I just remember turning to the doctor and saying, ‘I don’t want to die’.

“It’s thanks to the staff at Epsom and St Helier that I am here today, and I cannot thank them enough for saving my life and for being there when my family and I needed them the most.”

Sam Hall, Jackson’s mum, added: “All the staff were incredible throughout Jackson’s treatment and they really went the extra mile – from giving me a hug when I had to choose between staying at hospital or going home with my daughter, to making me a cup of tea. The care they provided was fantastic, but it was these small things, too, that made a difference.

“Jackson is doing amazingly, settling back into school and becoming an amazing big brother to three-month-old Louie. He makes us so proud.

“Sometimes as a patient or a family member it’s hard to know exactly how to show your gratitude to the incredible people who have been there in your time of need. But one way you can say thank you is by nominating a team or member of staff for this award.”

The Outstanding CARE Award is dedicated to staff and teams who have been nominated by a member of the public, while colleagues will put forward their nominations in several other categories. All 17,000 members of staff working for the hospitals Group – from frontline clinicians, to essential support teams – are eligible for nomination.

Jacqueline Totterdell, Group Chief Executive, said: “Our biggest-ever awards event will recognise the incredible teams and individuals who go above and beyond for patients like Jan and Jackson.

“Hearing stories about the amazing efforts our staff go to is one of my greatest joys, and every single day they make me proud. I’m already looking forward to reading all the nominations and celebrating everyone who is shortlisted.”

The awards take place on Tuesday 10 December at the Oval cricket ground, and will be generously supported by the hospital charities and local businesses. To make your nomination, visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk/about/gesh-care-awards or www.epsom-sthelier.nhs.uk/gesh-care-awards by Tuesday 22 October.

NHS Press

Image: Jan in ITU with family

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