

From the editor's desk

The **Public Service Friendly Society** provides confidential financial help and personal support to members throughout the Civil & Public Service. Using the contributions made by members, we provide relevant and confidential assistance to our members in times of financial difficulty. Our slogan is “**for people in a tight spot**”, and that’s who we help.

Members can benefit from a number of practical services including cash grants, educational grants, financial advice and help in dealing with banks, building societies and credit unions. Financial help for **essential** legal services, funeral grants, access to low-cost Specified Illness insurance cover are all available to members.

If you are not yet a member, please think seriously of joining now! Hopefully you will never have to approach the Society for help, but if you do, we are there for you. If we all contribute a little and the contribution is very small, 0.25% of gross salary, we can help those who do need us.

Remember – by becoming a member of **PSFS**, you will have peace of mind for yourself and your dependants, should financial difficulties arise. You are also supporting your colleagues in need, both serving and retired.

For more information, please visit our website www.psfs.ie

If you have any questions or suggestions, the Society is always glad to hear from you.

Adeline Meagher, Development Officer



Jane McKenna

HEARTBREAK FOR MOTHER OF TWO LITTLE GIRLS SO LOVED

Public Service Friendly Society supports long-time member.

Jane McKenna is a sadly remarkable woman who worked for over 15 years in the civil service – in the Dept. of the Environment and the Dept. of Justice. Married to Brendan for over 25 years, she was the mother of two beautiful girls, Lynn and Laura. Both have now died. And Jane says, “Not a day goes by that I don’t think of them and cry for them.”

Jane’s story is one of real and deep loss – and aching sadness. **But** she is a remarkable woman although she would not think of herself in those terms.

Jane’s father had worked in the civil service and she, with two of her brothers followed him into it. A few years later, she married local boy from Finglas East, Brendan McKenna.

Jane had joined the Public Service Friendly Society but never seriously thought she would ever have cause to benefit from her membership.

Six years after they were married Jane and Brendan had their first child, Lynn. Almost nine years later, Jane was pregnant again at 39. Laura arrived on Friday evening 20th January 1995 and it was with Laura’s birth that Jane and Brendan’s difficulties began.

She was born with what a doctor described to Jane as a “slight murmur on her heart”. It emerged later that she actually had a hole in her heart and narrowing of her arteries.

It was necessary to insert a shunt, when Laura was 7 months old. This in turn caused problems, which meant she had to have a further operation some months later to remove the top lobe of one of her lungs. She survived these operations despite the weakened state. Having spent her first Christmas and first birthday in hospital (where Jane and Brendan became very familiar with the sights and sounds of Our Lady’s Hospital), Laura finally got home. A few relatively healthy years followed until her final surgery for the full repair of the hole in her heart – aged just 4 and a half.



(L-R) Lynn and Laura

“I remember when Laura first smiled at me,” says Jane “it was great – she had a mass of curly hair”. “But I remember, too, the frightening sight of her hooked up to the machines in the Intensive Care Unit in Our Lady’s Hospital” she adds.

The day of Laura’s final operation (30th August 1999) was a day Jane will never forget.

“As we sat in the hospital waiting for news of Laura’s operation, a friend who worked in the hospital thought that our older daughter Lynn didn’t look too well,” Jane says. After some tests in casualty, while they continued to wait for news of how Laura’s surgery was progressing, Jane and Brendan were given some awful news. Lynn had leukaemia.

Lynn was admitted to St. John’s (the Oncology ward) immediately, and later Jane and Brendan were called up to see Laura, who was now back in ICU, but not doing so well. Laura sadly never woke up and the decision to take her off life-support was made the following day. Laura had died and Lynn had started the long hard road of treatment for her diseases.

Initially things looked good and she even went back to school for a short time. But in April 2001, after a final relapse (she had previously relapsed in early December 2000, and then required a bone marrow transplant), she died, less than two years after her little sister. She was just 15 years old. Jane and Brendan together with family & friends shared a wonderful last three weeks with Lynn, in which she did many lovely things, and passed peacefully at home. She had amazing courage and wonderful acceptance, as her poem (written 12 days before her death) shows.

SOCIETY COMES ALONGSIDE

One of the ways the Public Service Friendly Society can help at moments like that is through helping financially with the unexpected costs which bereavement of a close family member often brings. And that's what we were able to do as a small gesture of support for Jane and Brendan.

The Society got to know Jane a little better as she set out to remedy a painful gap in Ireland's health services for parents with children who are preparing to die.

Jane is emphatic about the need for a special children's hospice in Ireland. "There are a number of such hospices in the UK but none in Ireland" Jane says. "I saw first-hand how difficult it is in an overcrowded hospital when a child is gravely ill. A hospice would help give some privacy and other benefits to the child and very importantly their family" she adds. "It is a place of love, support and respite, and gives many choices, especially at the end".

And so the Laura Lynn Children's Hospice Foundation was formed and steps are well underway to build Ireland's first such facility. "The hospice is about living; it's about the quality of the child's life, however short it is, and the support to the parents, for whom life can be so difficult, especially where 24hour care is required" says Jane.

The Project is moving from strength to strength, and the decision has been made to merge with the Children's Sunshine Home, where one of the four units (the Palliative Care Unit) will become the LauraLynn House. 2008 should see significant progress on the Hospice Project.

"I so appreciate the support the PSFS gave me at special moments" Jane says, and I would like to extend sincere thanks to them for their kindness, which I know helps so many. I would also like to thank my friends in the Court Services for their support to us personally and with events run to raise wonderful funds for LauraLynn".

www.lauralynnhospice.com

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Lynn's Dreams

*I wish I could learn,
Like everyone else,
I wish I could swim, jump and run,
I wish different cards could have
been dealt
I wish it could be like old fun.*

*I wish I could grow and learn about
life,
I wish I could feel well again,
I wish that there was an end to the
strife,
And a new beginning instead.*

*But destiny's come and it's drawing
me near,
And I know my two ANGELS are
there,
With them I will have no reason for
fear,
In their warm embrace and their
care.*

Lynn McKenna 06/04/2001

LOW COST, TAX-FREE BENEFITS OF EXCLUSIVE ILLNESS PLAN

There are three levels of benefit
available under the Plan.

Option 1: Pays you €32,000 tax-free lump sum for only €3.38 per week. For you and your spouse/partner, it costs only €6.76 per week.

Children (aged 1-21) automatically covered for €13,000 - FREE

Option 2: Pays you €19,200 tax-free lump sum for only €1.47 per week. For you and your spouse/partner, it costs only €2.94 per week.

Children (aged 1-21) automatically covered for €8,000 - FREE

Option 3: Pays you €40,000 tax-free lump sum for only €4.12 per week. For you and your spouse/partner, it costs only €8.24 per week.

Children (aged 1-21) automatically covered for €15,000 - FREE

The Plan pays out up to €40,000 tax free as a lump sum. Almost €1 million has been paid out since the Plan was first started in 1999 - 82% being paid to members under 49 years of age.

Membership of this Plan is only available to new members joining the PSFS.

LIFE HAPPENS

that's why you should join the Public Service Friendly Society now. Totally confidential and independent, it provides a financial help and personal support service.

It is run by the members for the members... and their dependents.

HOW YOU BENEFIT

- Cash grants (non-repayable or repayable interest-free).
- Educational grants.
- Financial advice/help in dealing with banks, building societies, credit unions etc.
- Financial help for essential legal services.
- Support for retired members with nursing needs.
- Funeral Grant (for those in need) when members, spouses and/or dependents die.
- Access to, low-cost Specified Illness insurance cover.

WHAT IT COSTS YOU

Only €1 per week on average

Phone **1800 778787** for details or download an Application Form from our website www.psfs.ie

JOIN NOW...

UK Civil Service Benevolent Fund

The Society was delighted to be invited to attend the AGM of the UK Civil Service Benevolent Fund in the Europa Hotel in Belfast on 19th June 2008.

The UK CSBF provides a similar service to civil servants in the UK as the Public Service Friendly Society provides to our own colleagues.

While the two organisations differ greatly in terms of size and structure, the end product, i.e., providing assistance to our colleagues in times of need is exactly the same.

We learnt a lot from our visit and hope to visit the CSBF HQ, Fund House, in Surrey in the not too distant future.



David Main, Chief Executive, CSBF, Sir Brian Bender, Chairman, CSBF, Declan O'Brien, Executive Director, PSFS