

# Fountain Centre's New Cabin now open

Strictly star, Flavia Cacace opened a special space for local cancer patients on Monday 6th December at The Fountain Centre, part of St Luke's Cancer Centre at Royal Surrey NHS Foundation Trust.

The Cabin, situated in the Fountain Centre's tranquil garden will be used to support children who have a parent diagnosed with cancer.

5 years ago the Fountain Centre saw an increase in demand to support cancer patients with school aged children. Help was needed to communicate and manage the information around their diagnosis and treatment to young family members. There were services available locally if the parent was life limited but no support for the 24% of all newly diagnosed adults that had school aged children.

Following a successful bid to the Big Lottery, the Fountain Centre family support service was developed with two full time children's counsellors providing family support, 1:1 counselling, information and guidance to those in the local community or under treatment at St Luke's Cancer Centre at the Royal Surrey NHS Foundation Trust.

Initially this service was provided in an old cabin in the Fountain Centre Garden, however, this space was too cold in the winter and too hot in the summer and quickly became too small.

The Fountain Centre was introduced to the **Luigi Francescon Trust**, a local trust run by Paula, Alan and Lorna set up to support local people affected by cancer. Funds to build a new cabin in the garden to provide all year round support for cancer patients and their children that would be fit for

purpose. With the support of Nordic Wood, a local garden building company who provided the materials at cost and labour for free, the Fountain Centre were able to develop this service and provide a safe, secure and welcoming space for children to access appropriate and timely support. The cabin is called **Luigi's Place**.

Since 2016 when their dedicated family service began, the Fountain Centre has supported over 500 families when a parent has cancer, from diagnosis to treatment and beyond. During this time, they have helped over 800 children and young people live well and deal with the issues that arise when a parent has a serious illness. This is done in two ways – indirectly by supporting the parent with what to say to their children and how to communicate with them, or directly via more formalised counselling support for the child.

The actual building of the cabin was completed just as the first lockdown hit, so the space was loaned to the nursing staff at St Luke's Cancer Centre, to use to carry out blood tests on cancer patients, enabling them to have treatment without accessing the hospital buildings. Now some face-to-face services have been resumed, decoration is complete, and Luigi's Place is now ready to support children facing the news that a parent has cancer.

Fountain Centre Chairman, Martin Read said: "This space is going to be invaluable in continuing our busy Family Service. It is vital that we have the right environment to meet these families at what is a very difficult time. We are incredibly grateful to our valued patron Flavia Cacace for sparing time in her incredibly busy schedule to visit us and do the honours of officially opening Luigi's Place."

Flavia Cacace, a professional dancing champion best known for appearing on Strictly Come Dancing, has been a patron of the Fountain Centre for many years and been a staunch support of the work of the charity.

Please visit [www.fountaincentre.org](http://www.fountaincentre.org) for more information.