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PRESS RELEASE

Blackpool FC legends support hospital charity launch

TWO Blackpool football legends have given their backing to the new name for the charity supporting local hospitals.

Jimmy Armfield and Ian Evatt were on hand to support the Blue Skies Hospitals Fund, which raises money to benefit the patients of Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, at the official launch in St John's Square, Blackpool.

The new charity name is being launched in an effort to increase its profile across the Fylde Coast, Lancashire and South Cumbria, and to support people who want to get involved in fundraising for local hospitals and regional patient services.

Paul Bailey, the Trust's Head of Fundraising and Voluntary Services, said: "Thanks to the amazing generosity of local people the charity received more than £1m in donations last year.

"This has a fantastic impact on the standard of care that can be provided at local hospital sites. I know the staff really appreciate everything that local businesses, communities, families and individuals do for our hospitals. The fundraisers and volunteers are a true credit to the region, and a great many of the people cared for at our hospitals will in some way have benefited from this support.

"Blue Skies Hospitals Fund will help us to co-ordinate our future fundraising efforts, so that the charity can help a wide range of wards and departments across our hospitals, and help turn the grey skies of illness into the blue skies of good health for our patients."

Speaking at the launch Jimmy Armfield, who has long standing links with local health bodies, said he was delighted to support the charity. He said: "I have seen at first hand the terrific work that local health professionals do and

anything that helps make life better for patients while they are in hospital is something that I fully support.”

Ian Evatt, an integral member of the Blackpool side that won promotion to the Premiership this year, said: “I am delighted to support the charity. Local hospitals play a major role in our communities and deserve all the support they can get.”

Miss Blackpool, Jessica Berry, was also there to lend her support on the day. Jessica, who works for the Trust as an IT Trainer, said: “Working in the organisation I see just how much the donations can help to make things better for patients.”

The launch event was part of an awareness week which included an open top bus tour of local hospital sites, the charity’s Fundraising Manager Kathy Ancell undertaking a sponsored parachute jump, and attendance at St Annes Carnival, where the Carnival Queen is raising monies for the Special Care Baby Unit at Blackpool Victoria Hospital. Kathy said: “A parachute jump is something I have always wanted to do, but now seems the perfect time.”

The launch week will also promote the charity’s new website www.blueskieshospitalsfund.org.uk which is now live.



Caption 05: Executive Director Bill Robinson, Fundraising Manager Kathy Ancell, Miss Blackpool Jessica Berry, Jimmy Armfield and Paul Bailey, Head of Fundraising and Voluntary Services at the launch of the Blue Skies Hospitals Fund.



Caption 010: : Executive Director Bill Robinson, Ian Evatt, Chief Executive Aidan Kehoe and Paul Bailey, Head of Fundraising and Voluntary Services at the launch of the Blue Skies Hospitals Fund.

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