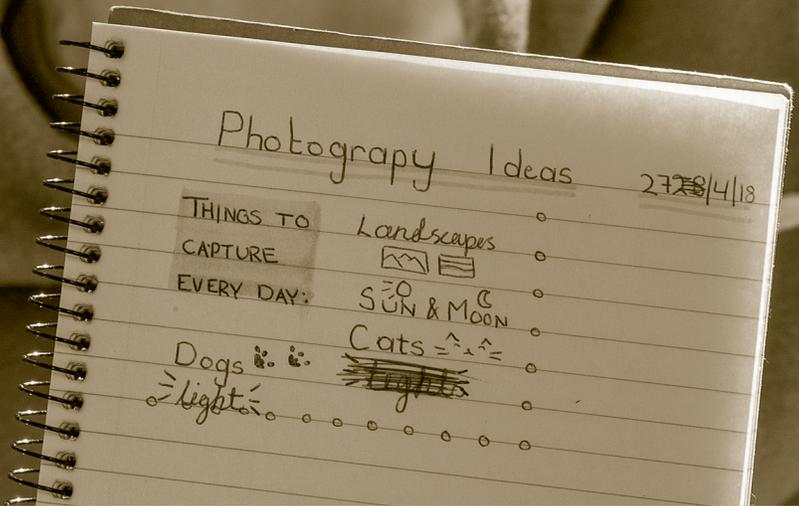




cancer fund for children



THE IRELAND FUNDS IS HELPING TO ENSURE NO CHILD FACES CANCER ALONE

EVERY WEEK ACROSS THE ISLAND OF IRELAND 10 CHILDREN OR YOUNG PEOPLE ARE DIAGNOSED WITH CANCER. CANCER FUND FOR CHILDREN OFFERS FREE THERAPEUTIC SHORT BREAKS TO FAMILIES ACROSS IRELAND WHO HAVE A CHILD DIAGNOSED WITH CANCER AT ITS SPECIALIST SHORT BREAK CENTER DAISY LODGE, CO. DOWN. • HERE, RACHEL BURGOYNE, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER AT CANCER FUND FOR CHILDREN SHARES THEIR WORK AND MISSION: TO SUPPORT EVERY CHILD IMPACTED BY CANCER, SO THEY ARE BETTER EQUIPPED TO COPE IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THEY ARE NOT ALONE.

At Cancer Fund for Children, we support children and young people (aged 0-24) who have been diagnosed with cancer, their siblings and also young people who are struggling to cope with their parent's cancer.

Cancer treatment is frightening, challenging, and isolating and can devastate families emotionally, physically, and financially. For a diagnosed child, months of gruelling treatment and its side effects can impact their mental health, their education, and their friendships.

This is also an extremely uncertain and worrying time for siblings who can feel like the forgotten child as their parents focus their attention on their sick sibling. For many parents struggling to care for a child with cancer, whilst working and maintaining a family routine, a childhood cancer diagnosis can place an enormous strain on their relationships. From the point of diagnosis our team of Cancer Support Specialists are here to help, guide and support young people at home, in their community, and at our therapeutic short break center, Daisy Lodge.

Daisy Lodge is a nurturing and restorative space that is purpose-built to support families at the most vulnerable, difficult, and exhausting time in their lives. Hospitals help children with their medical needs, but weeks and months as an inpatient can bring a family to breaking point. Daisy Lodge is a wonderful haven of peace and tranquillity. Families receive the right level of support to relax, connect, and meet other families living through cancer.

The RISE Program

We know that young people diagnosed with cancer are six times more likely than their peers to face mental health issues like depression and anxiety. Some of the issues young people have told us they face include uncertainty about their future, loss of friendship groups, isolation, anxiety, and they can struggle with changes in their body image. With the support of The Ireland Funds, the RISE programme helps teenagers and young people tackle these issues head on.

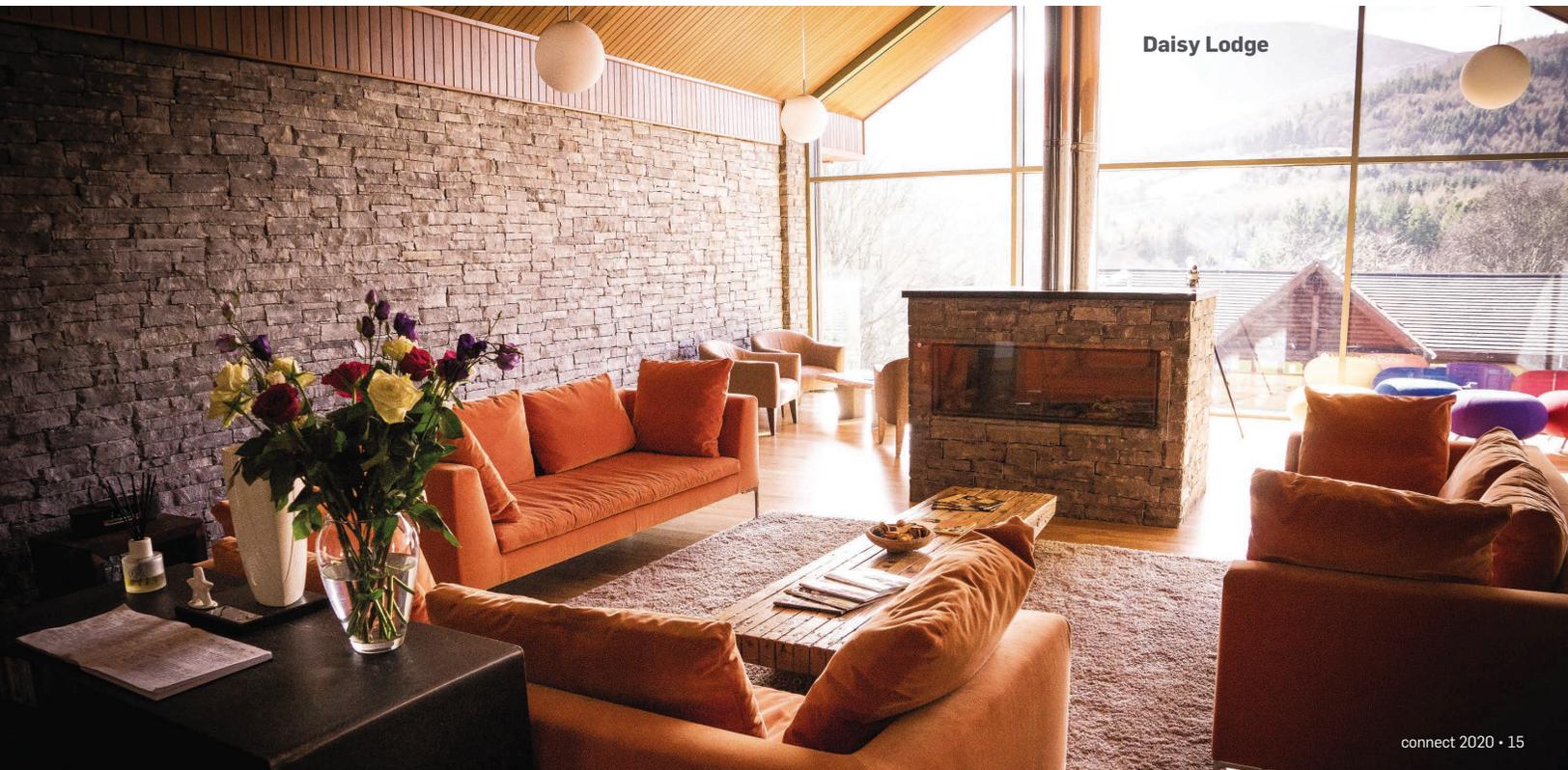
WHAT IS RISE?

The RISE Program supports young people age 8-17 diagnosed with cancer and their siblings and aims to help improve their

mental health and emotional well-being. Each young person supported through the RISE program benefits from a tailored plan of individual support, group support and individual follow up. Our team of Cancer Support Specialists create a safe space for young people with cancer to come together and talk about their cancer with their peers.

We would like to take this opportunity to say a massive thank you to The Ireland Funds for providing €100,000 of funding over the next two years for the RISE Program. The Ireland Funds grant will enable Cancer Fund for Children to provide 80 children and young people impacted by cancer with vital emotional support.

Each young person will benefit from a program of eight individual support sessions and three residential group support sessions. Participation in the RISE program will help young people rebuild their confidence, improve their emotional wellbeing and resilience, and enable them to reflect on their personal experience of cancer. It will also provide them with the opportunity connect to others going through a similar experience, away from the medical environment.



AUSTIN'S STORY

Austin Rothwell (12) was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukaemia (ALL) in 2018. He was in intensive care for three months and spent a year learning to walk again. Austin was supported through the RISE program.

Speaking of his experience his mum Nicola said, "I had forgotten what my son was like before his cancer diagnosis. Being at Cancer Fund for Children's residential log cabin lit a spark in my boy that I had not seen in a very long time. For the first time in a long time, I saw Austin as a 12 year old boy. His shoulders were light, and he was actually living and loving life.

COVID-19 came just as Austin was about to go on his second residential. I really wondered how Cancer Fund for Children could continue to offer support. Within days a Zoom meeting was set up. I was a little unsure how Austin would respond, but two hours later he emerged for his room beaming. I totally underestimated how important social contact of this kind was to Austin.

He has had a weekly Zoom chat with the charity's Cancer Support Specialists ever since. They just understand these kids. They listen and engage with them on a level that mums and dads cannot. As parents we worry about cancer treatments and side effects, about income and the impact of cancer on our other children.

Sometimes we just don't have the mental capacity to deal with the other stuff. Cancer Fund for Children let our children be children. They allow our kids to escape for a time and to be free from treatment and worry. It's a very special gift they give our children."





Cancer won't stop during the coronavirus pandemic and neither will we. Every day throughout Ireland one more child is diagnosed with cancer and the reality is that currently we can only support one in seven families.

We're building our second short break center Daisy Lodge on the beautiful shores of Lough Corrib, beside Cong village in Co. Mayo, which will be situated in an area of outstanding natural beauty. We are delighted to say with the support of Rory McLroy we've purchased the site, received full planning permission, and completed the design stage.

We have launched our capital campaign to help build Daisy Lodge Co. Mayo. A new therapeutic short break center will allow us to increase the number of families we support from 450 to 1000 a year, helping to ensure no child in Ireland has to face cancer alone.

Thanks to the support of The Ireland Funds we have made a difference for so many children and families battling cancer. With your continued support, we can be here for children and young people at a time when they need us more than ever.