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## PRESS RELEASE

### **Teddies for Loving Care Appeal hits Lancashire**

BLACKPOOL Victoria Hospital's A&E department has become the first in West Lancashire to benefit from an appeal which uses teddy bears to comfort distressed children.

The Teddies for Loving Care Appeal started in Essex but has been brought to Blackpool by the local branch of the Lady Freemasons.

The group is raising money to purchase the teddy bears so that A&E staff can hand them out to upset children in the hope that it will calm their nerves.

Provincial Grand Master of the Lady Freemasons, Heather Hitchen said: "I have always loved teddy bears and when I first became Grand Master, I gave everyone at the meeting a teddy dressed in full Masonic regalia. The TLC Appeal began with the men's freemasonry, who we are not actually part of, but I spoke to Ian Simpson of the province of Essex, who is chairman of the Appeal, and he obtained permission for us to do it.

"When we first started up the Appeal, Ian Simpson donated a box of teddies in remembrance of his mother-in-law, Jesse Moorhead, who had belonged to the Meridian Lodge in Blackpool and was very interested in this Appeal. My husband and I also donated 6 boxes to the cause in remembrance of our grandson, Jonathan, who died nearly 18 months ago. We are really delighted to be able to do the Appeal, and delighted to do it in Blackpool."

The ladies are doing numerous things to raise money to pay for the teddies including coffee mornings, Sunday lunches and sponsored walks. There are also five different lapel pins for people to buy costing £2.50 each, and every pin sold allows for the purchase of two teddies.

Provincial Grand Tyler, Teri Hill said: "We are the first of the lady masons to do this appeal and the first at Blackpool Victoria Hospital. There are around 8 lodges in the North of England with more than 200 members. The teddies are to give out to children who are distressed in A&E and hospital staff can decide who they think would benefit from the teddies."

Paediatric Sister in A&E, Caroline Gomery said: "The teddies are going down really well particularly with children who are around 2 and 3 years old. We give the teddies to children who are here and distressed or in difficult circumstances, whether they be here as a patient or with someone else. The children who get the teddies seem to really like them and hold on to them."

Head of Fundraising and Voluntary Services, Paul Bailey said: "We are delighted that the Lady Freemasons have decided to launch this Appeal at Blackpool Victoria Hospital. So far, children have been really receptive to the idea and the appeal is set to be a great success."

Once the children receive the teddies they can take them home with them to keep. If you are interested in donating money to the appeal or want more information, speak to Heather Hitchen on 01253 392963.

If you would like more information on the Lady Freemasons, log on to [www.hfaf.org/index.html](http://www.hfaf.org/index.html).



**PIC:** L-R Provincial Junior Grand Warden Brenda Cook, Provincial Deputy Grand Master Pat Rothwell, Head of Fundraising and Voluntary Services Paul Bailey, Provincial Grand Master Heather Hitchen, Provincial Grand Tyler Teri Hill and Paediatric Sister in A&E Caroline Gomery.

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