

# Big Hearts Celebrate Third Year of Support to Kinship Care families



Big Hearts Community Trust, the official charity of Heart of Midlothian Football Club, held its fourth Family Day – believed to be the largest gathering of Kinship Care families across Scotland – on Monday at Tynecastle Park, home of the current SPFL Premiership leaders. Big Hearts has raised more than £1.5m for community projects since it was established in 2006 and now focuses on families, supporting all generations across Edinburgh and the Lothians by leading, co-ordinating and facilitating meaningful activities where need is identified.

Charlotte Cailliez, Communications and Fundraising Officer told the Edinburgh Reporter:

*“Since October 2015, Big Hearts has welcomed over 100 kinship families every year to Tynecastle Park to enjoy various exciting activities including football coaching, music tuition, information stalls and stadium tours”*

*“The core element to our Kinship Care Programme is the Kinship Care After School Club which takes place every week. The club*

*provides engaging, fun and positive activities for the whole family. In addition, carers receive family support from our lead partner Mentor and have the ideal opportunity to share advice and experiences. A nutritious meal is provided after the session, providing an opportunity for the whole family to sit and enjoy this together."*

Since 2015, Big Hearts provide free comprehensive support to adults and young people living in a kinship care setting – a form of care often under-represented which concerns a third of 'looked after' children in Scotland. Due to the nature of these arrangements, Kinship care families are often facing practical and emotional challenges which make them most at risk of social isolation.

Over 300 adults and children took part in a host of free activities across Tynecastle Stadium, including alpaca and owl petting, music tuition, football games and stadium tours. A marketplace of 20 charities and local organisations provided information on support services available to Kinship Carers within the community.

Craig Wilson, Big Hearts' General Manager said: *"We launched the Kinship Care programme three years ago to raise awareness of Kinship Care and ensure the most vulnerable of these families can access the support they need. To date we have engaged with over 200 families and developed a wide range of free support to help young people and adult carers thrive and feel more confident as a family."*

*"Today we hosted our 4th Kinship family Day at Tynecastle Park and it has been fantastic to see close to 15 'new' and 'hidden' Kinship Care families come forward to find out more about the support available whilst enjoying a fun-filled day across the Stadium."*

Heather McVeigh, Director at Mentor Scotland said: *"As lead partner of Big Hearts' Kinship Care programme, we are*

*delighted to be here today to celebrate our fourth Kinship Care Family Day together. Our close work with Big Hearts over the past three years has enabled to significantly raise awareness of Kinship Care across Edinburgh and reach out to more Kinship Care families who need support. We are excited to see what the future of our partnership will hold."*

If you are interested in the tremendous work Big Hearts does for the community and would like to get involved, further details are [here](#).