

# **Big Hearts ensure support for families this Christmas**

**This Christmas, hundreds of families in Edinburgh and the Lothians will receive Christmas essentials thanks to the incredible efforts from 274 Big Hearts Supporters linked to Heart of Midlothian's charity.**

For this second Christmas of the pandemic, Big Hearts Community Trust is going on the road to bring some festive cheer directly to people's homes. The official charity of Heart of Midlothian FC, based at Tynecastle Park, is focusing on providing practical support to various groups referred by the local schools, social workers and partner charities.

Earlier this month, Big Hearts revealed that the number of referrals had doubled since 2020. A call for Hearts fans to become Big Hearts Supporters enabled the charity to meet the demand.



The Hearts Women Team supporting Big Hearts' Gift Back initiative. From left: Clare Williamson & Addie Handley. And now 274 individuals have come forward to help, by volunteering in their own time or at the Stadium, making Big Hearts' festive activity the biggest to date. A total of 400 pre-cooked Christmas dinners, 500 bags of tailored presents and 100 food parcels will be distributed in time for Christmas Day.

Andrew McKinlay, Big Hearts Trustee and Chief Executive of Heart of Midlothian FC said: "The festive holidays can be a challenging time for many. Throughout the pandemic, football has remained a force for good and it's heart-warming to see a record number of Hearts fans joining Big Hearts, the charity operating from Tynecastle Park, to help provide much needed support across the community this Christmas. They are a credit to our Club, and our shared family and community values. A big thank you to all involved, your kindness doesn't go

unnoticed.”



Hearts Players visit to the Broomhouse foodbank. From left: Taylor Moore, Craig Gordon, Alex Cochrane & Beni Baniangime. Craig Wilson, General Manager at Big Hearts Community Trust said: “Our priority this Christmas is ensuring families can enjoy a fresh Christmas dinner from the comfort and safety of their home and receive presents to open on Christmas morning. The fact that our charity saw a 100% increase in requests for support this year just shows how many more individuals are struggling over the festive season – with some facing poverty or loneliness for the very first time.” “Alongside our dedicated staff team, Big Hearts Volunteers are playing a vital role in supporting the 500 adults and children on our list. Our award-winning Big Hearts Supporters Movement was designed to do just that: use the incredible power of football to join forces and help others in need. We are incredibly grateful to all who decided to sign up and donate their time and skills to make a difference. Thank you.”



Big Hearts Christmas Hampers distributed to isolated older people in partnership with the SPFL Trust.



A group of Hearts fans volunteering at the Stadium to wrap up and prepare Christmas gifts deliveries