

Spartans host Sporting Memories at Ainslie Park

The charitable organisation Sporting Memories were the hospitality guests of honour at Saturday's game against Dumbarton.

Sporting Memories and The Spartans Community Foundation formed a partnership two months ago and the match gave workers and beneficiaries of the charity the opportunity to take in some SPFL League 2 action.

Formed in 2011, Sporting Memories aims to help those who suffer from long term health conditions such as dementia and Parkinson's.

Donna Mackie is the charity's Partnership Manager. She said: "We use the power of sport to bring people together in our community clubs who run sessions once a week and basically use sport reminiscence and physical activity to reconnect them with sport.

"I have seen the impact on so many of those who don't normally see anyone week to week but they'll come out whenever their Sporting Memories club is to see and chat to people.

"So just having that social connection, building their self-confidence but also they're physical health and just seeking the kind of camaraderie and bond that builds from older people who have a shared love of sport."



Partnerships Manager Donna Mackie and Royston Court care home worker Lyndsey Robertson enjoying the half time hospitality with one of the charities attendees. Photo provided by The Spartans Community Foundation. PHOTO Louise Murdoch

Local man Ian Davidson, 61 was recently diagnosed with prostate cancer, and he spoke about what the charity has done for him. He said: "It gives me something to do, and I enjoy the company and the people that run it are really good.

"You're meeting a lot of different people from different age groups and listening back to their stories and memories is great, it gives you something to look forward too.

"There is one woman who was a referee at the Commonwealth Games in the 1970s, great story and listening to people like that keeps your mind stimulated."

The partnership has also given Spartans volunteers the chance to help out with Sporting Memories.

Volunteer Ted Murdoch said: "My role involves making sure the room is up to scratch, putting on the soup, cutting up the

bread and making sure everything is okay for the attendees.

“Sometimes you say to yourself it’s not worked, but when you see a person going away with a smile on their face you know that you’ve done your job.

“That is the main thing, as long as you have made at least one person happy.”

The Spartans pride themselves on the work they do in the local community for all age groups. The feel-good atmosphere at Ainslie Park was evident to see, and at the centre of that is Youth and Community Worker, Jamie Tomkinson.

Jamie said: “A lot of people from the outside looking in view is as just a football club, which is one of the reasons why we changed our name recently from the Spartans Community Football Academy to the Spartans Community Foundation because we are much more than just a football club, we engage with not only young people as you’ve noticed today but with everyone in our local community.

“Our first sporting memories club began here in mid-August and the impact so far has been fantastic, they view coming to Spartans as the highlight of their week.

“We work with two care homes currently; Trinity House and Royston Court Care home and they say that their residents feel more comfortable coming out the rooms.

Over the next couple of months, we’ll be doing more monthly activities like a games night for local residents over the age of 50 who are socially isolated.”

On the pitch The Spartans put on a show for their guests beating Dumbarton 2-0 thanks to second half goals by Cammy Russell and Bradley Whyte.

More information on The Spartans Community Foundation and the Sporting Memories charity can be found on the links below:

<https://www.spartanscf.com/>

<https://www.sportingmemories.uk/>



Sporting Memories Development Director for Scotland Brian Sloan and attendee Ian Davidson at half time. Photo provided by The Spartans Community Foundation PHOTO Louise Murdoch