

Chief Christmas Officer is up to the job

Fort Kinnaird has revealed the successful candidate in its search for a new Chief Christmas Officer (CCO) – with six-year-old Ruari from East Lothian appointed in the inaugural role.

Ruari was recruited to try out the wealth of retailers and festive experiences at the centre for free, indulging in tasty seasonal treats and bagging plenty of Christmas goodies to make sure they're fit for a fun-filled festive season.

Ruari's application stood out to Fort Kinnaird due to his volunteering efforts from a young age and passion for helping others, that the team felt should be rewarded. Ruari volunteers for Children's Hospices Across Scotland (CHAS) with his granny, helping to collect cans and support at craft stalls. He has also encouraged his school to take part in fundraising for CHAS at Christmas over the last few years too.

Fort Kinnaird's new CCO also fundraises for a campaign to support a local East Lothian six-year-old who is fighting cancer, Flora's Fight Against Neuroblastoma. When he was three, Ruari did a sponsored cycle from Longniddry to Haddington, raising almost £4,000, after he had just learned to ride his bike. Since then, he has encouraged his friends to join him in fundraising and they did a bake sale for Flora earlier this year raising £700.

Ruari spent a full day at the centre this week, testing out the diverse range of activities available. From watching seasonal favourite, Home Alone, at ODEON Cinema to reviewing the new festive menu at Frankie & Benny's.

After sampling the new festive hot chocolate and treats at Hotel Chocolat, Ruari also got to test out this year's most popular toys and gadgets at Menkind, and even got to take one home.

He said: "When Mummy told me I was going to be Chief Christmas Officer for Fort Kinnaird I felt really excited and happy – it was such a fun visit!"

Mum Sarah added: "Ruari knows being kind is the most important thing you can be and to have his efforts recognised in this way is really special. I'm so grateful to the team at Fort Kinnaird for making the day so much fun."

Liam Smith, centre director at Fort Kinnaird, said: "We had some wonderful applications for our Chief Christmas Officer role, and were blown away by the number of entries and everyone's passion for the job! It was a difficult decision to select just one candidate, but Ruari stood out as a brilliant choice for us and he's done a great job in putting our festive fun to the test.

"We're always looking for ways to enhance our visitor experience, and we'd like to thank Ruari for helping us to do just that."

For more information on the stores available at Fort Kinnaird, please visit <https://www.fortkinnaird.com/>

