

SUPPORT NEEDED FOR CASH TO GET MIDLANDS A SPECIALISED SERVICE

Each time she was getting weaker and weaker. She ended up 30kgs, she couldn't even sit up. With the Covid virus then you couldn't even get in to visit her.



LOSS: Lisa died after complications from a car crash

EXCLUSIVE
BY EAMON DILLON

FARMER James Kane knows only too well the agony families endure as a loved one spends their final days in hospital.

Last month he buried his sister Lisa after she finally succumbed to complications caused by terrible injuries she suffered in a car crash last year.

It's why he has got behind a plan to raise cash by selling cattle for a full hospice care facility in the Midlands, the only region in the country without one.

"It was the number of other families I saw. The ICUs are just not designed for that," he told the *Sunday World*.

"The doctors and nurses have enough to be doing trying to save people's lives without trying to contend with families and help them go through the process of grieving at that particular time."

"It's a terrible, difficult time. That's why these units are so important around the country."

Earlier this year the Hooves 4 Hospice project saw farmers and the Midlands Lions Club link up to create a unique fundraiser.

James is one of the many local farmers who have volunteered to raise an animal,

FARMER BACKS HOOVES 4 HOSPICE TO RAISE FUNDS FOR CARE UNIT

the proceeds from which will go direct to the hospice charity.

He and his family went through the emotionally shattering experience of watching his sister battle through a series of operations and being put on life-support three times.

ANointed

"She lived on the farm here with me, I was very close to her. I was her godfather as well," he explained.

"After the accident, she got 22 units of blood that night in Tullamore. The next day she was on life support — she was anointed about 15 times during the year."

"She broke every bone in her body on her right side. They

repaired that, she had an awful lot of steel plates put in," said James.

"Whenever I'd go in, she'd live for my visits because I'd always crack a joke and she'd laugh."

"She fell just before she came home and ended up getting sepsis. She just got over it again, I don't know how she survived, then she was home for a couple of weeks," he added.

But she then suffered a stomach problem, having already had part of her bowel removed, and she had to undergo yet another operation.

"Each time she was getting weaker and weaker. She ended up 30kgs, she couldn't even sit up," he recalled.

"With the Covid then you couldn't even get in to visit her. It's been a nightmare between the Covid and the whole lot."

Lisa passed away on August 18, but for James the sight of other families going through the same

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process left its mark.

"It's the amount of other families I've seen in the intensive care unit and they're all there trying to cry and they can't, other people watching them. That's why I got involved," he explained.

POPULATION

He went to Galway to see an uncle approaching the end of this life being cared for in a hospice and he "saw the difference."

One of the organisers of the Hooves 4 Hospice project, Gerry Finnegan, said: "Laois, Offaly, Longford and Westmeath is the only region in Ireland that does not have a level 3 hospice."

"The region has a population in excess of 300,000. A level 3 hospice is a

specially designed and equipped building where end of life care is provided by specially trained staff to patients most in need of specialist care at the end of their life," he explained.

So far, 350 farmers have signed up to rear a young calf to be sold off with the entire proceeds of the sale going towards the fundraiser.

"It is planned to have a Hooves 4 Hospice sale in the autumn of 2021 and the entire proceeds of the sale will be donated to help fund the building of a level 3 hospice in the Midlands," he said.

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic impacting on the fundraiser he said the farming community have been hugely supportive.

"We have also had great financial support from the general public, businesses and other organisations towards the purchase of animals to be reared by host farmers."

Gerry said a number of farmers have been creative in their donations, including €2,000 donated by people who got one of nine Collie pups from a litter.



A farmer and his wife who heard about the project on the same day he sold an animal for €1,995 donated the entire amount to the project.

Another donated a rare breed Droimeann bull to be sold on condition it be kept for year to breed to help sustain the number of the declining native Irish stock.

People can support the project by visiting the website www.h4h.midlandhospice.ie

MOO-VING MOUNTAINS:

James Kane is rearing a calf on his farm in Clara, Co Offaly, to sell and raise funds for Hooves 4 Hospice



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