



Fighting Heart Disease & Stroke



Rachel and Jack

November 2022

Dear Croí Supporter,

Your generosity has the ability to change many lives, and as we enter this Christmas season, I wanted to tell you about one family in particular and how your simple act of giving can help families like them find hope and healing during an extremely difficult time.

Last Christmas, after experiencing both a stroke and open-heart surgery, Jack was newly home from hospital. His family was thrilled to have him back in time for Christmas, but they didn't fully realise that a months-long, painful journey to recovery was just beginning.

Croí Heart & Stroke Centre was integral to his healing. All our programmes and services are funded by donors and events like our yearly **Golden Ticket Raffle**. So when you read Jack's story, I hope you'll understand why your participation this year is so important in helping Croí continue to lead the fight against heart disease and stroke.

A healthy 64-year-old who cycled up to 120km every week, Jack went to hospital in Galway last October after experiencing loss of his peripheral vision. There, he was told he'd had a stroke and spent 10 days in the stroke unit.

Just before his release home, he received more bad news. He had an angiogram that showed his heart had a 70% blockage in one of his valves — one that would require open-heart surgery.

Jack always had good health and suddenly, within a week, he experienced two of the most traumatising health nightmares anyone can imagine.

Fortunately, two months later, Jack underwent successful valve replacement surgery in Dublin, and was home by Christmas. But it was a difficult time for the family. Without the ability to drive, Jack had no independence. He was weak, thin, and emotionally distressed. And worst of all, on his discharge from hospital he had not been given proper recovery instructions ... no plan to make sure this wouldn't happen again. Due to the absence of medical support over the Christmas period, his wife Rachel found this to be troubling, as without a plan it took time to figure out how best to support Jack.

And that's exactly why Croí exists — and why we need you. We're there for our community with education, programmes and services that prevent heart events and strokes from happening. But when they do, we're also there to aid in recovery — physically, psychologically and emotionally — as well as prevent reoccurrences.

Our Golden Ticket Raffle helps make this possible. So I hope I can count on you to buy as many tickets as you can, for friends, family, co-workers — or to keep for yourself! Each ticket is just €5, and you could win up to €2,000!

After Jack's surgery, his family tried their best to support him, but as Jack had been a patient of two hospitals, he describes his experience on discharge as "falling between two stools." When this happens, "You need someone there to call, and the only one you can call is Croí," Jack says.

Please turn over



Thanks to generous friends like you, Jack's family didn't have to face his recovery alone. Instead, they were able to take advantage of one of our most important services, the **Heartlink West** free nurse helpline, which connects patients one-on-one to a qualified cardiovascular nurse specialist. Croí's nurse, Maeve, became a lifeline to this family.

"There was nobody else," Jack remembers. "It was Maeve that got us through."

Maeve even set up an appointment for Jack to speak with a counsellor who helped him work through some of the emotional distress he experienced while in hospital. She also encouraged him to try yoga at Croí, which he continues to this day, not just for his physical health, but for the psychological well-being that comes from being around others who understand what he's been through.

Thanks to support from friends like you, Maeve and the Heartlink West team also provided essential care to someone often forgotten about in a patient's recovery: the caregiver. Recovery from a stroke or cardiac event can be a long journey, extremely difficult for both a patient and their loved ones. For caregivers like Jack's wife Rachel to feel that they also have someone looking after them is a huge burden off their shoulders.

Croí's ability to provide wrap-around support is only thanks to events like the Golden Ticket Raffle and friends like you who generously participate. It's easy to sell tickets to friends, neighbours or work colleagues, and we now have an online option. Just go to www.croi.ie/raffle and enter your unique ID#: 001 to purchase tickets.

The raffle takes place on **19 December**, and the more tickets you buy, the more chances you have to win amazing cash prizes. Every ticket purchase helps provide education, lifestyle programmes, cardiac research, and support services like Heartlink West — as well as a comforting place to stay at the Courtyard Apartments for families who are dealing with fear and stress.

Jack and Rachel were Golden Ticket Raffle participants for years before they benefited from Croí's services themselves. Seeing their money in action has been powerful.

"As somebody who has supported Croí over the years, I never imagined that I would become a service user," Rachel told us. "But now I've seen it from both sides. You can be guaranteed that your money is being wisely and carefully applied to provide the **best possible care and service to the people who need it.**"

It's certainly been a hard year for Jack and his family, and this Christmas they are more thankful than ever for their health. Though Jack is feeling more like himself and gaining independence every day, he knows Croí and Heartlink West will be there for him if any questions or concerns arise.

No one knows exactly when they'll need Croí, but with your support we'll be there, promoting healing and recovery — and even saving lives — all throughout Ireland.



Rachel, Jack and Croí Nurse, Maeve

It's the season of gratitude and generosity. Will you show both by participating in the Golden Ticket Raffle this year?

With my thanks,

Christine Flanagan
Director of Fundraising

P.S. A serious cardiac diagnosis or stroke — or BOTH, in Jack's case — can be difficult and lonely for the entire family. With your support of the Golden Ticket Raffle today, you'll help Croí to be there for families across Ireland when no one else is. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Visit www.croi.ie/raffle to purchase your tickets today!

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