



Dear Friend,

First let me begin by wishing you a Merry Christmas from all of us at Muscular Dystrophy UK. Perhaps it's not the Christmas any of us were expecting, but I dearly hope the festive spirit will still find you.

In Thea's letter, you'll have read just how vital a role our charity has been able to play in people's lives during this very strange and challenging year.

Thea was certainly not the only one seeking help and information from us. Between April and September, my team received 985 requests for support, with people contacting us with questions not only about muscle-wasting conditions but also about the impact of Covid-19 itself.

Thanks to kind support such as yours, we were able to adapt our way of working, providing people with reliable and accurate information about coronavirus, while putting much more content online, including regular Facebook Q&A sessions and videos on a range of topics from our annual seminar series.

We also had 51 requests for advocacy – people like Thea needing our help to challenge decisions about benefit payments. Sadly, what Thea went through is not uncommon, but we know the system and how to guide people through it.

This is why your support is so important. Every single week my team and I speak to parents who have been thrust into the role of carer and advocate, not to mention having to take a crash course in biology and

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medicine as they grapple with a muscle-wasting diagnosis. This can be exhausting as well as worrying, even scary. I know this from my parents' experience, and mine as a sibling, coming to terms with my brother's diagnosis of Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, and the many hurdles we have faced.

Your generosity this Christmas could help ensure that nobody is left to face a muscle-wasting illness alone, as well as helping to fund vital research into possible new treatments that could help make conditions like Tobi's a thing of the past.

The future is always uncertain, but given the changes the world has gone through in the past year, the coming year somehow feels even more uncertain than usual. My heart goes out to everyone whose life has been affected by a muscle-wasting diagnosis, and who is feeling isolated and anxious against the backdrop of the pandemic. But you can help ensure we're here to support people in the year to come.

I hope you have a very Merry Christmas and that 2021 is a better year for all of us.

Yours sincerely

Neeru Naik
Head of Information, Advocacy and Support
MuscularDystrophy UK

PS: Please send a donation to Muscular Dystrophy UK this Christmas – it is essential that we remain able to help families like Thea's with whatever support they need. We can't do this important work without your kind help. Thank you.

www.musculardystrophyuk.org

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