



## You meet some amazing people in this job...

...once again thanks to you, our readers, we found nine incredible winners from all over the UK to be our 2010 Mums of the Year (read their stories from p38, plus see coverage of

the star-studded awards' day itself online). Among the winners, families and celebs at the London party were the Prime Minister and his wife Sarah, who presented an award. Earlier Fiona Phillips enjoyed an exclusive. politics-free chat with the famous couple for us at their No 10 flat. They've never given such a personal and heartfelt interview before so it's quite a coup (see p34). Elsewhere this issue we have some fabulous spring recipes (p56), offer help with growing your own fruit and veg (p104) plus we look at how parents can help with homework and exams - something my mother found rather tiresome when it came to me.



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## Meet our amazing mums

This year's judges found it tougher than ever to choose from the thousands of entries received for our Mum of the Year competition. But we think you'll agree our chosen mums are all deserving winners. Read their incredible stories over the next few pages





was to set up a holiday home where children with a terminal illness and their families could enjoy

special time together.





After battling a rare form of childhood cancer for two and a half years, brave Sebastian died on Christmas Eve 2003. 'We wanted to ensure that his dream lived on, so the charity Sebastian's Action Trust was founded in his memory,' says his inspirational mum Jane.

Jane, 47, from Binfield in Berkshire, established the charity from home, and over the past five years the Trust has raised a staggering £1·2 million. Of this, £825,000 will go to create a holiday home in Hampshire for children with life-limiting illnesses, aimed at giving families respite and a sense of normality.

Just some of the other amazing work the charity does is providing families with much-needed practical support. In 2005, Jane started a bereavement group, Reflections, to offer support to anyone affected by

the death of someone who has died young. Funded by the Trust, the group organises an annual weekend away for up to 40 people to Devon, giving siblings and parents a chance to talk to others in a similar situation.

Local hospitals have also benefited from the charity. The Trust lobbied Wexham Park Hospital in Berkshire on the refurbishment of six isolation rooms in the children's ward. And it funds a team of beauty therapists who visit local hospitals to pamper the mums of sick children. Jane has also introduced mobile libraries into hospitals, giving parents access to information on their children's conditions. In addition, the Trust provides funding for a psychologist at Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals, and wants to secure a psychologist and social worker on a local level too.

Candida Hazard, an oncology nurse at Wexham Park Hospital, says, 'To lose a child is unthinkable but to help so many as a result is truly amazing. Jane has made a huge impact on the lives of hundreds of families they will remember forever.'



## Charitable Mum of the Year, Sabina Igbal

round nine million people in the UK are either deaf or hard of hearing. Yet before 2001, when Sabina Iqbal set up the charity Deaf Parenting UK, there was no specific organisation here to represent the particular needs of deaf parents with hearing children.

Run by deaf parents for deaf parents, Deaf Parenting UK is the first organisation to address this gap in services. Sabina, 34, who is mum to Samaira, three and a half, and two-year-old Areeb, who can both hear, chairs the charity in a voluntary capacity. She also works as a sensory team manager for Islington Social Services and has written a book too, called *Pregnancy And Birth: A Guide For Deaf Women*.

In addition to offering vital support, the charity runs parenting skills courses every year and informs parents of their rights, for example making sure that a school provides an interpreter if necessary.

Deaf Parenting UK has also organised fun days, encouraging social integration with children who may feel a bit embarrassed by having deaf parents, and allowing them to mix in a natural environment. And the charity has received requests internationally from Australia and the USA, who are keen to establish similar organisations in their own respective countries.

Sabina says, 'The everyday contact that people take for granted can be a struggle for deaf parents, and accessing services is the biggest barrier they face. The charity aims to empower parents and parents-to-be and promote a positive image of deaf parents. We want to provide support and get across the message that there is nothing wrong with asking for help and advice.'

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