British Heart Foundation

Young Heart Hero Awards 2026

25 September 2026 | Paradox Museum

What to expect on the day

Get ready for an afternoon full of discovery, celebration, and fun at the incredible Paradox Museum in London! From mind-bending illusions to heartfelt moments, there's something for everyone – kids and grown ups alike.

- You'll be greeted at the entrance and guided to check in coats and buggies – don't forget to strike a pose before you start and make the most of your 'paparazzi moment!'
- Before the ceremony begins, enjoy exclusive access to the Paradox Museum – prepare to be amazed by mind-twisting exhibits that challenge your senses.
- Enjoy a selection of light snacks and refreshments available throughout the afternoon, with options for both children and adults to keep everyone fuelled as you explore and celebrate.
- The awards ceremony will be hosted by CBBC's brilliant Dr Dan and Dr Raph Olaiya (AKA 'The O-Twins'), alongside our very own Director of Fun, Teresa Hicks. Expect plenty of smiles, energy and maybe even a few surprises!
- Celebrate the incredible achievements and bravery of our Young Heart Heroes during our awards presentation. Bring your tissues – there might be some proud tears!
- Capture a special moment throughout the day – there will be opportunities for photos with awards or celebration items to remember this unforgettable experience.
- Guests are welcome to stay and enjoy the museum until 5pm.

Welcome

Hello and a huge welcome to our 4th annual Young Heart Hero Awards!

I'm Teresa Hicks, Director of Fundraising, but today you can call me the Director of Fun here at British Heart Foundation. I've got the best job ever: celebrating amazing young people like you!

This event is all about you, our brilliant young fundraisers, heart heroes and super supporters aged 11 and under who have done incredible things for the BHF. Whether you've raised money, spoken up for others, taken on challenges, or shared your own story, we think you're nothing short of amazing.

You've inspired your schools, your friends, your communities and you've inspired all of us at BHF too.

We also want to say a big thank you to all the families, friends, teachers and cheerleaders who support our Young Heart Heroes behind the scenes. You're part of the team too!

Every one of you here today has shown strength, kindness, and the kind of determination that changes lives. You've helped us raise awareness, fund lifesaving research, and bring people together with hope and heart.

Being brave and kind while facing challenges? That's your superpower and we're here to celebrate it.

So sit back, smile big, and let's cheer loudly for our amazing Young Heart Heroes. Let the fun begin!



Teresa Hicks
Director of Fundraising
British Heart Foundation

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Our awards hosts



We are delighted that for the third year running, BHF Ambassadors Dr Dan and Dr Raph, better known as the O-Twins, will be hosting our Young Heart Hero Awards.

The O-Twins can currently be seen on our screens on the BAFTA award winning CBBC show 'Operation Ouch!'

Real life twin brothers, medical doctors and captivating storytellers, this energetic duo combine the excitement of cutting edge science and technology with their relatable, cool and funky style.

With a wealth of experience being in front of the camera through presenting and journalism, they also have experience in emergency, pre-hospital and extreme environments medicine as well as medical technology and innovation.

Both brothers work as frontline doctors. Dr Dan is a Flying Doctor, repatriating sick patients from all over the world back to the UK.

Dr Raph is a General Practice resident, fitness trainer and a wellbeing data scientist at University College London.

Our 2026 Young Heart Heroes



Beatrix Adamson-Archbold

Beatrix was a happy, healthy toddler until she suddenly became critically ill at just 15 months old. After a cardiac arrest, she was fitted with a Berlin Heart and spent over a year in hospital, waiting for the call her family hoped for every single day.

At last, that call came. Beatrix received her heart transplant and began a new chapter. Now five, she is full of energy, laughter and personality. Her journey has been incredibly tough, but she meets the world with joy and spirit, bringing so much happiness to everyone around her.



Koa Audsley-Redfearn

Koa's story began before he was born, when he was diagnosed with Down's syndrome and severe hydrops, and given very little chance of survival. But true to the meaning of his name, he kept fighting and, against all odds, grew stronger.

Recently, Koa needed open heart surgery after being diagnosed with a heart condition, spending several weeks in hospital before returning home to recover.

He has already faced so much in his young life, but Koa is full of happiness and brings so much joy to everyone around him. He is brave, resilient and a true little fighter.



Florence Bennett

Florence is three years old and has already faced more than most people do in a lifetime. Born with a rare and complex heart condition, she has had two major open-heart surgeries and survived two cardiac arrests, one of which left her with significant complications.

Florence has had to relearn so much, from movement to communication, and continues to work incredibly hard in rehab. Yet every morning, she wakes up with the biggest smile. She loves people, gives the best cuddles and lights up every room she enters. Florence approaches every challenge with courage, resilience and a sparkle of joy that lights up every room.



Harrison Blanchflower

Harrison was a happy three-year-old when a virus attacked his heart and he suddenly collapsed at home. His mum performed CPR until help arrived, and he was rushed through emergency care before spending a year in hospital.

He faced so much, including ECMO, complications affecting his brain, gut, movement, speech and sight, and months of being unable to eat normally. But Harrison has amazed everyone.

Now five, his heart function has recovered, he is home, going to school and loving it. He can say "mum", "dad", "nan" and "hello", and his gorgeous smile and laugh light up every room. Harrison is showing the world he is so much more than his diagnosis.



Loki Bourn

Loki was very poorly when he was born and had to fight through ECMO and a major stroke in his earliest days. Despite the challenging journey, he continues to surprise and inspire everyone around him.

With the support of his family, Loki is now giving back, helping to raise money for heart charities, even taking on the role of compere at a recent quiz held in memory of a friend. He faces every challenge with quiet determination and a brilliant spirit, showing just how much strength can be found in one small but mighty boy.



Arne Burlegaite

Although Arne seemed like a healthy baby at birth, at just six weeks old she was urgently flown from Aberystwyth to Bristol where complex congenital heart defects were discovered. Since then, she has had a pacemaker fitted and faced multiple major surgeries, including mitral valve replacements, and two rounds of ECMO treaments.

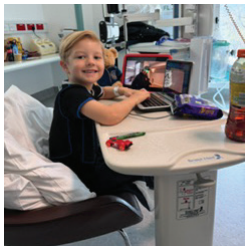
Her journey has been long and incredibly complex, with many setbacks along the way. But through it all, Arne has shown remarkable strength and determination. Her positive outlook gives her family confidence for the future, and she continues to inspire everyone around her with the way she embraces every opportunity that comes her way.



Hollie Dodd

Hollie is five and has spent much of her life in and out of hospital for scans, tests and monitoring. Some days have been really tough, including repeated attempts just to take blood, but she meets it all with quiet strength.

She has a vascular ring which affects how she swallows and breathes, with surgery planned in the future. Despite this, Hollie takes everything in her stride. She is bright, determined and full of character, with a wonderful smile and gorgeous ginger hair. Supported by her family, school and dedicated NHS teams, she continues to face every challenge with bravery and resilience.



Vincent Ellaboudy

Vincent spent years living with subtle but worrying heart symptoms before finally getting a diagnosis, and he has since been visiting Great Ormond Street Hospital for regular care. His first surgery is planned, with more to come, but he faces it all with incredible bravery.

Now five, Vincent proudly tells his friends about his ‘special heart’ and is determined to give back. He has already helped raise thousands, with big plans to take on a 100k challenge with his family. Full of positivity and strength, Vincent inspires everyone around him.



Theo Fry

Theo was born with a heart condition that developed before birth, and at just eight days old he became unconscious at home. He spent months in hospital, facing multiple surgeries, infections and repeated cardiac arrests, including one just days before his first Christmas.

Against all odds, Theo kept fighting. After three major heart surgeries, he continues to be closely monitored, but today he is a happy, determined boy who loves life and gives everything his all. He brings joy to everyone he meets and shows incredible strength, courage and spirit every single day.



Aurelia Grandison-Goyette

Aurelia's story began before she was born, when a scan showed she would need heart surgery as a baby. After a tough start and an operation at just four months, she slowly began to thrive.

Now four, Aurelia is full of energy and curiosity. She loves swimming, playing with her friends and chatting away at preschool. On World Heart Day, she proudly told her classmates about her heart and was presented with a heart "PomPom" in recognition of her bravery and strength.



Penelope Greathead

Penelope is two years old and has already faced more than most in a lifetime. At just 16 days old she became critically ill, and what first seemed like sepsis turned out to be a serious heart condition. After a period of stability, her health suddenly worsened and she suffered a cardiac arrest, needing ECMO to survive.

With incredible determination, Penelope went on to receive a Berlin Heart before finally receiving her life-saving transplant. Today, she is doing wonderfully. Brave, strong and full of life, Penelope is a little girl who has fought every step of the way and continues to bring so much joy to her family.



Imogen Harman

Imogen was diagnosed with complete heart block before she was born and was born at 34 weeks. After spending some time in neonatal care, she went home but needed regular monitoring throughout her first year.

At 15 months old, she had a pacemaker fitted. Now, Imogen continues to attend cardiology appointments each year and will need further procedures in the future. Through it all, she faces everything with quiet strength, showing just how resilient she truly is.



Donnie Jones

Donnie is six and a half and was diagnosed with a congenital heart condition after being referred for a suspected heart murmur. What seemed like a small concern turned out to be something far bigger, but Donnie has faced it all with a smile.

Kind, funny and full of life, he has been a brilliant support to his family's fundraising for British Heart Foundation, helping to raise over £500 in just one day. Donnie's positivity and big heart make him a joy to everyone around him.

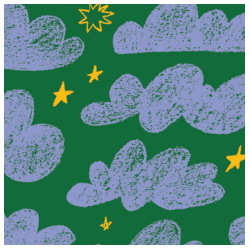


Ellah & Jude Kerr

Jude was born with TAPVD — a serious congenital heart condition. He has already faced two open heart surgeries in his young life. Alongside him every step of the way has been his incredible big sister, Ellah.

From the moment Jude became unwell, Ellah's world changed overnight. She has spent long days in hospital, stayed close to her brother and found ways to keep everyone smiling, even on the hardest days.

Ellah has also raised money, collected gifts for other children on the ward and speaks proudly about heart conditions at school. Together, she and Jude show what true courage, love and strength look like.



Laurie Lawson

Laurie went into heart failure at just nine days old and spent his first year in hospital, supported by a Berlin Heart while he waited for a transplant. At just over one year old, he received the life saving-transplant he needed.

After everything he has been through, Laurie is full of joy. With his cheeky sense of humour and love for trains, tractors and splashing in puddles, he lights up every room he enters. Brave, resilient and full of life, Laurie brings happiness to everyone around him.



Penelope Lewis

Penelope is six and has been living with heart failure since she was just a few months old. She has faced multiple surgeries and difficult recoveries, but each time she picks herself up and keeps going.

She still loves going to school whenever she can and enjoying all the things that make her childhood special. With a love for crafts, glitter and unicorns, Penny brings joy wherever she goes. Brave, strong and full of spirit, she refuses to let anything hold her back.



Charlie Marsh

Charlie was diagnosed with a heart condition before he was even born and came into the world already fighting. He has since faced three major open-heart surgeries, along with countless tests and long hospital journeys, showing incredible strength at every stage.

Now awaiting a heart transplant, Charlie continues to take everything in his stride. Bright, funny and full of personality, he brings joy wherever he goes.

A real little character, Charlie has a huge heart in every sense, inspiring his family every day with his resilience, determination and cheeky spirit.



Imogen Newson

Imogen was diagnosed with complete heart block at 22 weeks before she was born. From the very beginning, she faced long journeys for daily monitoring and care.

She had her first pacemaker fitted at 18 months and, after a setback, went on to have a second in 2025. Through it all, Imogen has shown incredible strength.

Full of energy and determination, she loves football and dance and has even helped raise money for charity. She takes everything in her stride and continues to live life with confidence, courage and joy.



Leo Nicholls

Leo has been sharing his heart story from a very young age, first supporting campaigns as a toddler and continuing to raise awareness as he's grown older. He proudly talks about his condition at school, helping his friends understand his scar and his breathlessness.

He has taken part in national campaigns, including BHF's 'Keep us Beating' awareness campaign, a huge achievement after years of speech therapy following surgery that affected his voice.

Now eight, Leo is happy, confident and full of energy, enjoying football, rugby and golf. Whatever lies ahead with his care, he meets it with positivity, courage and an incredible spirit.



Leo O'Brien

Leo is just six years old and has already faced three open heart surgeries. After being born with a complex heart condition, and against all odds, he received the lifesaving surgery he needed. This gave Leo a chance at life and he has been proving people wrong ever since.

From his very first days, Leo has shown remarkable strength. Through long hospital stays and major surgeries, he has kept going with courage well beyond his years.

Despite everything, Leo is full of life, bringing hope and positivity to those around him.



Chester Osment

Chester was just three days old when a serious heart condition was discovered. Diagnosed with a complete AVSD, he soon went into heart failure and underwent major surgery as a baby. He is likely to need further operations in the future.

Despite everything, Chester is a little star with the most infectious smile. He has already overcome so much and continues to bring joy to everyone around him. His strength reminds us just how deeply heart conditions can affect an entire family, and why continued research and support are so important in helping more children live fuller, healthier lives.



Lola Plimmer

Lola fell ill at just 17 months old and was taken to Birmingham Children's Hospital with what was first thought to be myocarditis. She was later diagnosed with dilated cardiomyopathy and needed life support to keep her going while she waited for a transplant.

After only two months, Lola received her donor heart. Now almost three years on, she is thriving at school and full of life. Together with her family, she helps raise awareness through fundraising events, sharing her story and bringing hope to others facing similar journeys.



Lily-May Postance-Lewis

Lily was expected to be a healthy baby, but within moments of being born it was clear something was wrong. Just hours later, she was diagnosed with pulmonary atresia and needed urgent specialist care.

Since then, she has undergone multiple procedures and will need open heart surgery in the future. Through it all, Lily has shown incredible spirit.

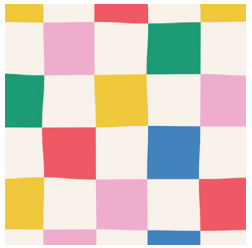
She is full of warmth, with an infectious laugh and a natural instinct to share joy with everyone around her. Lily is truly a little heart warrior, bringing light and happiness wherever she goes.



Ada Rainey

Ada was diagnosed with dilated cardiomyopathy shortly after birth and became critically unwell at just three months old. She spent 11 months in hospital, supported by a Berlin Heart while she waited for a life-saving transplant, celebrating both her first birthday and Christmas on the ward.

After receiving a donor heart, Ada finally went home and hasn't looked back. She is a joyful little girl who loves spending time with her family and friends. Brave and full of life, Ada continues to inspire others, helping raise awareness and honouring the gift that changed her future.



Freya Sheerin

Freya was just a week old when she was rushed to hospital with breathing problems, and ended up having life-saving heart surgery. She's since faced further heart surgery, but she's taken it all in her stride.

She wears her scar with pride and never lets her heart condition hold her back. Freya's determination shines through in everything she does She is strong, spirited and full of life, and her family couldn't be prouder of the young person she's becoming.



Freddie Wiles

Freddie was diagnosed with a rare form of cardiomyopathy at just 14 months old and spent over a year in hospital, facing countless complications while waiting for a transplant. When Freddie's condition worsened, he was placed in intensive care and his family were told there were no options left.

Then came the call that changed everything. Freddie received his donor heart and began his journey to recovery.

Through it all, he never stopped smiling. Now thriving at school and enjoying every moment of childhood, his journey reflects the brighter future that research is helping to create for families affected by heart disease.



Ella Wiseman

Ella had her first heart transplant before her second birthday, giving her five precious years before she needed further support with a pacemaker. When she became seriously unwell again, she urgently needed another transplant, and in June 2023 she received her second heart.

After a long and difficult recovery, Ella is now thriving. She loves going to school, playing with her friends and enjoying being a child. To her family, she is nothing short of a miracle.



Rory Martin Woods

Rory was just hours old when he was rushed for life-saving surgery, fighting from his very first day. His recovery amazed everyone, and he was soon able to come home and begin his journey as a growing, determined little boy.

Now five, Rory is full of personality, with a cheeky sense of humour and a huge love for life. He has already overcome so much, yet continues to face each day with strength and joy. He inspires his family every day and reminds everyone around him just how powerful resilience can be.

Your heart dictionary

Every Heart Hero has a unique story, and sometimes that story includes new words to learn. Use Your Heart Dictionary to discover what different heart conditions, treatments and equipment mean.

Medical treatments and equipment

Berlin Heart

A special machine that temporarily helps to pump blood around your body when your own heart is too weak. It takes over the work of your heart while waiting for a new one.

Defibrillator

A device that helps to restart the heart when it suddenly stops pumping blood around the body

ECMO (Extra Corporeal Membrane Oxygenation)

A form of life support machine that supports heart and lung function in those who are critically ill.

ICD (Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator)

A small device placed inside the chest that monitors the heart's rhythm. If it notices abnormal heart rhythms, it can give electrical impulses to let your heart beat normally.

Pacemaker

A small device placed inside your chest that helps your heart beat at the right pace and rhythm.

Heart transplant

An operation where someone is given a healthy human heart from a donor.

Conditions and diagnoses

Arrhythmia

When the heart beats too fast, too slowly or in an unusual rhythm.

ASD (Atrial Septal Defect)

A small hole in the wall between the top two parts of the heart. Doctors can sometimes close the hole with an operation or special procedure.

Brugada syndrome

A condition that can affect the heart's rhythm, which means the pattern of the heartbeat. Some people need an ICD to treat dangerous heart rhythms.

Complete heart block

When the signals that tell your heart how to beat don't travel properly.

Congenital heart condition

A heart condition you are born with.

Down's syndrome

A condition some people are born with that may affect how they learn and grow.

Heart failure

When the heart heart muscle is not able to pump blood around the body as well as it should.

Heart murmur

An extra sound doctors can hear in the heartbeat – sometimes it's harmless, but sometimes it can be a sign of a heart problem.

Hole in the heart

A simple way of saying there is an opening inside the heart where there usually should not be one. Some holes close by themselves, while others may need treatment

Hydrops

A serious condition where too much fluid builds up in a baby's body.

Leaky heart valve

A heart valve is like a little door that helps blood move the right way. A 'leaky valve' means some blood can flow backwards instead of forwards.

Pulmonary vein stenosis

When the blood vessels that bring blood from the lungs back to the heart are too narrow. This can make it harder for blood to flow properly.

Stroke

This happens when blood cannot get to a part of the brain properly. This can affect a person in different ways including how they move, speak, see or learn.

SVC draining into coronary sinus

This means one of the big tubes that carries blood back to the heart is connected in a different way. Doctors check how it affects the heart and decide if treatment is needed.

Valve regurgitation

When a heart valve does not close properly, and blood flows backwards.

VSD (Ventricular Septal Defect)

A hole in the wall between the bottom two chambers of the heart. This can make the heart work harder, so some children need treatment to help close it.

Heart structures and surgeries

AVSD (Atrioventricular septal defect)

A condition where there is a large hole or holes in the wall between the chambers of the heart affecting how blood moves through it.

Mitral valve replacement

An operation to replace one of the heart valves (the mitral valve) that's not working properly and helps blood to flow in the right direction.

Pulmonary atresia

A condition where the pulmonary valve, the valve that allows blood to flow from the heart to the lungs, is not properly formed and blocks the flow of blood from the heart to the lungs.

Valve replacement

Surgery to replace a heart valve that is not working properly.

Vascular ring

This happens when the body's main artery forms a ring around the wind pipe or the food pipe making it harder to breathe or swallow.

Heart-related illnesses

Myocarditis

When the heart muscle becomes inflamed, often because of an infection.

Dilated cardiomyopathy

A condition where the heart becomes stretched and bigger, making it harder for it to pump blood.

Cardiomyopathy

A general term for diseases that affect how well the heart muscle works.

Other medical terms

Antibodies

These are proteins in your blood that help the body's immune system to recognise and fight off germs.

Cardiac arrest

When the heart suddenly stops beating and needs immediate treatment to help it beat again.

CPR (Cardiopulmonary resuscitation)

A way to help someone in an emergency when their heart has stopped beating. It involves pressing firmly on their chest to help keep blood moving around their body until help arrives. You can learn how to do this for free using our RevivR tool!

Transplant pathway

The process of being checked, supported and prepared while waiting for a possible transplant.

A special thanks to...

...our official 2026 BHF Heart Hero Awards partners and suppliers.

With thanks to Tim and Lisa Knight

The Young Heart Hero Awards 2026 have been made possible thanks to the generous support of Tim and Lisa Knight. Their kindness and commitment to British Heart Foundation has helped us create a truly special day to celebrate the remarkable bravery, resilience and achievements of children and families affected by heart conditions. We are incredibly grateful for their support.

HAUTE

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For this year's full Heart Hero Awards terms and conditions, please visit 2026 Terms & Conditions:

bhf.org.uk/how-you-can-help/heart-hero-awards/

What would you do if somebody's heart stopped?

Many of us will witness a cardiac arrest in our lifetime. Be ready for that day.

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What was your favourite part of the day?

Colour me in!



British Heart Foundation

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