

# One in a MILLION!



**This week, we're recognising the wholesome story of Sue Russell, 38, from Barking. She said...**

**R**unning to a steady beat in my earphones, I kept my mind on the finish line.

Running a marathon in 2014 for Sense, a charity supporting the deaf and blind, I never knew how important it would later become to me.

That was until I laid eyes on 11-month-old Lillie on 22 February 2021, who was born with moderate deafness.

Baby Lillie, who is my second cousin, and her two siblings Daisy, now seven, and Oscar, now four – who were also born with moderate deafness – were facing adoption due to troubling times in the family.

Speaking to my sister Carol, 42, we just couldn't let that happen.

And so I decided to put



Running for Lillie

myself forward and kickstart the special guardianship process for Lillie, while Carol took in her siblings.

While I'd never had children, I had over 20 nieces and nephews who I loved spending time with.

So, although I'd never held the title of Mum before, I felt experienced enough for the new challenge.

During every appointment with the social worker, I was buzzing to meet Lillie, even though it was through a screen due to Covid.

Despite Lillie being too young to listen to me, I played nursery rhymes through my Alexa and sang to her on Zoom.

By the time I met her, I'd prepared everything – from car seats to clothes and toys.

I wanted to give her the life

she deserved.

Only, we faced an extra challenge, too – Lillie's moderate deafness.

As soon as she was old enough, we started learning sign language together.

And there was certainly no stopping Lillie.

Now three, getting stuck into her ballet, swimming and gymnastics classes, she's always on the go.

She's a right daredevil, too, going on all the rides at Drayton Manor.

'How do you fit it all in?' my friends always ask me.

Being a full-time hospice nurse and a single parent to Lillie can often be a challenge.

But Carol has been a huge support for me, babysitting when I've had to work.

Together with Daisy and Oscar, too, we form one big, happy household.

On 23 April this year, I ran the London Marathon for Sense again.

With Lillie cheering me on from the sidelines, crossing the finish line was so rewarding.

I even managed to raise a whopping £1,850 in total.

Lillie has changed my life forever and I'm so grateful for everything she's taught me.

Getting to be her parent has been the ride of a lifetime so far.

Here's to many more adventures together!

● For more, visit: [sense.org.uk](http://sense.org.uk)

**I'd never had a parental role before**

WORDS BY FLOSSIE PALMER. PHOTOS: SWNS

## Contents

### On the cover

- 7 Toyboy lover broke my bones in three-hour beating
- 10 Possessed by a demon as I cared for my newborn
- 20 I scored a keeper but I know I'm the third wheel!
- 24 How taking sexy snaps keeps me alive
- 28 My warning to you after losing everything
- 42 Death ride – toxic teen killed her boyfriend

### More real life

- 17 Walk the walk
- 38 Blink of an eye
- 50 Pup-arazzi

### From you

- 3 One in a million
- 12 Your brainwaves
- 18 Doc Q&A
- 37 Your dilemmas

### Feelgood

- 4 Your pick me ups
- 15 Your home
- 16 Your health
- 23 Animal magic
- 26 Your style
- 33 Your beauty
- 34 Love after loss
- 36 Genius or bonkers?
- 40 Easy eats
- 46 Rhyme or reason
- 48 Food and drink
- 49 Your stars

## Bitesize!

JUST FOR FUN

1	2	3	4
5			
6			
7			

#### ACROSS

- 1 Garden hut (4)
- 5 Biblical wise men (4)
- 6 Encouragement (4)
- 7 \_\_\_ Daly, presenter (4)

#### DOWN

- 1 Speck of soot (4)
- 2 Rabbit-like mamma (4)
- 3 Omelette ingredient (4)
- 4 Perishes (4)

Read down the shaded squares for the answer.

Answer on page 47.

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## Sneaky peek at this week!



**P40 Make tasty treats at home**