A Worthwhile Error – The Story of Francis House Children's Hospice

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***A Worthwhile Error* is the intriguing title of a fascinating new book about the history of Francis House Children's Hospice.**

The phrase was coined by co-founder Sister Aloysius FMSJ to describe the decision to build the hospice with hardly any money.

Her gamble paid off thanks to the overwhelming generosity of donors and the first children's hospice in the north-west was duly built from a convent in Didsbury, south Manchester.

Some 16 religious Sisters sacrificed their home so that much-needed respite care could be provided for youngsters with life-limiting and life-threatening conditions.

More than 1,500 families have received help since the charity first opened its doors late in 1991, when Princess Diana performed the official opening.

One of the chapters in the book features her visit and that of her eldest son William, accompanied by wife Kate, to open a new wing of hospice for young people over the age of 16 in 2016.

The book explains how brave youngster Kirsty Howard put the hospice on the map by raising more than £5m to ensure the charity's survival when it was struggling financially.

Kirsty - born with a rare heart condition - starred alongside David Beckham when handing the baton to Queen Elizabeth II at the Opening Ceremony of the 2002 Commonwealth Games.

Endless stories of dedicated volunteers include the amazing sacrifice made by Pauline Armitage MBE who spent 26 years working a 40-hour week as a bookkeeper without pay. It was her way of giving to the hospice.

Kyle Wells has lived at the charity's specialist residential unit since 2014 after beginning respite stays nearly 30 years ago.

Kyle, who has a rare form of muscular dystrophy, said: "When I first came here as a child, I was in tears and wanted to go home. The next time I cried it was because I wanted to stay. My mum was a heavy drinker and had an abusive partner. By coming here, I went from domestic chaos to complete calmness and feeling cared for."

Chief Executive David Ireland has been with the hospice since the start. His first involvement was as an architect, designing the building.

He said: "The book is an in-depth look at the rich history of Francis House. It shares the stories of the many personalities involved including, most importantly, the wonderful families who have passed through our doors."

The glossy hardback book, written by author, broadcaster and journalist Andy Buckley, from Sale, also details how Francis House has helped sick children across the world.

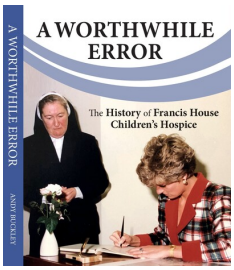
It has helped several countries establish hospice facilities, including Japan, Australia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Belarus, Canada, USA, Czech Republic and Latvia.

A Worthwhile Error – The History of Francis House Children's Hospice is available for £19.95 (plus postage and packing) by calling the hospice on 0161 434 4118 or from www.francishouse.org.uk/online-shop. All proceeds will be donated to the care of children, young people and their families.

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** See attached pictures. Captions read:*

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** Princess Diana signing the visitor book at Francis House, watched by Sister Aloysius FMSJ –the front cover of a Francis House history book. Image: Murray Ludwig*

** Volunteer Pauline Armitage MBE who helped the charity for 26 years.*

** Kyle Wells for whom Francis House is his permanent home.*

** Fundraiser Kirsty Howard who mixed in royal and celebrity circles.*

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