Francis House launches Christmas Appeal with Florence's story

Wednesday 26 November, 2025

Francis House Children's Hospice has launched a Christmas Appeal – Love and Life - with a moving new film showcasing the support offered to the families of seriously ill children.

The appeal features a family from Dukinfield and is narrated by Jen East, mum to 11-year-old Florence, who has a life-limiting condition and was not expected to live beyond the age of ten.

The film had its premiere at the charity's Christmas Ball held at Mottram Hall which raised approximately £25,000 on the night.

The hospice aims to raise funds for its range of services that support the whole family not just the child who lives with a life-limiting condition. These include respite care, sibling support sessions, homecare, day care, and emotional support.

Francis House has served the families of Greater Manchester for 34 years. In that time, the hospice has supported more than 1,500 families, surrounding children and their families with love, helping them live every moment in a warm and welcoming home from home, embracing happy and joyful moments.

For mum Jen, the hospice is a lifeline. Florence was referred to Francis House in 2017, when she was two years old and the whole family including Jen's 14-year-old son Riccardo, have been coming to the hospice for respite care ever since.

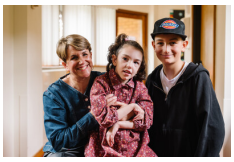
As a toddler, Florence's development paused and she was diagnosed with a life-limiting regressive condition called Late Infantile GM1 Gangliosidosis. She can no longer walk, talk or sit up unaided and needs 24/7 care.

> "Florence is a real character," says Jen. "She's got a cheeky smile and a great sense of humour, and she absolutely loves socialising and taking part in all of the activities at Francis House.
>
> "When Florence was diagnosed, our whole world was turned upside down and we were told she wouldn't live past the age of ten and told to go home and make memories. Someone told me about Francis House and they invited the three of us to come for lunch - it immediately felt like it was a home from home. It was calm and full of love.
>
> "Most people think of hospices for end of life but it's like a second home for us. Francis House are there for Florence of course, but also for me as a mum and a person, caring for my daughter. They're there for Riccardo too, a teenager and a brother who has to deal with everything that comes with having a sister who has a life-limiting condition.
>
> "Riccardo absolutely loves it at Francis House. It can be hard for him as a brother because Florence needs so much attention. But they take as good a care of Riccardo as they do Florence. They take him to the cinema and he's mixing with other siblings, so they get to talk, share and support each other.
>
> "Florence gets to do so much when she's at Francis House. She loves the play specialists and when she comes home after a few days, you can see in her face how much fun she's had.
>
> "Being a parent of a child with a life-limiting condition, means the support from people who know what we're going through is really important. It's a place that we can all go to for a break and a change of scene – it's a special place which we couldn't live without."

Francis House costs £5.8 million a year to run, supporting more than 435 families with respite, end of life care and other services.

> Rachael Taylor, chief executive of Francis House said: "Jen and Flo's story is just one example of the many families who use our services all year round. Francis House offers much more than just respite care; it's a place where memories are made, friendships are formed, and most importantly, lives are lived to the fullest. As demand for our services continues to rise, we need

Media:





Related Sectors:

Charities & non-profits :: Children & Teenagers :: Christmas :: Health :: Lifestyle & Relationships ::

Related Keywords:

Christmas :: Appeal :: Hospice :: Francis House :: Jen East :: Dukinfield :: Life-Limiting :: Respite Care :: Greater Manchester :: Children's Hospice :: Funding ::

Scan Me:

the support of the local community to keep these vital services running. Any support you can give this Christmas is greatly appreciated."

For more information to watch the film or to donate to the appeal, visit
https://www.francishouse.org.uk/jen-flo-and-riccardo-story/

Company Contact: