Man Utd players kick off Christmas with festive visit to Francis House Children's Hospice

Wednesday 24 December, 2025

Manchester United goalkeepers Tom Heaton and Senne Lammens spread some Christmas joy on a visit to Francis House Children's Hospice.

The Manchester United first-team players visited seriously ill young people and their families at the hospice in Didsbury, handing out an array of United-themed presents, including scarves, hats and calendars.

Heaton and Lammens met with a group of children, their parents and siblings in the home from home surroundings of the family lounge at Francis House and heard how the hospice supports them with respite care and a range of palliative care services.

Bertille Chuipa, mum of Anderson who receives regular respite at Francis House said: "For the players to find the time to come and see people like Anderson I think that is really important. Having met them today, it's a nice kick off for the Christmas period."

Senne enjoyed spending time with fans at Francis House. He said: "We are grateful for what we do and the life we have and it's really nice to see all the happy faces. It's nice to give back to them as well because we also have a lot of support from them. It's been an honour to be here."

The players then moved onto Francis Lodge, the teenage and young adult wing at the hospice, where they were greeted by more than a dozen young people and hospice staff.

Josh, who receives respite care at Francis House, said: "It was a privilege to meet Senne and Tom. I've watched Manchester United from being a little boy so it means a lot. It feels like an early Christmas present at this time of year. They gave us a bag with some gifts in and I'm looking forward to opening it!"

After the visit Tom Heaton said: "These visits are a great reminder of how much football can impact people's lives, and as a player, the responsibility to be a role model and to have an affect on people in a positive way. Francis House does an incredible job supporting these families, so for us, we just came to meet some of the families and try to bring some festive cheer. There's been an incredible atmosphere here and it's been an honour to be a part of."

The visit organised annually by the Manchester United Foundation is enjoyed by Francis House families in addition to children receiving treatment at nearby Royal Manchester Children's Hospital and The Christie Palatine Treatment Centre.

Sharon Doodson, director of care at Francis House, thanked the Club for the visit .

She said: "It's always such a joy when United come to visit. Seeing our children, young people and families light up with smiles and laughter, sharing their love of football with people they admire, is truly magical. Moments like these fill the hospice with warmth and leave memories that stay with them long after the day has ended."

Francis House supports more than 435 families from across Greater Manchester. The hospice services are all given completely free of charge and include respite care, homecare, sibling support, end of life care, emotional and bereavement support.

The hospice needs to raise £15,900 a day in donations to continue to provide long-term support to the children, young people and their families.

For more information on Francis House or to give a donation visit www.francishouse.org.uk

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