Star support at the Francis House 'Festival of Trees'

Tuesday 31 October, 2017

Stars from Strictly Come Dancing and Coronation Street entered into the festive-spirit with signed decorations to adorn Christmas trees on display at the Lowry Outlet in Salford Quays today.

Gemma Atkinson and ‘Strictly Come Dancing’ partner Aljaz Skorjanec helped to spruce-up a glittery ‘Strictly’ themed tree autographed by fellow contestants after the pair met volunteers from Francis House Children’s Hospice.

The Greater Manchester children’s charity hold the annual ‘Festival of Trees’ to raise funds in the run up to Christmas.

More than fifty trees are now on display, decorated by local and national organisations, social clubs and groups.

The spectacle also includes a Coronation Street signed tree thanks to actress and hospice supporter Sally Dynevor, who asked cast members to contribute their signatures.

Donations of exclusive gifts and decorations cover the trees including - a Manchester City tree, a tree of mini-cricket bats signed by Lancashire County Cricket Club, and hundreds of pounds of products and vouchers from Dulux decorating centre, Virgin Media and Towers Business Park.

Francis House fundraiser Mary Gillatt said: “This year’s ‘Festival of Trees’ is looking to be our biggest and best yet. We’d like to thank Gemma, Sally and the many individuals and companies for their fantastic support. We also have a tree decorated by some of the children who use Francis House. We hope lots of people will come and see the display and show their support by bidding on a tree.”

Tens of thousands of pounds has been raised over the years by members of the public placing a bid on their favourite tree. The highest bidder can then take the tree home in time for Christmas.

Festive gifts and promotional goods will also be available to purchase in the pop-up shop, a unit generously provided by the Lowry Outlet.

The display is on until Sunday December 10.

Francis House Children’s Hospice serves the north west of England and provides respite care for children and young people with life-limiting conditions and the necessary support and short-term rest for their families.

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