

SPRING 2025 NEWSLETTER

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FRANCIS HOUSE
CHILDREN'S HOSPICE

WELCOME TO OUR FAMILY



By the time that this newsletter is published my time as Chief executive will have come to an end and Rachael Taylor will be in post.

This is a time of change, Francis House has been a huge part of my life from its very inception, and one thing that we offer to families who join our roll is stability. After 35 years Rachael is only the third Chief Executive and she is already known to many of you and has spent over twenty years as Trustee, Legal Advisor and Deputy, she is fully imbued with the Francis House Family Trust philosophy and ethos.

When we registered the charity we were the Rainbow Family Trust changing to Francis House Family Trust in 2012, you will note that “family” has always been at the centre of our title and it is care for the whole family, not just the sick child, that sets us apart from many other facilities.

In this newsletter you will read of some of the activities of our group for older brothers and sisters. When a family has a child with a life limiting or life threatening condition it is a family who live under a great deal of stress. Siblings are quite often unpaid carers, they worry constantly about their poorly sibling, they miss out on activities such as football or swimming lessons and quite often they become isolated. Our Seasons groups allow them to do activities that help them to socialise with other young people, siblings with similar life experiences, it gives opportunities for sharing concerns and worries with our specially trained staff and brings some normality to their lives. Family – the wellbeing of the whole family is at the centre of our care ethos.

How to
contact us

Francis House
Children's Hospice,
390 Parrswood Road,
Didsbury, Manchester,
M20 5NA

Hospice tel:
0161 434 4118
Fundraising tel:
0161 443 2200

From the very beginning we have tried to build Francis House using the great raft of Love and Concern showed to us by the people of the North West and beyond. The people who become supporters and who assist us financially and through their prayers and who become part of the wider Francis House Family. We are all blessed by it. I hope that this too continues and that you show the same support to Rachael that you have shown to myself and Sister Aloysius over the years.

In Disney's Lion King the "Circle of Life" is the main theme and all families experience that same circle as older members become fragile and younger people take over their responsibilities.

Rachael is the ideal person to take us on into the next phase of the Francis House story – give her all of the encouragement that she deserves.

Simba takes over the pride following Mustafa's demise but Mustafa still keeps a watchful eye over the whole proceedings.

I have felt the watchful eye of Sr. Aloysius looking over my shoulder – so watch out Rachael!!

Thank you everybody for the friendships and support I have enjoyed over the years.

David



The Seasons programme offers dedicated sibling support.

SIBLING SUPPORT

Having a sibling with a life-limiting condition can be a unique and challenging experience.

Seasons is a dedicated sibling support programme designed to provide emotional and social support to children and young people who have a brother or sister receiving care at Francis House.

Through group sessions, one-to-one support, and additional engagement opportunities, a safe space is created where siblings can express themselves, connect with others in similar situations, and receive the support they need.

Group sessions are designed for different age ranges with an individualised approach to ensure that each sibling receives age-appropriate support. Group 1 is for younger siblings aged between 5 to 10 years and Group 2 is for middle siblings aged 11-16.

Group 3 for older siblings aged 16 plus was introduced in September 2024, following research conducted by the hospice which identified a strong need for continued support among siblings aged 16 and older.

Since its launch, Group 3 has re-engaged siblings who had either stepped away from the service or had never participated before. Activities for this group have included a residential weekend, an annual January meal, and quarterly meet-ups. This flexible and social approach ensures that older siblings continue to benefit from a strong support network.

“At Francis House we care for the whole family, and the siblings are a massive part of that,” said Sarah Laird, a Nursery Nurse who is part of the sibling support team and has worked at Francis House since 2006. “It is crucial that the siblings are offered one to one care; this lets them know that they are valued and cared for just as much as their sibling who is the referred child.”

“The Seasons groups are so important to these children and young people, no matter what age they are. When they go to school or college, they are very likely to be the only person in a class of 30 who has a disabled brother or sister. When they come to the Seasons group, they are in a room with a group of peers who are in exactly the same situation as them, and they understand each other’s thoughts and feelings.

They can talk openly and honestly to each other without judgment.”

“The siblings often miss out on things. One sibling I cared for had never been on a beach because her brother’s wheelchair couldn’t go on the sand. Another had never been to the cinema before, because her sister was ‘too noisy’ and other people wouldn’t like her being there disturbing the film.”



Seasons activity session with Sarah Laird and Claire Armstrong

Claire Armstrong started working at Francis House in 2017 and has built up a good rapport with the siblings.

“During our sibling support sessions, many of the children and young people tell us that they love to come and have a break from their caring roles, enjoying time that’s just for them. We find that the teenagers and young adults can feel extremely guilty that they are able to do things that the sick child in their family cannot do. These guilty feelings can be about being able to eat when their brother or sister can no longer do so, or they can’t walk or talk anymore. We explore all of these feelings within the group. Having the support can be really beneficial to them.”

Bella Vita Trattoria in Didsbury donated a night out to a group of 19 siblings accompanied by the team to enjoy a meal and night away from their role as carers.

“We don’t usually get to do things like going for meals so I was very excited when I was told we were going with the group. It was amazing.”

“I love attending the Seasons group because it feels good being with people my age who are all supporting each other. We are so grateful to have been able to share a delicious meal together.”

For more information or to support our work please visit our website franchishouse.org.uk

Seasons enjoying a residential weekend



PICK UP A CHICK

It's been a busy few months in our Fundraising Office, which has been overrun with your generous donations of chicks, bunnies and Creme Eggs towards our Easter Chick Appeal. A big thank you to everyone who has contributed. But it's not over yet – please help us to ensure every knitted chick and bunny finds a home! Each knit covers over a Cadbury's Creme Egg, making them perfect gifts for Easter.

You can order from our online shop at www.franchishouse.org.uk/online-shop straight to your doorstep. Or if you would prefer to pick out your own, a map on our website can locate your nearest vendor: www.franchishouse.org.uk/easter-knit-a-chick-appeal



SUMMER RAFFLE

Enter our Summer Raffle and you could be the lucky winner of £1,000 in cash! Plus we have some fabulous prizes including £200 in Amazon vouchers, 26" Enduro mountain bike, wireless headphones, a toy hamper and £75 in M&S vouchers.

Tickets are just £2 and all money raised goes towards the care of the children and families at Francis House. The raffle runs from 1st July until 31st July and tickets can be purchased from our website. If you would like to buy tickets offline please contact Julie Williams in the fundraising office on 0161 443 2200.

The Summer Raffle is kindly sponsored by **JP Goldman**. Good luck!

www.franchishouse.org.uk/summer-raffle

www.franchishouse.org.uk



ENJOY THE GREAT OUTDOORS WHILST

Run Heaton Park: 4th May new date!

Sign up today for a 5k, 10k or Half Marathon for HALF the usual entry price and run and raise funds for Francis House.

Run Heaton Park is a fun and challenging race series organised by RunThrough Events and Francis House is the official charity of the year for the 4th May, 5th Oct and 30th Nov races. To register visit francishouse.org.uk/run-heaton-park-5k-10k-half-marathon

Great Manchester Run: 18th May

If you are going to do a run in Manchester – make it the greatest! Join thousands of runners on an unforgettable route passing by our favourite Manchester landmarks. Sign up for a discounted charity place of £35 for the 10k route and £40 for the Half Marathon and we'll send you a Francis House T-shirt or running vest! francishouse.org.uk/great-manchester-run

Cheshire Three Peak Challenge: 22nd June

Join our popular walking challenge in the picturesque Macclesfield countryside. Take on three of Cheshire's highest peaks on the 13.6 mile route or choose the 6.5 mile ramble suitable for energetic families through beautiful heathland and woodland. Registration fees apply and include a fully flagged route, refreshment rest-stop checkpoints, route guides, t-shirt and finisher certificate. francishouse.org.uk/cheshire-three-peaks-challenge



SUPPORTING YOUR FAVOURITE CAUSE

Trafford Palazzo Abseil: 29th June

For a great team building day or your next exhilarating event, you could be abseiling 170 feet down the side of Trafford Palazzo Tower at the Trafford Centre. We are looking for thrill seeking individuals to sign up and step over the edge for a discounted event price of £45 (minimum sponsorship pledge of £100). To sign up visit francishouse.org.uk/abseil

Charity Golf Week: 23rd - 30th September

Jet off to Andalucia for a week of golf at Almerimar Golf Course and stay at the five star Hotel AR Golf Almerimar for 7 nights Bed and Breakfast in a Deluxe Room. Enjoy three rounds of golf at the host location of the Spanish Seniors Open. Our highly experienced and longstanding golfing supporter John Andrew will make sure your trip goes with a swing! Visit francishouse.org.uk/charity-golf-week-almerimar

TCS London Marathon: Coming 2026

The TCS London Marathon is one of the most iconic events in the athletics calendar. More than 55,000 runners will be participating and places for the event are highly sought after. We are delighted to have secured nine places for 2026 which we can allocate to dedicated supporters who feel they can commit to raising a minimum of £1,500 in sponsorship for Francis House. To register your interest visit francishouse.org.uk/london-marathon-2026

“I’d highly recommend signing up to the London Marathon if you’ve ever debated it - the sense of achievement you will feel on the day not only through the run itself but also being able to give back to such an amazing charity like Francis House is a feeling I struggle to describe.”

Melissa Thornton



FUNDRAISING ROUNDUP



Festive Fundraising

As winter is left behind and we step into spring we'd like to take a moment to thank each and every one of you who supported our festive fundraising activities.

Your participation in 'A Christmas Story Service', 'Festival of Trees', 'Virtual and Memory Lights', and our 'Christmas Ball' helped to raise more than £80,000!

Our grateful thanks to everyone who generously donated over the festive period. Without your help we couldn't continue our work supporting seriously ill children and their families.

Fish and Chippings

Since 2019 Reddish Angling Club has been supporting Francis House with its annual 24-Hour Fish-A-Thon. Come hail, rain or shine, the August bank holiday weekend challenge reaps up to £2,000, the result of hours of dedicated fishing by club members. In five years, funds have topped £10,000 after an Honesty Log scheme was set up selling logs cleared from the club's pond to local residents.

Julie Williams of Francis House said: "I love working with Reddish Angling Club and the enthusiasm of all the members. The Honesty Log scheme is an excellent initiative which has given a nice boost to the already impressive amounts that the club donates each year."

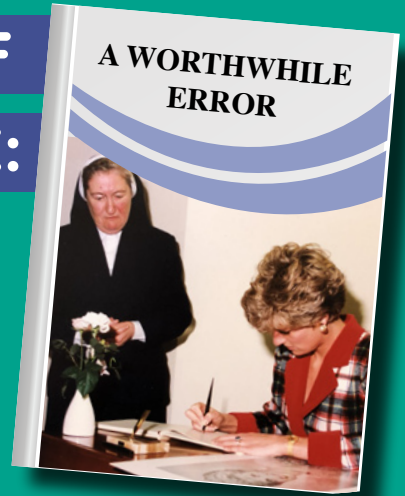


THE HISTORY OF FRANCIS HOUSE:

This captivating 208-page hardcover book chronicles the rich history of Francis House Children's Hospice, one of Manchester's most cherished charities. The title, 'A Worthwhile Error,' refers to a phrase used by Sister Aloysius FMSJ to describe Francis House. Though she acknowledged that, in a practical sense, it was a mistake to build a children's hospice without sufficient funds, she believed morally it was the right decision—one that proved to be immensely worthwhile, thanks to her dedication.

Written by Manchester-based author, journalist, and broadcaster Andy Buckley, this book highlights his passion for storytelling and his extensive work supporting the charity sector over the past 15 years. Sir Warren Smith KCVO KSTJ JP, in his foreword, reflects on the lasting impact of Francis House:

It has been a privilege to write the foreword to this extraordinary book. It has allowed me to reflect on over 30 years that have flown by and appreciate what Francis House has achieved. It is a remarkable organisation.



The History of Francis House: A Worthwhile Error is available for £19.95 (plus postage) by calling the hospice at 0161 434 4118 or purchasing through www.francishouse.org.uk/online-shop

Your purchase helps support Francis House in continuing its vital work in the care of children, young people, and their families from across Greater Manchester.





YOUR SUPPORT

FLO LOVED THE
SENSORY PLAY AT
FRANCIS HOUSE
THIS MORNING
PARTICULARLY THE
CHOCOLATE!

DONATE £30

A gift of £30 can help make a difference to the lives of more children like Flo. It could be as simple as making a one-off donation of £30 or by pledging a regular monthly gift of just £2.50 a month you would be donating £30 over a year. Please use either the single or regular donation form attached, call 0161 443 2200 or visit francishouse.org.uk/donate-online. Thank you.

Every donation will help the families of Francis House



SCAN TO DONATE

- **Donate at francishouse.org.uk**
- **Donate by phone 0161 443 2200**
- **Donate using the form below**

I would like to give a single donation

£10 £30 £50 other £

I enclose a cheque made payable to **Francis House Family Trust**

Title.....First NameLast Name

Address.....

.....Postcode.....

Telephone Number..... Email Address.....

Gift Aid

Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 donated

giftaid it

I wish Gift Aid to apply to this donation and all donations I make in the future or have made in the last 4 years. I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in that year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Signature..... Date.....

Keep in Touch

Your support is vital and we look forward to keeping in touch with you by post, sharing our news, activities and appeals.

Would you like to receive our supporter emails too?

Yes, I am happy to hear from you by email. Email Address.....

If you do not wish to receive information by post, or wish to change how we get in touch, please contact rachael.taylor@francishouse.org.uk or call 0161 443 2200.

THANK YOU

Please return this form with your donation to:

Francis House Family Trust, Francis House Children's Hospice,
390 Parrswood Road, Didsbury, Manchester M20 5NA

MAKE A REGULAR DONATION

To continue to expand and develop our services we need to raise £4.8 million each year. Become a regular giver and make an ongoing difference to the lives of the children and families that we support. To make a regular monthly donation by Standing Order fill in this form or set it up via your own online banking using the information below. Once set up please confirm your details, monthly amount and date chosen by email to carole.dickinson@franchishouse.org.uk If you prefer to set up a Direct Debit you can do so via our website franchishouse.org.uk

STANDING ORDER

Name of Bank/Building Society

Branch Address

..... Postcode

Account Name

Account Number Sort Code

Please pay:

Francis House Family Trust
Virgin Money
48-50 Market Street
Manchester
M1 1PW

Account Number **68170373**
Sort Code **05-05-73**

The sum of £..... each month

Commencing on until further notice

Name

Address

..... Postcode.....

Signature Date.....

If you are a UK taxpayer, please also sign the Gift Aid Declaration to increase the value of your donation by 25% at no extra cost to you.

GIFT AID DECLARATION I wish Gift Aid to apply to this donation and all donations I make in the future or have made in the last 4 years. I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in that year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Signature Date

Please return this form to Carole Dickinson,
Accounts Office, Francis House Children's Hospice,
390 Parrswood Road, Didsbury, Manchester M20 5NA

**Thank you for
your donation**

Registered Charity No. 328659

MEET THE VOLUNTEER



For 16 years Ann Yearsley collected for Francis House at Homebase in Altrincham.

Why did you start volunteering?

Through the 2 Little Ducks community group I met Mary and Alan Gillatt who worked at Francis House and they asked us to get involved with the Festival of Trees project decorating a Christmas tree for auction for Francis House.

What have you been doing?

Since 2009, I've been collecting at Homebase in Broadheath. When I first started the whole retail park belonged to the Crown so I wrote to the Queen's secretary asking if I could collect for charity. I got a letter back confirming it was okay as long as I didn't sit on the pavement. Homebase agreed to it, and every weekend since I've been there with a bucket.

What do you get out of it?

I enjoy it. The managers and staff have been great and people know who I am and we have a chat and a laugh. I enjoy the company and meeting people. I'd like to thank all the staff and customers who have been kind enough to give to me in order to collect for Francis House.

What's next?

Unfortunately Homebase is closing down and I'm devastated. I've been very lucky to have been allowed to collect for so long. I'm hoping that a new retailer will take over (there are rumours it might be B&Q) and I'll be able to carry on!

As a thank you to Ann for her years of dedicated fundraising, we presented her with a trophy as she exceeded £22,000 in donations collected in her bucket!

To find out more about our fundraising volunteer opportunities visit [franchishouse.org.uk/volunteering](https://www.franchishouse.org.uk/volunteering)



EVENTS 2025

2025	
Easter Chick Appeal	January – April
Adidas Manchester Marathon	27th April
TCS London Marathon 2025	27th April
Tour de Manc	4th May
Run Heaton Park 5k, 10k & Half Marathon	4th May
The Giant Walk, Hale to Hale	10th & 11th May
Francis House Open Day	12th May
Great Manchester Run	18th May
Cheshire Three Peaks Challenge	22nd June
Trafford Centre Abseil	29th June
The Peak District Ultra Challenge	28th & 29th June
STEPtember	1st - 30th September
Charity Golf Week in Almerimar	23rd – 30th September
Run Heaton Park 5k, 10k & Half Marathon	5th October
Francis House Winter Ball	15th November
Run Heaton Park 5k, 10k & Half Marathon	30th November
A Christmas Story	12th December

To find out the latest information or to take part in any of these events contact the fundraising team on **0161 443 2200** or email fundraising@francishouse.org.uk or visit www.francishouse.org.uk/get-involved/events

STOP PRESS!

If you're looking for an exhilarating event, then look no further than the 170ft Trafford Palazzo Tower abseil at the Trafford Centre – Sunday 29th June.
Contact James.Ferguson@francishouse.org.uk

Newsletter Mailing List

If you no longer wish to receive a copy of the newsletter through the post, please call the fundraising office on 0161 443 2200 or email rachael.taylor@francishouse.org.uk and ask to be removed. Visit our website to subscribe to our monthly supporter newsletter via email and view our newsletters online www.francishouse.org.uk/news/newsletters/

 [@FrancisHouseCH](https://twitter.com/FrancisHouseCH)

 www.francishouse.org.uk

 [FrancisHouseChildrensHospice](https://www.facebook.com/FrancisHouseChildrensHospice)

 www.instagram.com/francishousech/