**"The Disabilities Trust has a phenomenal impact on the people it supports"**

**In our 40th year, former Trustee of 27 years, Christine Yorath, explains how Daniel Yorath House – the brain injury rehabilitation centre named after her son – is making a difference to people's lives. Here, she tells us why she decided to support The Disabilities Trust and join our Board.**

**"I got my wife back thanks to Daniel Yorath House. My three children got their mum back.”**

"This is the kind of inspiring testimonial I have heard about how the brain injury rehabilitation centre in Leeds is improving people's lives. The specialist care supports residents to gain life skills they have lost, from cleaning teeth to cooking dinner.

I was a Trustee of The Disabilities Trust for 27 years until 16 July this year when I turned 70. In that time, I saw the phenomenal impact the charity has on disabled people and their families. I attended events where I found myself sitting next to residents’ parents. When they told me their stories, I could hear the warmth and appreciation in their voices. It made me realise the difference the charity is making to people's lives.

In the charity’s 40th year, we can reflect on how the care model has changed dramatically. People with brain injuries used to live in large institutions in the middle of nowhere – their families sent them there because they couldn't cope. There was no treatment or rehabilitation because people didn't realise they could get better. The Disabilities Trust has proven, along with other good care providers, that they can.

**In memory of Daniel**

I first heard about The Disabilities Trust when they wrote to me asking if they could name their new rehabilitation centre after my late son. Daniel was playing football in the garden with my then husband Terry when he fell to the ground and died. He had an undetected heart condition. He was 15 years and 10 months old, and just four weeks away from joining Leeds United full time.

Terry was the manager of the Wales football team at the time and there was a lot of publicity surrounding Daniel's death. It made the front pages of the newspapers. We had around 2,000 to 3,000 letters with people expressing their condolences. So, the letter from The Disabilities Trust was one of many.

I was in a fog. We were vulnerable and wanted to make sure the request was legitimate. I asked my secretary if she would do some research to find out more about the charity. We were happy with what we found out and agreed to The Disabilities Trust using Daniel's name.

We went along to the opening of Daniel Yorath House, and I was invited to join a fundraising committee to raise money for the centre. A year later, I was invited to become a Trustee. I took on the role as I wanted to make sure the work being done at Daniel Yorath House was honouring Daniel's name.

**Sharing and learning skills**

I've enjoyed my time as a Trustee, especially being able to widen my knowledge and learn about the social care sector. I've used my experience in interior design and property development to guide the charity's decision making. Buying and selling property makes up a large part of what the organisation does.

For example, when we were buying a site in Glasgow for a hospital for people with brain injuries, there were concerns that the land may be contaminated. The purchase looked like it wouldn't happen. I recommended that we insure against any risks as I had done this for a property I was buying for my own business, and the sale went through.

As well as a Trustee, I became a member of the quality and governance committee, helping to review the quality of local services and feeding back to the Board. I was keen to join the committee as I was involved in quality and assurance visits when I first became a Trustee 27 years ago. This involved accompanying staff on trips to local services and speaking to the people who ran them.

Over the years, I've spoken to my daughter Gabby [Logan], who is a TV presenter, about The Disabilities Trust. When I introduced her to staff at The Disabilities Trust, they invited her to become a Vice-Patron in 2010. She helps to raise awareness of the charity's work by sharing information on her Twitter and Instagram accounts.

**Celebrating 40 years**

The Disabilities Trust has come a long way in 40 years. It started off providing housing for people with physical disabilities and expanded into supporting people with an acquired brain injury. It then began providing community-based services for adults with autism and learning disabilities, and set up a school for children with autism.

I'm proud that Daniel Yorath House still has the same name. Daniel would be almost 44 now. On the day he would have turned 40, the centre celebrated his birthday. They had cakes and a photo of him in his football kit on display. It's nice that he's still thought of. I will continue to be involved with the charity and the refurbishment of Daniel Yorath House.

I hope that The Disabilities Trust continues to raise awareness of its work in the future so more people choose its services and benefit from them.”