Press release

Duchess of Cambridge speech at Malaysian hospice highlights the value of partnerships

13 September 2012

Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Cambridge today visited a hospice in Malaysia to make her first public speech abroad, reaffirming her commitment to supporting the hospice movement. This follows her first official speech at The Treehouse Hospice in Ipswich in March, the newest of East Anglia’s Children’s Hospices (EACH).

The ICPCN is delighted with the Duchess’s decision to focus worldwide attention on both adult and children’s palliative care, particularly in developing countries.

Joan Marston, chief executive of ICPCN said:

“Palliative care for children is a basic human right and we feel that it is significant and timely for the Duchess to draw the world’s attention to the need for universal access to hospice and palliative care for all children who need it and their families. By choosing to make her maiden speeches, both within her home country and internationally in Hospis Malaysia, she has chosen to place people with life-limiting illnesses and their families and carers at the forefront of her royal responsibilities.

“The ICPCN estimates that worldwide more than 20 million children and their families need palliative care every year and the need is greatest in the developing world.

“While we have seen an encouraging increase in the children’s palliative care services worldwide, the unmet need remains overwhelming. More than half of the world’s countries still have no children’s palliative care services at all, leaving millions of children to die in pain and distress every year.

The Duchess has indicated that she hopes her visit will leave a legacy of constructive dialogue between East Anglia’s Children’s Hospices (EACH) and Hospis Malaysia.

Joan Marston added:
“We are thrilled that The Duchess has chosen to highlight the importance of partnerships, and we hope that this will encourage further collaboration within the global children’s palliative care movement.

“Children’s palliative care was pioneered thirty years ago in the UK with the opening of Helen House, the very first children’s hospice in 1972. An enormous amount can be achieved by children’s hospices in the UK and other developing countries sharing expertise and experience with hospices around the world, particularly in developing countries in order to improve patient care. These partnerships can make a real difference to the lives of children in countries where instability and a lack of vital medicines, training and financial resources prevent so many from accessing the care they need to live with some quality of life.”

The ICPCN wishes to express our gratitude to the Duchess for choosing to raise awareness of children’s palliative care and hopes that she will continue to bring attention to the wonderful work being done by people in the field as well as the great need for more services.

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Notes for Editors

The International Children’s Palliative Care Network (ICPCN) is a worldwide network of individuals and agencies working with children and young people with life-limiting conditions.

ICPCN’s Vision
To live in a world where children’s palliative care is acknowledged and respected as a unique service, and every child and young person with life-limiting or life-threatening conditions and their families can receive the best quality of life and care regardless of which country they live in.

The International Children’s Palliative Care Network (ICPCN) shares a vision that the total need of life-threatened or life-limited children should be met to encompass physical, emotional, spiritual and developmental aspects of care.

ICPCN’s Mission
Our mission is to achieve the best quality of life and care for children and young people with life-limiting conditions, their families and carers worldwide, by raising awareness of children’s palliative care, lobbying for the global development of children’s palliative care services, and sharing expertise, skills and knowledge.

ICPCN’s Aims
1. To help services across the world to develop and meet the total care and support needs of life-limited children and their families.
2. To advocate and raise awareness of children’s palliative care and the specific needs of life-limited or life-threatened children and their families.
3. To develop a strong ICPCN membership from children’s palliative care services across the globe.
4. To facilitate communication and sharing of resources, information and research worldwide, and to provide a ‘one stop shop’ for information relating to children’s palliative care.

5. To campaign for the global development of children’s palliative care services.

6. To enable the sharing of expertise and information between children’s palliative care practitioners.

7. To increase the international evidence base for children’s palliative care through education and research.

8. To maximise ICPCN’s resources by developing its fundraising activities in order to discharge its mission.