

A 'freight' way to promote Martin House Children's Hospice

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The name of Martin House Children's Hospice will soon be seen across the length and breadth of the UK after a newly-liveried locomotive was unveiled at York Railway Station.

DB Cargo UK's Class 66 freight locomotive (66190) has been emblazoned with the hospice's colourful new branding and will promote its valuable palliative care work across all areas of England, Scotland and Wales.

DB Cargo UK and Network Rail recently handed over a cheque for £200,000 to the hospice which was the culmination of four years of fund-raising by the rail industry.

The money was raised by running special fundraising charter trains in conjunction with the volunteer Branch Line Society, which were started after a Network Rail colleague, Charlotte Bullock, used Martin House's services to help care for her son Luca who was born with multiple disabilities.

Both Charlotte and Luca have since passed away, but remain the inspiration for the rail industry's fund-raising efforts.

Industry and civic dignitaries gathered at Platform 3 at York Rail Station for the grand unveiling of the newly-liveried locomotive before taking a special trip to nearby Drax Power Station, another major fundraiser for Martin House.

DB Cargo UK's chief sales officer Roger Neary said: "We are delighted to be in a position to spread the word about the amazing work undertaken by Martin House Children's Hospice.

"Our colleagues are proud to utilise their skills and expertise to run charter services for such a worthy organisation and I'm sure this striking new livery will turn heads our locomotive is out and about on the rail network."

Rosie Mellor-Silvester, head of regional and individual giving fundraising at Martin House Children's Hospice, who will perform today's official unveiling, said: "We are absolutely delighted that Martin House Children's Hospice is receiving the honour of having a locomotive named after us. This is a fantastic extension of our ongoing partnership with the Charter Train team, and we're incredibly grateful for their continued support which enables us to be there for children and young people across our region when they need us most."

Jerry Dickinson, a senior incident controller at Network Rail and whose brainchild the charter trains are, said: "It is fantastic to see a DB Cargo UK freight locomotive named in honour of such a deserving charity. We have worked closely with them and others to deliver a series of fundraising charter trains with our voluntary promoter, the Branch Line Society.

"Martin House is a charity which we hold very dear to us after they provided invaluable support to our colleague, one of my members of staff and friend, Charlotte Bullock, and her family over a number of years.

"We are one industry working together to achieve remarkable things. Together, we will continue to do our very best to raise awareness of the wonderful work of Martin House Children's Hospice and provide donations to allow them to continue their critical work. We feel like an extension of their family and that is only enhanced when their staff join us on the trains."

Mark Gibbens, head of logistics at Drax Power Station, whose chosen charity is Martin House Children's Hospice, said: "We are proud to support the vital work that Martin House Children's Hospice does to provide care and comfort for children and their families, and we are delighted to be working with our partners Network Rail and DB Cargo UK to raise awareness of such a good cause.

"It was a real privilege to see the unveiling of the locomotive which looks fantastic and an honour for Drax Power Station to be the first stop on its inaugural run."

Photo credit: DB Cargo