In celebration of its thirtieth anniversary of broadcasting to audiences in North Yorkshire, BBC Radio York and Martin House Children’s Hospice embarked on a year-long appeal to raise funds and awareness for the hospice.

The aims of this project were to inform listeners about a key part of children’s hospice care: providing parents’ with a good night’s sleep, to raise £120,000 and to enable families to tell their own, moving stories, thus raising the profile of the hospice and reaching more families.

Launched in September 2013 the Good Night’s Sleep Appeal succeeded in doubling its original target, raising £240,000, gaining new support in its wake and contributing to an increase in the listenership.

A brand new experience for everyone, hospice and broadcasters alike, members of the hospice care team embraced the project and took part in interviews, explaining to listeners about the day to day work of the hospice and the stories of some of the families who use the service.

Several of the young people and children contributed to programmes, giving interviews both from the hospice and the radio station, with highly personal accounts of their need for hospice care. The partnership galvanised support across a part of the hospice’s catchment area that in the past has proved notoriously difficult to reach, with the listeners to BBC Radio York responding magnificently to the stories and interviews supplied by hospice staff and families.

We expect Martin House to feel the positive impact of the Appeal for years to come - including skills in partnership working, story telling, collaboration with the media, and awareness raising.

In 2009 we identified that we really needed to connect on a higher level with local teenagers and young adults; both to engage them in fundraising and raise awareness about our vital role within their community. So, we asked a secondary school assembly what theme of fundraising would profoundly motivate them: “Music. No brainer. We love it, make it, listen to it…!”

After 170 acts, a collective crowd of over 10,000, 70 bands performing at O2 Academy, Leeds, 6 performing at Leeds/Reading, charity auctions, and the support of some of the biggest music industry names in Yorkshire, we have raised more than £200,000!

Not only does this competition give young, local bands/soloists a platform and exposure whilst raising vital funds for our hospice, but it has also been instrumental in creating a tangible unity between care, fundraising and our teenagers and young adults.

The beauty of Centre Stage is that it has created exciting opportunities for the young people who receive our care, and also their siblings. We have the unprecedented support of local bands Embrace, The Pigeon Detectives, The Cribs and Pulled Apart by Horses, making the project attractive and ‘cool’ to be involved with.

Under our care, our young people enjoy the annual final at O2 Academy, Leeds, and not only do they watch the show, but for the last two years they have participated in photography projects during the event, interviewed bands and judges and even published a blog. Following this, they then accompany our winners to the mighty Leeds Festival, as the guests of Festival Republic.

Another example of our young people being at the heart of this project was our ‘Drum Skin Design Competition’. Our Art Therapists worked alongside our youngsters and their siblings to create designs to potentially be featured on drum kits. Harry and Cameron’s designs were chosen as joint winners.

We had these professionally printed and signed by over 50 bands at last year’s Leeds Festival - including the Arctic Monkeys, which we then auctioned! We have also featured these designs on event posters, social media and given prints to our young people.

Young people helping young people.