Princess Diana Essay, Research Paper

Throughout her life all eyes were always on Princess Diana. Millions

came to identify with her and, when she died, they felt as though they

have lost a best friend. More than a year after the sudden end of her

privileged but imperfect life, Princess Diana’s charity work still

motivates many others to donate their own time in hopes to help the

lives of others. Through the vigorous fund raising and campaigning,

Princess Diana has greatly effected the lives of the patients she has

reached out to.

The honorable Diana Frances Spencer weighed in at seven pounds,

twelve ounces when she was born on July 1, 1961. Her father

announced at the time of her birth, she was nothing less than a

“perfect physical specimen.” She was the third surviving child of her

parents. In 1967 her parents, Johnnie and Frances separated, then in

1969 their divorce became final. Johnnie Spencer won custody of their

four children(Brennan19).

On February 24, 1981, Princess Diana’s life changed forever.

Her engagement to Prince Charles, the heir to the British

throne, was announced. They were married in Saint Paul’s Cathedral on

July 29, 1981. The ceremony was internationally televised. People all

over the world tuned into the beautiful day when Princess Diana was

married into one of the most powerful families in the world(Encarta).

The young Princess of Wales unofficially came of age when she

was twenty- six years old, married for nearly six years, and

the mother of two young sons. That moment was a turning point in her

life because she decided to become involved with AIDS, a subject

shunned by “the great and the good” of British society. Overnight,

Princess Diana changed from a young mum who liked to shop or listen to

pop songs on her Walkman, to a mature young woman who had created a

role for herself(Davies260).

The metamorphosis came the day in April 1987 when Diana opened

Britain’s first purpose-built ward for AIDS sufferers, at London’s

Middlesex Hospital. Many were shocked at the fact that she didn’t wear

any protective clothing(Davies260). At

that time the average Briton knew very little about AIDS. Some

believed it could be caught and passed on by touch, kissing, or even

hugging someone who was infected. The revelation that a royal, like

Princess Diana, the mother of two young sons, one the heir to the

throne, had taken such an enormous risk with a deadly disease shocked

many people(Brennan88).

Many people wondered, and still to this day wonder if it was

advisable for the Princess of Wales to get involved. Buckingham Palace

was torn. Some of the Queen’s advisers totally opposed the young

princess becoming involved with AIDS, a taboo subject never discussed

in polite company or at British upper-class dinner parties. In 1987,

many Britons condemned it as “that gay disease” which only affected

“homosexuals and drug addicts,” two groups which received very little

sympathy from the chattering classes, many of whom believed the victims

were reaping the harvest they themselves had sown. The advisors argued

strongly that the public would be unsympathetic and warned that

becoming associated with AIDS charities could harm her position as the

future Queen. They also feared it could weaken public sympathy for the

Royal Family(Davies261). Despite much criticism, Diana was

determined. She contacted many charities to produce studies showing

how innocent babies and mothers who has nothing whatsoever to do with

homosexuality or drug addiction had caught the disease(Davies261).

The Palace bureaucracy reluctantly capitulated Diana’s

determined arguments and pleas and officially met the senior

members of the charity. The Department of Health and the Charity

Commissioners had already investigated the National AIDS Trust and

reported that the charity was efficient and well run. It seemed a

highly reputable charity, one in which a member of the Royal Family

could become involved without risk of scandal by the trustees. Only

then did Buckingham Palace agree that Diana could go ahead(Brennan88).

Five years later, in 1992, Buckingham Palace adopted a

different attitude. Press spokesman Dickie Arbiter explained:

“It’s abundantly clear that Princess Diana is determined to break down

prejudice about HIV. Nobody told her to adopt this cause. Everything

she does is spontaneous and nothing is premeditated. It was her own

decision to show someone infected with it(Davies262).” This quote

proves the kind heartiness of Princess Diana. It shows the only reason

she did the community service was to help others. The point that must

not be forgotten is that Diana does all this knowing that people are

misjudging her, but she’s got the sense and compassion to follow her

own inner beliefs. Diana came far in helping others realize the truth

about those with HIV and disproved the many stereotypes of the sick.

“She was the first important person in Britain to show you can touch an

AIDS victim and not catch it. One cannot overestimate the importance

of what Princess

Diana did

that day. Before that no one would go anywhere near them. AIDS sufferers

were

treated by the general public as tough were the untouchables, that to touch

them meant

death(Davies262),” said by Lady Harlech, an AIDS fund-raiser for years. This

only

proves again the many breakthroughs Princess Diana had with the citizens of

Britain,

even with people all over the world. Princess Diana made the statement, “HIV

does

not make people dangerous to know, so you can shake their hands or give them

a hug

God knows they need it(Davies263).” Many people doubt Diana’s motivation.

People

suggest she is doing it for the publicity.

It wasn’t only AIDS that commanded Diana’s attention and concern.

Princess

Diana was the royal patron of seventy separate charities and had a hectic work

schedule to keep up with all of them. Diana can never rest on these

occasions, or put

her feet up, or not show that she is interested, no matter how bored she may

be or

whatever else she may have on her mind. It seldom matters how the princess is

feeling personally; she knows she has a duty to perform and she does

it(Davies267).

Initially, charities devoted to babies and child welfare were singled

out for her

attention, but soon Diana discovered other opportunities. She decided she

wanted to

help young people-closer to her own age-with drug and alcohol problems, then

later

the unprivileged, and the young homeless(Davies269).

After AIDS, the charity Diana is most closely related to is

Birthright, of which

she became a patron of in 1984. Birthright is the appeal arm of the Royal

College of

Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and it’s aim is to raise funds for research

into

problems of the un born child, including stillbirth, infant death, and

infertility. Before

her support, Birthright had struggled for funds, and it’s valuable research

had been

largely ignored when it came to handing out money. Since Diana came aboard,

all

that had changed.

“Her involvement with the charity has attracted stars from

the entertainment world. Big names equal big money:

They managed to raise $5,000,000 for the charity, which

has helped it improve the survival rate of some premature

infants by up to seventy percent. Diana can feel quite

proud that the turnabout is due primarily to her enthusiasm,

persuasion, and patronage(Davies271).”

This quote confirms that Princess Diana’s endless help brought more people to

donate

their time and money to a good cause where people who needed help survived.

Princess Diana did more than fund raise for different charities. She

actually

met with the people who her hard efforts were assisting. This is just as bit

as valuable

as fund raising. Meeting with the Princess brings new hope to the suffering

patients.

“There is something quite moving about the way she talks with patients. Not

only is

she concerned about their problems, but she knows she is. She understands

the joy of

having a baby and the anguish if something goes wrong. She felt very lucky

and

privileged to have had one healthy child, says Vivienne Parry, one of the

group’s

national organizers.

Supporting charities concerned with drug addiction is another of

Diana’s

concerns. She never smoked and hardly drank herself. In 1987, she became

patron of

Turning Point, the largest national charity in Britain helping drug addicts,

alcoholics,

and mental-health outpatients.

Diana has not only proved her compassion for sufferers, but has also

shown the

courage to take risks she believes are worthwhile. Without publicity

coverage, Diana

would visit clinics-some on her own without detective protcetion- to meet and

chat

with the patients in an effort to help them kick their addiction and

encourage them

back to health(Davies273).

Princess Diana’s determination to help those charities rejected by

many others

also extended overseas causes. Shocked by the gruesome effects of leprosy on

children, Diana agreed to become patron of the Leprosy Mission. In November

1989

Diana visited many young lepers in Indonesia. One of the hospital’s doctor’s

quoted

the effects of her visits:

“She did so much more than she had to. She need only

shake their hand and move on, but she sat on their beds and

listened and talked to them. Then she joined the children

in a game of bowls, which they loved. She brought

happiness and smiles to those children(Davies280).”

Kate Dawson, a British doctor at the hospital, also stated,”The Princess has

helped so

much. She has shown by being so open and natural with them that lepers are

not a

threat to anybody(Davies280).”

Diana was determined to keep up with her charity work, until her

terrifying

death on August 31, 1997, in Paris, in an automobile accident with her lover

Dodi

al-Fayed(Brennan136). Diana especially wanted to reach out to those patients

and

victims who were shunned by the rest of the world.

Not only did Diana personally reach out to victims of terrifying

diseases, but

she also encouraged others to donate their time and money to these worthy

causes.

Diana showed it wasn’t necessary to be apprehensive towards the victims of the

various diseases she worked with. Princess Diana lived an influential life

and her

efforts will never be forgotten.