

Whizz-kidz



30 years of moving lives forward

WIN A TRIP TO
Disneyland[®]
PARIS

**What will your future
wheelchair look like?**

News of our Dream
Wheelchair project inside

*The Future
is WOW*

**Ruth Madeley's made it
after 'Years and Years'!**

Special edition magazine to celebrate 30 years of Whizz-Kidz!

Clubs, careers and more inside...

Photo Scandeborgs for Vogue Italia



Get to know us

We're hoping you remember who we are. But just in case, here's a brief summary of what we do which by the way, isn't 'just' providing wheelchairs.

1. We provide wheelchairs and other mobility equipment to 2-25 year olds across England, Wales and Scotland. It's easy to apply, so please do. We'd love to hear from you again.

2. We host youth clubs to foster a good social life amongst disabled peers and give them a chance to try new and different things.

3. Our wheelchair skills training sessions help disabled young people develop confidence and more independence.

4. We campaign on issues around accessibility and inclusivity.

5. We find work placements with accessible employers to help young people become work-ready.

Read more about how we can help on our website at: www.whizz-kidz.org.uk/get-our-help

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Whizz-Kidz has reached its 30th birthday and we're marking it with this celebratory special edition magazine for you, our Whizz-Kidz family!

Some of you perhaps haven't heard from us in a while. We might have lost touch when your child was still young and they're now a fully fledged adult in their own right. Maybe that child is you. We just wanted to say hello again and welcome you to Whizz-Kidz in 2020!

We've curated the articles in this magazine especially for you and it's packed full of all our latest news including articles on sport, the arts and culture. Many of the articles are written by members, current and past, of our Kidz Board, which ensures Whizz-Kidz stays relevant to the changing needs of young wheelchair users. As well as news and articles there is also lots of helpful information on many things relevant to wheelchair users including up to date information on our services across England, Scotland and Wales.

A big 'Thank You!' to our writers and patrons who have taken the time out of their busy schedules to write and contribute to this one-off magazine. Also to Lexian for liaising with our contributors. Much appreciated!

Now, sit back, relax and enjoy the read. We hope you will find the magazine interesting and we very much hope you want to stay in touch with Whizz-Kidz. The support of all our Whizz-Kidz family, however it is shown, is valued by us and helps keep the charity going for the young wheelchair users of the future.

Your Whizz-Kidz Team

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A special thank you goes to Simply Business, our fantastic partner, for their brilliant support with the design of this magazine.

Celebrating

30 years

of moving life forward for young wheelchair users

WHAT I AM DOING NOW IN MY CAREER WOULD NEVER HAVE HAPPENED WITHOUT WHIZZ-KIDZ. NEVER.

We feel super lucky to have welcomed **Ruth Madeley** as our newest patron last year. BAFTA-nominated for 'Don't Take my Baby', she also played the wheelchair therapist in CBBC's 'Katie' and more recently the nightmarish but lovable mum Rosie in the BBC's fast and furious 'Years and Years' drama.

Taking a quick break from her play at the Donmar Theatre to chat to us about acting, disability & modelling for Vogue!

Bolton or London? Bolton! I'm sorry, I'm a northern girl through and through.

What's your earliest memory? My mum always picked me up from nursery and I remember one day my dad came instead. I'd just started walking that day and I saw him and I remember walking up to him. I didn't walk until I was 3 and I didn't really grasp how big a deal that was back then.

You worked with Whizz-Kidz for nine years. What did you do with us? Whizz-Kidz gave me my

first wheelchair when I was 5. I got another wheelchair when I was 14 and I was a member of the Kidz Board. I started volunteering at Whizz-Kidz and whilst volunteering I applied for one of the club coordinator vacancies in the north. Then I moved onto the work placements team, then into the fundraising team.

What was your stand-out moment at Whizz-Kidz? I applied to one of my assigned trusts who had given £8,000 to us in the past. I thought ok let's up it a little bit so I sent them my story. I explained firsthand what exactly their money would do for children and young people like me and do you know what? They donated £100k! It was incredible.

Last year, the BBC pledged to make disabled characters more distinctive and authentic. They've gotta do it, they have to. I think everybody gets frustrated about how slowly things happen. It's the same for actors who are Black, Indian, Chinese, LGBTQ, for all these groups it's a slow process and sadly it's disability that always comes last. It's always the afterthought. I feel really lucky that I'm in a position where I can hopefully make that the top of people's priority list.

Years and Years - what was it like to work on? I struggle to explain what a joy it was. The story, the whole production company was so special. I think jobs like that don't come round very often. Everybody



worked so hard and they were just magic. And working with Emma Thompson, well, she's bucket list isn't she? She was incredible.

You had such a massive part in it.

Yes and the cherry on top of it all was that it wasn't meant to be a wheelchair character or anything. It was just a character who was a mum that had two kids and who was a bit all over the place. She was a nightmare and lovable all in one and the fact that she was a wheelchair user just made it even more interesting. It was so easy. When I got the part I was like 'right, let's talk about spina bifida'. Let's see how much of it is relevant to the part and when we got down to it, actually we found out it wasn't. The story would not have changed one bit if she'd have not been a wheelchair user. That's the beauty of it.

So is this the template, of how the BBC can fulfil their pledge for disability representation on TV?

Absolutely. That is how you do it. End of! It's so easy. I think everyone thinks it's going to be a logistical nightmare and in the end it was just a conversation. That's it, it was just a conversation.

What's your favourite film?

Anything Disney. I'm such a Disney freak.

Earlier this year you trod the boards at the Donmar Theatre in Covent Garden! How was that?

It's so different to TV. When you're doing a play you get a rehearsal



Alice Hewkin and Ruth Madeley in rehearsals for Teenage Dick at the Donmar Warehouse

Photo Marc Brenner

period, you get like a month of really learning the script, getting to grips with the characters. You don't get that with film. You literally just turn up for filming after having had a chat with the director and a table read. You don't get the luxury of having four solid weeks of just rehearsing

with all of the cast like you do with theatre. I've just learnt so much about being an actor, about how your voice changes in theatre. How your breathing is different and how your voice carries is different. And this play's American so we've had dialect coaching every day as well. He talks about dropping off on certain words. The Bolton accent doesn't work in this world!

Your parents must be... oh my god they are so excited, they're coming for press night this week. I was like please please, please, keep yourself in check. I've got such a great family around me and my big sister. Everyone is so incredible and a great support for me especially in an industry that isn't easy, as there's a lot to take on, even when you're doing

well. I didn't work in August and I drove everyone mad saying 'oh my god I'm unemployable, oh I'll never work again.'

Aside from this production, has more work come your way?

Yes, I'm working on 'The Watch', a series based on Terry Pratchett's Discworld novels for BBC America. I play Throat, who is a really interesting character because in the books she was male. And they've made her a wheelchair user which is fantastic.

It was also reported in the news last year that disabled people have a pay gap of around 12%. So you're a woman, working class, a wheelchair user and working in the media and culture sectors. The odds are stacked against you, how do you keep

going? Yeah, it don't look great does it!? But then if I don't do it, then how's it going to change? And I don't mean that I do it by myself, I'm very lucky and I meet lots of people doing great things on diversity. I've got a bit of a profile so people can see me and I try and change what I can so the kids coming after me won't have to deal with it on the scale that I do. I'll gladly sit there and take it but it doesn't make it easy though. But it's so worth it.

Marmite. Good or bad? Love it! I love it, I love it, I love it! I've got some in my hotel room upstairs.

Whizz-Kidz is 30, you're 30-something, what have been the high points in your life so far? Genuinely? Getting the wheelchair as young as 5 years old was a

game changer for my life. It's why I wanted to be a Patron. I never felt that you just left me. It was never like, 'OK you've got your chair now go on and do what you want to do'. Whizz-Kidz was always there and I felt that throughout all of my childhood and through my teenage years.

What I am doing now in my career would NEVER have happened without Whizz-Kidz. Never. I remember my first role in 'Don't take my baby' and we were filming for 3 and a half weeks and I asked to take annual leave. The Whizz-Kidz team couldn't have been more supportive and off the back of that success came other things. That was massive, not just for me, but for everyone to see another person with disability on screen and get BAFTA recognition for it.

THE STORY WOULD NOT HAVE CHANGED ONE BIT IF SHE'D HAVE NOT BEEN A WHEELCHAIR USER. THAT'S THE BEAUTY OF IT.



I then remember asking for more time off for another audition and my then boss, Esther, saying 'Ruth, I think you're an actress now'. And I was like 'OK' and I was really scared about leaving Whizz-Kidz because it was so much of my life.

And then finally, entering this industry was big. I'll never forget Lenny Henry's speech about diversity and how people from all walks of life should be mirrored on screen. And that something that's stuck with me and kept me motivated.

Do you still want to write scripts?

Yes, my agent is literally always asking "When you gonna write, when you gonna write, when you gonna write?" You know what it is though? I'm dead new to acting, I've only been doing it for four and a half years and I say well, when it calms down, I'll write. But it doesn't calm down.

Where do you really want to go?

Hollywood is my aim. I mean if that doesn't change then everything else will take so much longer to change. And if you get that then it will all filter down. It baffles me that the DC Comic or Marvel films haven't yet had a wheelchair user character. Yeah so a big Hollywood movie. There's just no excuses anymore. All the excuses that have been thrown around are all so boring and old!

IT Baffles me that the DC comic or Marvel films haven't yet had a wheelchair user character. Yeah so a big Hollywood movie. THERE'S JUST NO EXCUSES ANYMORE.

YOU KNOW I DIDN'T TRAIN OR DREAM THIS WOULD BE MY CAREER AND I KNOW LOTS OF LITTLE GIRLS AND BOYS WITH DIFFERENT DISABILITIES WHO WANT THIS WITH ALL THEIR HEART, AND FOR THEM THERE IS NO OTHER OPTION.

Last year you were photographed and interviewed for Vogue! Italian Vogue AND British Vogue! Tell me more.

Ah, it was so special. It came about from Alessia Glaviano who is the visual brand director for Vogue Italy. She contacted me after watching 'Years and Years' and she's really passionate about increasing the representation of disability in fashion. She wanted to interview me and it was so special.

The funny thing is I've got quite big eyebrows and I arrived on the shoot and they were, like, your eyebrows are a 'bit of a distraction' so they bleached them blonde. They looked great in the shots but then the next

day they turned orange! They've turned back to brown now thank god! Two weeks later, British Vogue wanted me to a shoot for International Day for Persons with Disabilities. The article celebrated 5 women who were, in inverted commas 'excelling in their field' and I was like ooh thanks guys! So yeah two Vogues in two weeks, that's never going to happen again so yeah I celebrated that!

What next? I'm really excited to see where my career goes now. I can't wait to go back to South Africa and finish 'The Watch', and I'm always excited about meeting and talking about changing this industry. I always say this industry wasn't built for people like me. The more jobs I get and the more people I meet it makes me more excited about changing it. Whatever job I end up on next or if I end up knocking on Whizz-Kidz's door begging for my job back, either way I'm really excited to make this industry more accessible. You know I didn't train or dream this would be my career and I know lots of little girls and boys with different disabilities who want this with all their heart, and for them there is no other option. That is what I will keep fighting for, until they drag me off stage!

Join the Whizz-Kidz Families Network and stay connected

Receive top tips, discounts and meet other families of young wheelchair users.



As part of our 30th anniversary celebrations, we've launched a new online community network for the parents, carers and guardians of young wheelchair users across England, Wales and Scotland.

It's especially timely given that we're all looking for ways to stay in touch much more these days. We hope it's useful to you to be able to connect with other parents and would love your feedback on how Whizz-Kidz can support you and your family.

It's free and easy to join. Simply register on our website at www.whizz-kidz.org.uk/FamiliesNetwork or call us on 0800 151 3350 or email families.network@whizz-kidz.org.uk



Share

A place to share tips, advice and recommendations with other families.



Connect

With other parents of young wheelchair users locally and across the UK.



Access

exclusive offers & promotions from our partners including:



Hear

The latest news from Whizz-Kidz and find out about opportunities for young wheelchair users and families.

Win a trip to

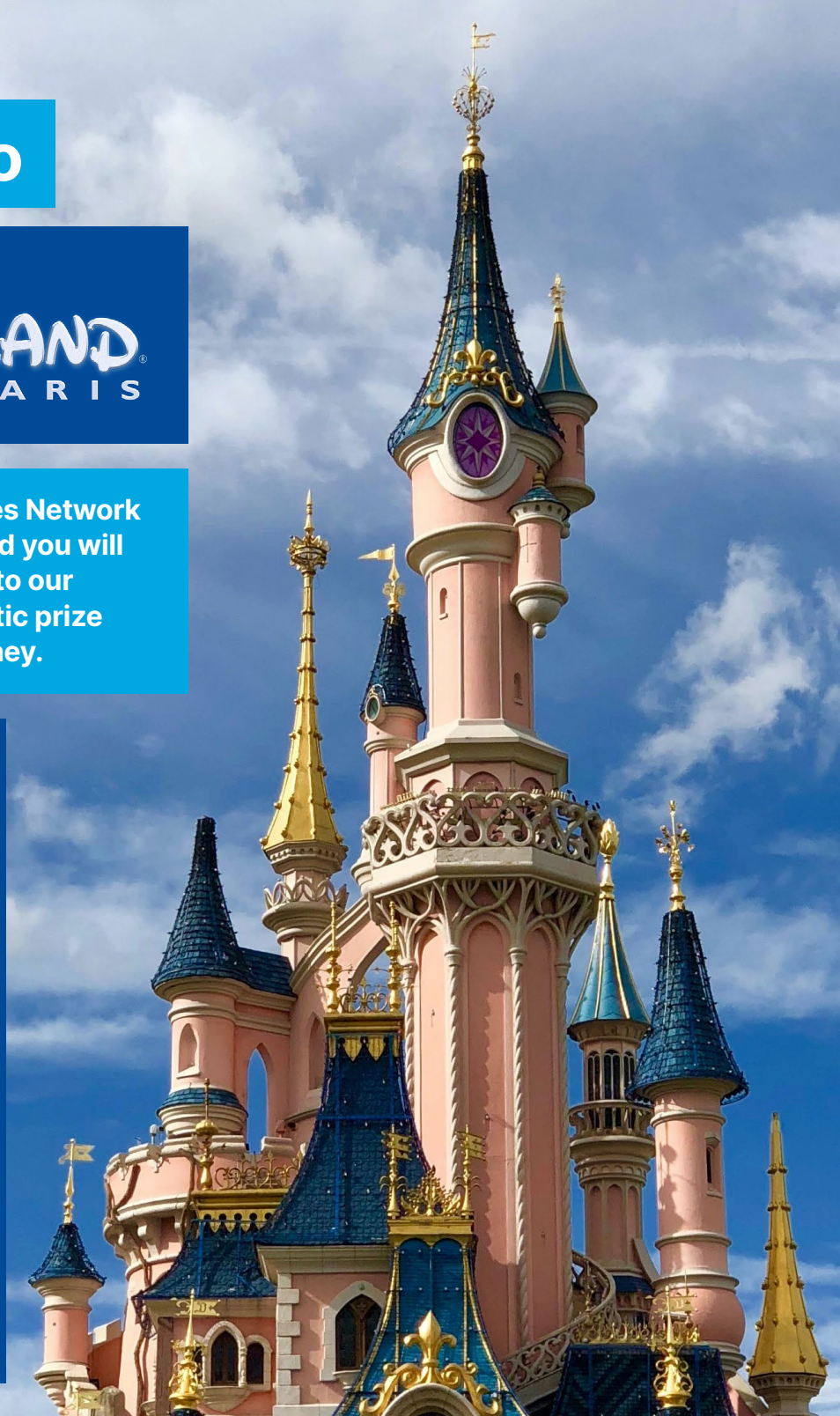
Join the Whizz-Kidz Families Network by 30th November 2020 and you will be automatically entered into our free prize draw, for a fantastic prize generously donated by Disney.

Join now by registering on our website at www.whizz-kidz.org.uk/FamiliesNetwork

Experience the Disney magic with your family by winning 3 nights accommodation and up to 4 two-day passes to Disneyland Paris.

Disneyland Paris is the most visited theme park in Europe, located 20 miles east of Paris. The resort covers 4,800 acres and encompasses two theme parks, many resort hotels, a shopping, dining and entertainment complex and a golf course, in addition to several recreational venues.

The theme park offers countless magical experiences and exciting attractions for all ages.



Please note:

Disney will provide the promoter with One (1), two (2) night, three (3) day holiday package to Disneyland Paris. Each package is valid for one (1) prize winner and up to three (3) guests sharing one standard room in Disneyland Paris. The following terms and conditions shall apply to the prize trip:

- Two (2) nights' accommodation sharing one (1) standard room at a Disney® Hotel (excluding the Disneyland Hotel) including continental breakfast
- Four (4) x three (3) Day Park Hopper tickets valid for entry into the Disneyland Park and Walt Disney Studios Park

Terms:

- Any costs incurred in addition to the Prize Trip elements listed above shall be incurred at the prize winner's and/or their guests' expense including but not limited to: UK transfers, alcoholic beverages, telephone charges, room service, laundry service, excursions, tips, souvenirs, and any other incidental expenses. Travel insurance is not included but is recommended.
- The holiday must be taken before 31st July 2021 and all date requests are subject to availability. The booking form must be received back a minimum of 30 days out from preferred travel dates. Departure date and accommodations are subject to availability. Certain restrictions and block out dates may apply.
- The winner and all of their guests must travel at the same time on the same routing. Any children in the group must be accompanied by their parent/legal guardian aged 18 or over - Prize must be taken by an adult (18+) Under 18s must be accompanied by an adult - Winners are responsible for their own passport and visa requirements.
- Age and height restrictions may apply to some attractions. Parks, attractions and/or entertainment may change operating hours or be closed due to refurbishing, capacity, weather or special events and may otherwise change or be discontinued without any notice and without liability to Disney.
- Prize Trip package and all elements within may not be sold, traded, transferred, rescheduled to dates not within the fulfilment period set forth above, or refunded.
- Disney Destinations International reserves the right to substitute elements of the Prize Trip package at any time. There is no alternative prize and the Prize Trip cannot be exchanged for cash or an alternative prize.

I'm Here, Where Are You?

There's a new arts festival on the circuit, led by disabled artists and showcasing the best of disability arts in the UK.

What's the story behind the festival? I'm Here, Where Are You? (IHWAY) is part of Vision Mixers, a programme produced by Cambridge Junction to support Independent Producers. We were introduced to each other by the staff that ran the programme and together we conceptualised and produced the IHWAY Festival and programme of workshops. Led entirely by disabled artists, our aim is to engage disabled audiences in Peterborough, Cambridge and Ipswich through a programme of workshops culminating in a two-day festival at Cambridge Junction Theatre.

How long did it take from when you first had the idea through to opening night? We first applied for Vision Mixers, separately, before we knew each other. Our ideas were so intrinsically linked that the team at Cambridge Junction brought us together. We spent three months bringing our ideas together and then roughly a year after we were both announced as Vision Mixers to the first workshop at Cambridge Junction.

We want to demonstrate the feasibility of having a career as an artist not just within the disabled community, but in the arts industry as a whole.

What are you trying to achieve by running this festival? We want to widen opportunities for disabled artists to perform and showcase their work in accessible venues, supporting the inclusion of disabled-led work within the arts. We want to demonstrate the feasibility of having a career as an artist not just within the disabled community, but in the arts industry as a whole. We want to inspire, engage and involve new audiences. Our other focus is on getting other theatre and arts centres across the UK to programme work by disabled artists.

Who's your target audience and why? The main target audience is people with disabilities. However, we particularly want to engage with the general public and arts professionals too, aiming to disseminate best practice in producing disabled-led work and widen the debate on arts' inclusivity. Our 2021 edition will have specific targeted events for young people too!

What, if any, major obstacles did you come across when organising it? When you're working within an existing venue, there are always going to be barriers to overcome when thinking about creating the most accessible space. You can't make any environment wholly accessible - an element you put in place to increase someone's access to the work, might mean there is a barrier for another person. Cambridge Junction worked really well with us, making their space as accessible as possible.

What has been the audience response? Brilliant! We are so happy with it. This message on our social media event from an audience member says it all: "I am writing to thank all the performers, organisers and volunteers who helped to put on the I'm Here. Where Are You? Festival for renewing my faith in humanity and making me laugh more than I have in a long, long time.... A great deal of care was taken to provide for all sorts of disabilities and I thoroughly enjoyed being treated like I actually existed."

What was the stand-out moment? Liz: my standout moment was just before one of our major shows started, and the brilliant facilitators of Viva Carnival had just created some amazing Carnival decorations

and props. The audience and other artists that had taken part in the festival went into the space, excited to watch an exceptional performance (Joel Brown and Eve Mutso's 111) waving around their carnival creations!

Linda: the standout moment was during Jackie Hagan performance 'This is Not a Safe Space' when she threw packets of crisps to the audience to be consumed during the show.

What are your plans for 2021? A bigger and better IHWAY Festival in 2021 with more shows, more shows, more spaces and more workshops! For the 2021 Festival, the aim is to include a wider spectrum of disability representation, advanced tech-based works as well as activities for young people.

Thank you! Your work is so important - what's next!? Tell us about your dream? To infinity and beyond! Wouldn't it be nice if venues all across the UK, just like Cambridge Junction has, acknowledged how important Disability Arts is in our sector and how we need to shine more bright lights on exceptional work from exceptional artists!

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For more information about future events and festival go to the Cambridge Junction Theatre website www.junction.co.uk



Well, a magazine isn't a magazine without a wordsearch is it?

Q S C V G Y U F U N K L P P O I J F N B
 N C V R D V Y A F S L I J H Y T R R G F
 Z G L H K W R T T B S A G E V I G I S Y
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WHEELCHAIR	FUTURE	FRIENDS
CLUBS	DIGNITY	UNDERSTANDING
KIDZBOARD	A VOICE	CAMPS
FUN	SKILLZ	VOLUNTEERING

STATE OF THE ARTS

The latest Arts Council England report on diversity shows that little progress has been made on hiring more disabled employees across 800+ publicly funded arts organisations, libraries and museums.

Whether it's been about widening exposure to the arts, art teaching, art as therapy or art simply for arts sake, our youth clubs across the UK have got it down to, well, a fine art. Pun intended!

To celebrate the first anniversary of our Glasgow club, young people took part in a photojournalism project to capture the world as seen 'through the eyes' of a wheelchair user. A curated selection of the images were displayed at an exhibition titled 'Through our Eyes.'

In a co-creation workshop, 12 of our teenagers painted a piece of artwork now known as 'Colour Collaboration', and in November 2019 a print of it was proudly hung in the First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon's office at the Scottish Parliament.

"Whizz-Kidz is brilliant and the artwork is phenomenal."

Nicola Sturgeon
Scottish First Minister.

"The photography project has been a brilliant experience for us all, leading up to this moment in seeing the enjoyment that going to the club brings us!"

Caitlyn, 19.

To find out how we can help you find a work placement, call **0800 151 3350** or email kidzservices@whizz-kidz.org.uk



Nicola Sturgeon with Whizz-Kidz Glasgow club artists and their collaborative artwork.

HEAR FROM MILLIE- ROSE

"I was given a standard manual wheelchair from the NHS at the age of 15. It was big, wide, heavy, clunky and uncomfortable. I couldn't really push myself around in it as it was so heavy, it was a real struggle and strain on my arms and meant that I'd dislocate my shoulders and elbows trying to use it. It actually limited my independence and I would have to get my parents to push me around or at school I would ask my friends. I had to rely on everyone else to get me from A to B and as a teenage girl it was extremely frustrating. I had no confidence in myself with that

wheelchair and it made me more afraid to go outside."

"This new wheelchair from Whizz-Kidz has changed so much for me. It's light enough for me to easily push myself - I do not have to wait around for someone to push me around everywhere. The motors in the e-motion wheels give me an extra boost which takes the pressure off my arms and allows me to go really fast. Before I used to struggle to keep up with family and friends but now they struggle to keep up with me".



That feeling when your wheelchair suits you perfectly.



CUSTOMISING YOUR RIDE

"Each one of our wheelchairs is clearly designed for its user, be it a shimmery teal wheelchair with zebra-printed spoke guards or a powered wheelchair with an elevated seat. I need to think creatively in my job, no other job I've tried does that quite like this one."

Jonathan, Whizz-Kidz engineer

Our mobility equipment engineers up and down the UK have been called Fairy Godmothers, Father Christmas, Angels and a whole lot of other lovely names by children and families. What's their secret? It's simple (well it's not but)....accessories help!

Always going the extra mile to make smiles, Whizz-Kidz engineers do their best to personalise wheelchairs before they're handed over to families.

We've even matched the wheels to one of our young people's dyed green hair!

We can provide a range of mobility equipment to 2-25 year olds including manual and powered wheelchairs, buggies, trikes and sports wheelchairs.

See if you're eligible for new wheels.

Email: kidzservices@whizz-kidz.org.uk
Telephone: 0800 151 3350



PARA ICE HOCKEY ANYONE?



We're not a team, we're a family, and they have given me somewhere to belong. I might not be the best, but I'm a Phantom.

Callum Shakespeare explains, what it's all about and how he ended up representing GB in the World Championships!

THE ORIGINS

Para Ice Hockey was born on a frozen lake in Stockholm in the 1960's, by a group of players that wanted to continue playing hockey following injuries which prevented them from playing "stand up". A modified version of Ice Hockey, Para Hockey, sometimes know as Sledge Hockey, follows the same rules as Ice Hockey from puck control to checks and fights, but with some different equipment. A player sits on a metal and plastic "sledge" and propels themselves with two sticks with metal spikes at the end. It wasn't until 1994 that Para Ice Hockey became an official Winter Paralympic Sport and poetically Sweden took the gold!

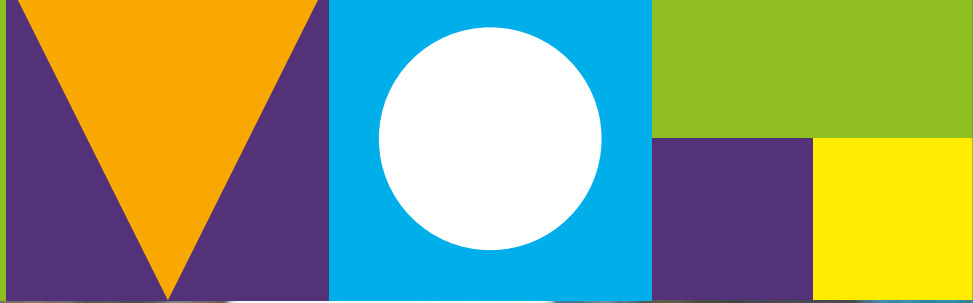
PHANTOM OF THE ICE RINK

For me it started in 2008 after I fell from a window, broke my back and was paralysed from the waist down. At university I played American Football and missed that full contact, body crunching, team sport feeling. The following year, I discovered Sledge Hockey at the "Inter Spinal Unit Games" and I was hooked! Just 18 months later I found myself over the arctic circle going to Sweden to the World Championships... me in Team GB!

In the summer of 2011, I became one of the founding members of the Peterborough Phantoms. We're not a team, we're a family, and they have given me somewhere to belong. I might not be the best, but I'm a Phantom.

Number 40, wheelchair user, signing off.

Our very own Work Placements Coordinator, Callum Shakespeare, took up Para Ice Hockey after a spinal injury.



TRY IT.

LOVE IT.

LIVE IT.

We will be posting news about Whizz-Kidz and our future plans with gaming on our website at www.whizz-kidz.org.uk



Whizz-Kidz clubs for 8-25 year old wheelchair users

A place to try new things and make friends

Get ready for your future

We also run sessions for 14-25 year olds that focus on the transferable skills needed in today's workplace.



Did you know...

Young people attending our clubs felt Whizz-Kidz (unlike mainstream youth provisions) offers a setting where there is no pressure - or any need - to explain the impact of being disabled, where all activities and opportunities are accessible, and where they can 'connect' with others and enjoy being young.

50% OF DISABLED CHILDREN DO NOT FEEL COMFORTABLE TAKING PART IN SPORTS.

There has been a worrying decline in the number of disabled people playing sport regularly – a drop of around 10% – since the 2012 Paralympics. According to Sports England, disabled people say they are nearly twice as likely to be physically inactive (43%), compared with non-disabled people (21%).

The children and young people that come to Whizz-Kidz clubs, however, are helping to buck this trend. For many years, we've played wheelchair futsal, basketball, and tennis – sports that our young people told us they wanted to play. We've even been surfing in Wales. So it seemed a natural progression for us to develop our sports offer to disabled young people with the chance to train as sports coaches.

In 2019 we teamed up with the Youth Sport Trust to launch a sports coaching programme for young disabled people in Birmingham, funded by Comic Relief.

A chance to become leaders, peer mentors and community-based advocates for the power of sport and hopefully reverse the statistics.

Through a combination of young disabled leader training, volunteering placements and the option of gaining a certified qualification, by the end of the course our young cohort will have developed into confident, skilled and healthy role models for the next generation. By applying their new skills in communities, we're hoping for increased disabled participation in mainstream community venues.

Our first Birmingham cohort have started their course and our Manchester group will be hot on their heels to start the coaching programme later this year.

LET'S NOT DROP THE BALL

“I am finding the sports coaching programme really interesting, helpful and lots of fun! I really enjoy the way I can link it so easily to the sports I play.”

ELLA MAE WARREN

FIND OUT MORE

Email us at kidzservices@whizz-kidz.org.uk or call 08000 151 3350



DID YOU KNOW?

For those sporty types amongst you, Whizz-Kidz can also provide sports wheelchairs.

SURF'S UP...

Some of the young children attending our clubs in Wales expressed a desire to go surfing. So of course we went. Without the slightest raise of an eyebrow, our Wales Whizz-Kidz Club Coordinator got on with arranging trips to Swansea and Cardiff with the help of Surfability, the UK's first fully adaptive and inclusive surf school. Whilst the young people hit the waves, parents were left welling up with joy on the beach.

Some of the young people hadn't been on a beach before, or had been unable to get back onto a beach since becoming a wheelchair user.

For one young person, it was the first time that she was able to surf alongside her surfing sister, which of course left mum overjoyed. Needless to say, our Welsh surf club days are always packed and we take up to 15 young people per session.

"A huge thank you for the opportunity to have this experience both for my disabled son to be treated as equal as everyone else with a team committed to bringing joy & happiness to the disabled person surfing but also for myself a mother of a disabled son being able to witness this happening was so overwhelming."

Clare



VOLUNTEER

Can you join our brilliant small army of volunteers and support disabled children and young people at a Whizz-Kidz club near you?

EMAIL volunteers@whizz-kidz.org.uk

CALL 07833 475 987



LOVE SPORT?

WE PUT THE BALL IN YOUR COURT

Free specialist sports coaching training for disabled 14-25 year olds in Manchester

Get an NVQ coaching qualification, a nationally accredited course. Receive bespoke sports training, which includes:

- Advanced wheelchair skills training
- Coaching and peer mentoring training
- 30 hours of sports coaching (voluntary placement)

Email us for more information kidzservices@whizz-kidz.org.uk



GETTING BOOKISH WITH TOM FROM **McFLY**

Tom Fletcher, the vocalist and guitarist might be better known as one of the founders from band McFly for us oldies, but did you know that he's also an author, a producer, songwriter, and, oh yes, a fantastic patron of Whizz-Kidz?! He first contacted us via Twitter when he was writing his book 'The Christmassaurus' featuring a young disabled character.

Rebecca reviews the follow-up book 'The Christmasaurus and the Winter Witch' which comes hot on the heel of his debut, The Christmasaurus. She also got the chance to send Tom her burning questions about his books.

"After I read The Christmasaurus in 2016 I was left wanting more, and the new sequel The Christmasaurus and the Winter Witch definitely delivers! We join William, Brenda, Bob and Pamela a year after we left them.

They think they're in for an ordinary Christmas when all of a sudden time stops and they are whisked away for another North Pole trip. It's meant to be just a fun day out, but soon an icy discovery turns it upside down and William must fight to save Christmas itself!

A perfect follow up to the first story, the reader gets to dive straight back into William's world

and explore the North Pole in all its festive glory. The fantasy is taken up another level as we're swept along on a whirlwind adventure through time.

Reading about a young wheelchair user actually getting to time travel is so cool! A lot of disabled young people will feel like they're living their sci-fi dream through William! As well as the Christmas action, getting to know the main characters even better is fantastic, especially Pamela and Brenda. It makes William's world even more real.

The Winter Witch is also brilliant as a chillingly mysterious villain! The best bit though is that William gets to



Tom with judges and winners of our #DreamWheelchair competition

take the reins of the Christmasaurus once again and shines. Seeing how he grows in confidence from the first book is incredible and he is undoubtedly a character that all young wheelchair users can look up to. The Christmasaurus and the Winter Witch is definitely another Christmas treat!"

What made you want to go back to the world of The Christmasaurus? It was impossible to leave it! I spent so long creating that world and the characters so it was just too tempting to not try to find out what they did the next Christmas!

We're taken on a grand tour of the North Pole in The Christmasaurus and the Winter Witch. What is your favourite part of the North Pole? I think I'd spend a lot of time in the cinema that only shows Christmas

movies or the Wish forest would be pretty fun to hang out in for a while. I really enjoyed writing the chapters where we meet the Winter Witch though.

The Christmasaurus focuses a lot on how William feels about his disability and being different. In The Christmasaurus and the Winter Witch, William's disability is more in the background of the story. Why did you take a different approach for the second book?

That was actually one of the things that attracted me to continuing the story. While I loved addressing William's disability in book 1 and I'm really proud to be one of the few books with a main character who is a wheelchair user, I was excited by the idea of writing this next book where his disability isn't what defines him. I wanted to write a book with a

lead character who is a wheelchair user where the story doesn't have anything to do with him being a wheelchair user. William is a boy like any other, on a Christmas adventure!

READING ABOUT A YOUNG WHEELCHAIR USER ACTUALLY GETTING TO TIME TRAVEL IS SO COOL! A LOT OF DISABLED YOUNG PEOPLE WILL FEEL LIKE THEY'RE LIVING THEIR SCI-FI DREAM THROUGH WILLIAM!

We love The Christmasaurus soundtrack and have got it on repeat now we're so close to Christmas! Can we expect more musical treats to go along with the sequel? Perhaps. There are songs but I haven't recorded them yet. Maybe in the future!

You made The Christmasaurus into a stage musical in 2017 and cast 3 wheelchair users including Whizz-Kidz ambassador Archie in the role of William. How was the experience and why was it important for you? It was an INCREDIBLE experience and one that I'm so proud of. We knew from day one that we wanted to use the role of William to create an amazing opportunity for three young wheelchair users to come and perform on the stage in London. There are still so few roles

for wheelchair users in theatre productions so I hope we can do it again in the future and showcase some of the amazingly talented young wheelchair users around the country who have a passion for performing.

I WANTED TO WRITE A BOOK WITH A LEAD CHARACTER WHO IS A WHEELCHAIR USER WHERE THE STORY DOESN'T HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH HIM BEING A WHEELCHAIR USER. WILLIAM IS A BOY LIKE ANY OTHER, ON A CHRISTMAS ADVENTURE!

It is great to see William and Brenda go from arch enemies to annoying brother and sister in the book! Did you enjoy writing their new relationship? Yes, although the parts where Brenda bullies William were awful to write and still awful to read, but I guess that's what I was aiming for. I didn't want to dumb down any of the more serious and difficult moments and bullying is certainly that. Getting her character to go from being truly awful to William's closest friend was a challenge but I love their dynamic now and they are very fun to write.

The Christmasaurus and the Winter Witch goes a bit timey-wimey. Would you like to write more time travel stories in the future or maybe even write for Doctor Who? I would LOVE to do that one day. Perhaps a Doctor Who Christmas Special...BBC, give me a call! On a serious note though, time travel is SO tricky to write about as it's something that doesn't really exist (yet) but there are some widely accepted rules that we seem to

take as truth that is really difficult to get your head around. I'm actually writing another time travel project at the moment so the Winter Witch obviously didn't put me off!

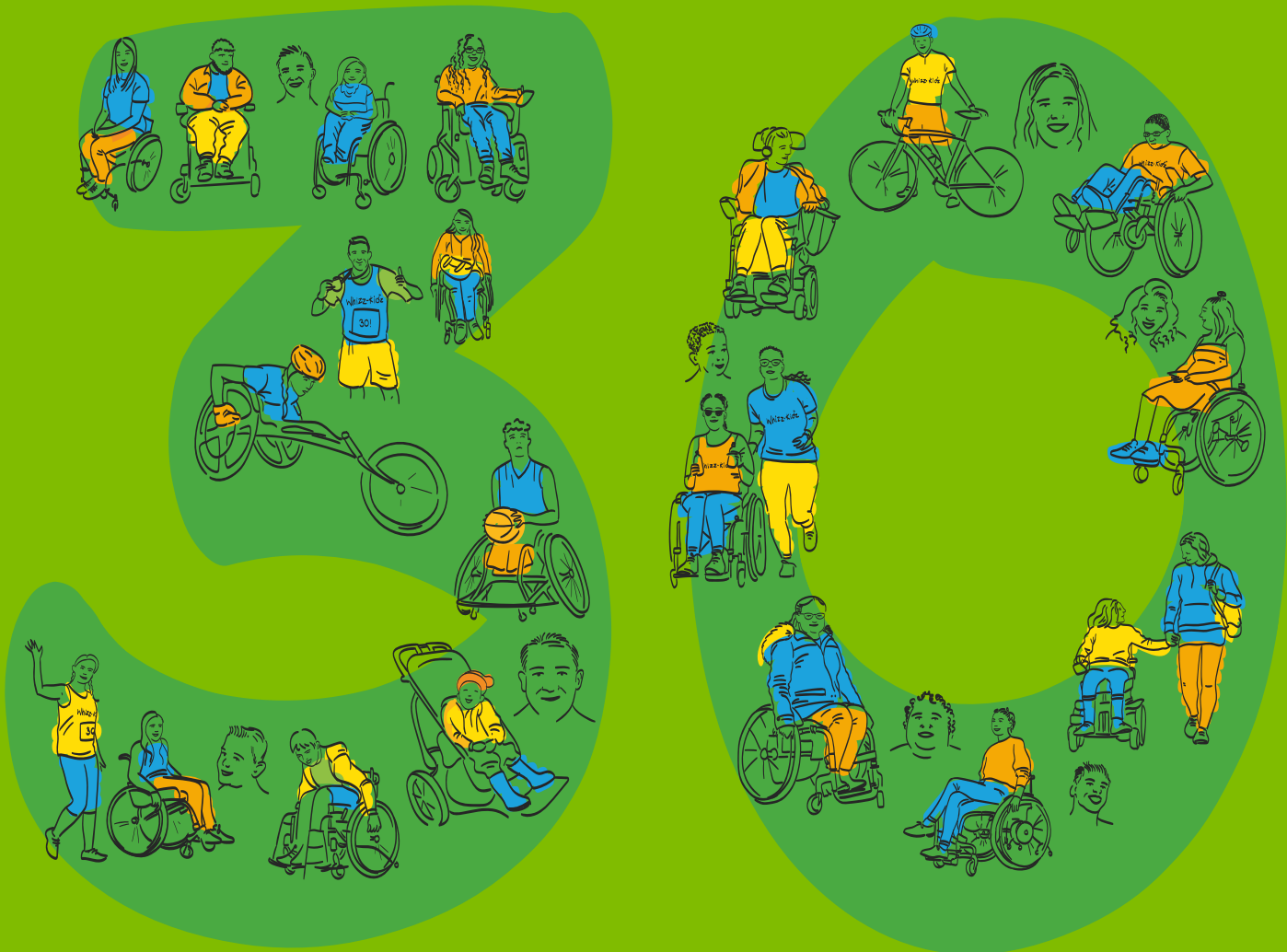
William has become a new hero for disabled young people. What has the response from young wheelchair users been like? It has been truly magical. I have had so many incredible responses from letters and messages online to people face-to-face. The nicest part of it is that I never intended to do that and it happened so organically for all the right reasons. I'm extremely proud of The Christmasaurus for that reason.

What's next for William and the Christmasaurus? Well, there are SO many ideas flying around that it's hard to say but eventually there will be The Christmasaurus movie and I hope another stage show and since Christmas comes every year I'm sure there will be lots more adventures for William and the Christmasaurus!



About Rebecca

Rebecca attended her first Whizz-Kidz club in Newcastle aged 13. She has received a power trike and e-motion wheels. She joined the Kidz Board in 2008. Since graduating, she has spent 9 months volunteering in Brussels, for which she won the Whizz-Kidz Young Leaders Award for Affecting Change in 2017. She is currently studying her Masters in Inequalities and Social Science at the University of Leeds.



30 YEARS 30 STORIES

To mark Whizz-Kidz's 30th anniversary, we were curious to find out what had become of the children and young people who had received equipment from us over the last 30 years. So much would have changed for them on a personal level, the transition to adulthood, any wedding bells, children, we had many questions!

With many changes also taking place in the UK regarding disability policy and legislation over the last three decades, we also wanted to know how these had made any impact on their daily lives. If indeed they had at all.

So throughout 2020, we're curating a unique oral history storytelling project to capture the personal biographies of 30 Whizz-Kidz wheelchair users. We've trained 10 of our amazing volunteers to record these oral stories and together, they have already travelled many miles across England, Scotland and Wales to document these distinctive lives.

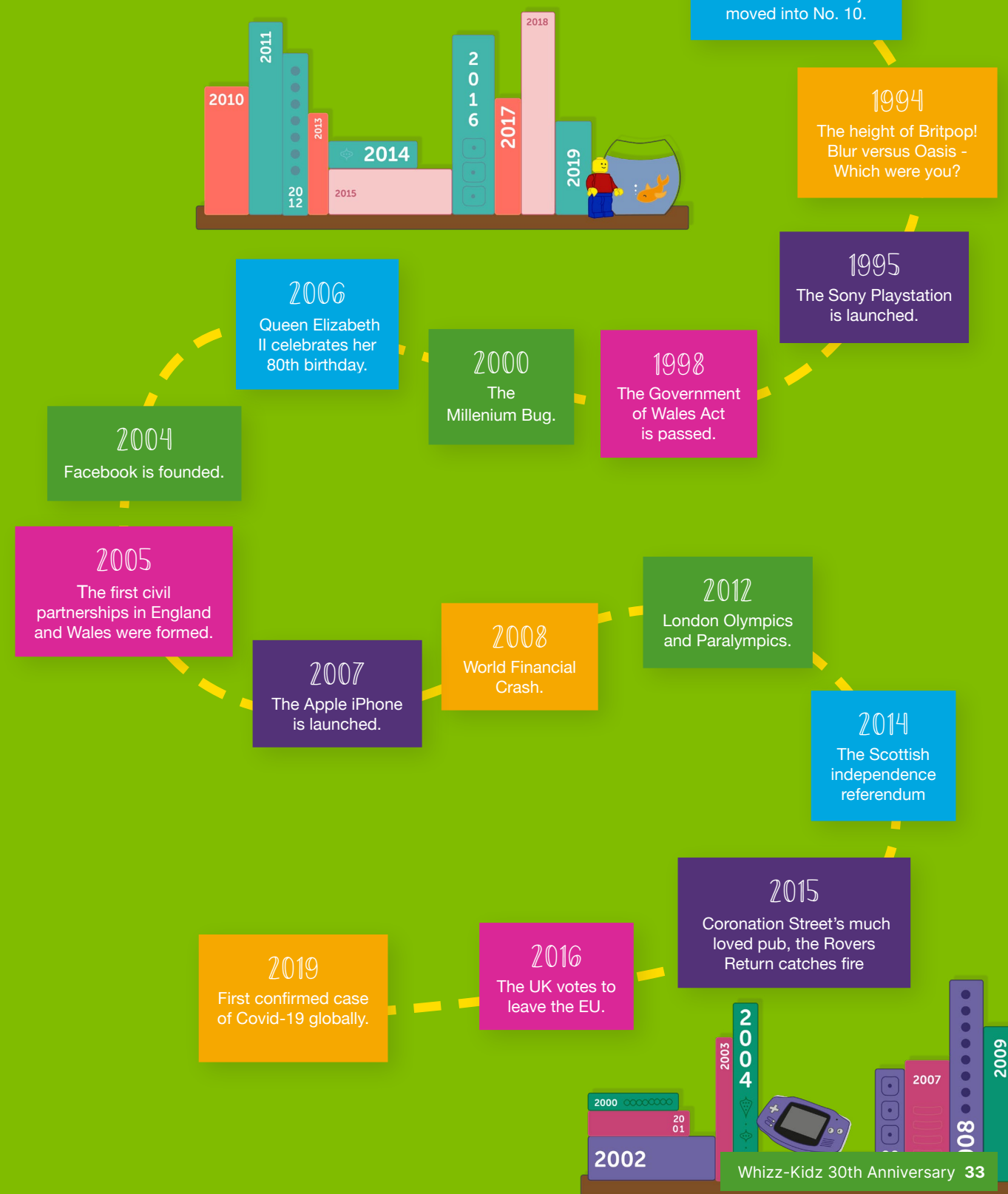
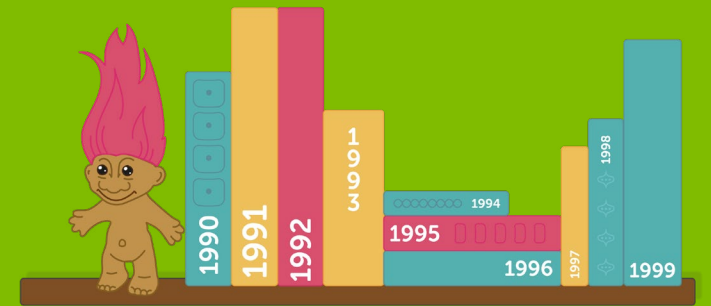
Alongside these personal stories, you can also listen to the stories of disability activists and of some of our patrons including paralympian, Hannah Cockcroft. We will be launching an online exhibition of these stories on our website later in the year.

Once complete, all 30 stories will be archived at the British Library.

We are grateful to our partners the Heritage Lottery Fund and the British Library for this amazing oral history project ●

REMEMBER THIS?

Some of the most changes in the UK since 1990. How many do you remember?





THE WHEELS OF CHANGE

IMAGINE THE NEXT GENERATION POWERED WHEELCHAIR WITH BRILLIANTLY ENHANCED FEATURES.

So we are here, in 2020, the year of sci-fi promise. Yes, we have artificial intelligence, robots, drones, more apps that you can shake a stick at and the tech to enable us to work remotely. Yet wheelchair design, fundamentally, has hardly progressed. So we asked why?

Why have powered wheelchairs lacked progress in design and innovation witnessed in other products? Why, despite costing the same as a family car, do they still look like they did 20 to 30 years ago? Why the same old, same old features?

And then we did something about it. With a £1million grant funded by the Peoples Postcode Lottery Dream

fund, we're leading the 'Wheels of Change' project to create the next generation, state of the art demonstrator wheelchair.

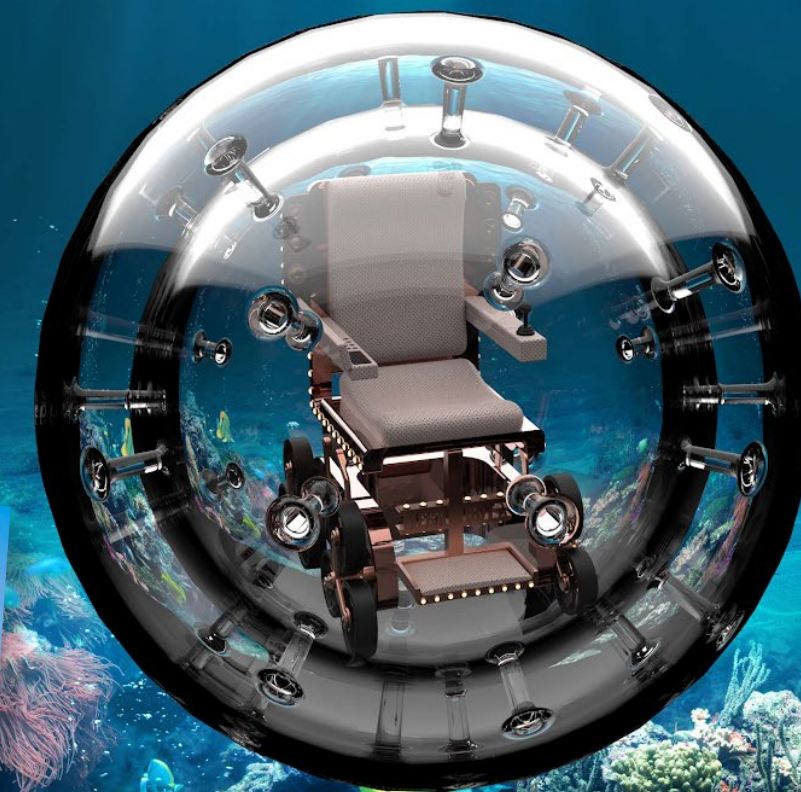
Incorporating the latest technology our wheelchair will enable its user to better interact with the environment around them and we hope to disrupt the wheelchair market in the same way the iPhone did to the mobile phone market.

With partners Duchenne UK and The University of Edinburgh we're aiming to raise the game and the expectations of all wheelchair users in what they can expect from a wheelchair. Which by the way, will also come with an affordable price tag. Cha-ching!

As ever, we're placing young wheelchair users at the heart of the design process and our young people will be test piloting prototypes.

Keep updated on this exciting project through our website at www.whizz-kidz.org.uk

A huge thanks to Frazer Nash Consulting, our engineering partner and Somo Global, Curtiss Wright and Aergo for being so generous with their pro bono support.



Would your ideal wheelchair be able to fly? Make food for the homeless?

Check out these brilliant ideas and the winners of our #dreamwheelchair competition at www.whizz-kidz.org.uk

"With any piece of technology, it has to **grow with the environment** and you as a person. This project is exciting because it's **pushing the boundaries** and seeing what technology is out there that could be implemented into a wheelchair. Why didn't somebody think about this before?!"

The workshop was fun...**wheelchair users naturally think about other wheelchair users** so even if someone has a manual

chair and others have a powered chair, we're thinking about how both sides can benefit. The conversations were less about our individual needs and more about us as a **wider community of wheelchair users** and **how we can put this technology in a wheelchair to help everyone.**"

Jacqui, Whizz-Kidz Board member and workshop participant.



GET YOUR GAME ON

START LEVEL?
YES NO

Gaming has caught the world's attention, whether you are a self-proclaimed gamer or complete newbie, the industry has certainly appealed to some of you. In fact, 1.2 billion people! The trend has always been popular as they have grown from Mario orientated games on the Nintendo 64 to a large, interconnected community that combines people's love of imagery, adventure and competition with an ability to interact worldwide with likeminded people. This phenomenon is not only made special by the technology it

harnesses and the community it has formed but also the level of inclusivity it offers. Through the years parents have expressed how gaming has encouraged confidence through the building of meaningful friendship and the exciting sensory stimulation; this can also be said for older, disabled individuals. Even though gaming has allowed those with disabilities a new mode of engagement and entertainment, the media coverage of accessible gaming can be seen as under-represented.

There is still a distance to travel before gaming can be compatible for all needs and SpecialEffect are a charity who is dedicated to making this possible. We had the pleasure of interviewing them about their thoughts on the gaming industry and how they are influencing the conversation about accessibility in this realm.

Let's start from the beginning, why does SpecialEffect exist and what are your goals? Noone likes being left out. That's why we're a charity that puts fun and inclusion back into the lives of people with

THOSE WHO ARE DISABLED HAVE BEEN ABLE TO BENEFIT FROM THE BOOM IN THE GAMING INDUSTRY AS IT OFFERS CONTACT, WHICH OTHERWISE WOULDN'T BE WITHOUT ITS DIFFICULTIES.

physical disabilities, by helping them to play video games. By using technology, ranging from modified games controllers to eye-control, we're finding a way for people of all ages to play to the very best of their abilities.

Sum up the gaming scene in three words Massive! Absolutely massive!

What has Special Effect experience with accessible gaming been like through the years? Love them or hate them, video games are now firmly part of life. Whether you've idled away a few minutes on a bus with Candy Crush or spent a weekend dicing with death alongside your friends in the latest battle royale game, you're one of over 30 million people in the UK enjoying unique and engaging environments, built by an industry that's now considered to be bigger than the film business.

For many, video games facilitate inclusion, friendship, confidence and creativity. Yet the vast majority of games rely on small, complex handheld controllers or keyboard presses, both of which demand access, dexterity and speed, things that many people with physical disabilities struggle to manage. So they miss out.

That's where we come in. We provide face-to-face support on an individual basis to hundreds of people across the UK every year. We visit people to find out what they want to play, and exactly what

they need to play it. There are no one-size-fits-all solutions, so we'll then match, modify or create controller setups to lend to them, and then give on-going support. We're also answering thousands of enquiries from around the world.

What advances have you made to make gaming more accessible?

The insight we gain from the one-to-one, life-long assessment and support we provide puts us in a great position to share what we learn with both hardware and software developers worldwide, so that they have an opportunity to incorporate our ideas. By implementing a feature that's worked successfully for just one individual, tens of thousands of people with similar access needs across the world can benefit, too. It's also been great to see the raising of awareness of gaming accessibility through products like Microsoft's Xbox Accessible Controller, and we were honoured to be included in the design process for it.

We're also researching our own accessible gaming solutions. Last year we launched EyeMine, freely-available software which, paired with low cost hardware that converts eye-movement to computer control, has the potential to open up Minecraft to severely disabled people who can only move their eyes. Becky's a teenager with cerebral palsy who's benefited from it. "I can't do much by myself," she said, "but I can play games, which gives me a great sense of independence and achievement."

Do you believe enough media attention has been placed on promoting accessible gaming and the benefits gaming has to disabled people? We try to inspire the industry to consider the benefits of gaming accessibility. Every day we're finding more and more benefits that go way beyond simply having fun, and sharing the stories of the people we help gives the subject real context. For many, for

example, the real sense of inclusion comes from being able to level up and compete. "If it wasn't for this charity, I wouldn't be playing," says Paul who has a spinal injury, "[but] I like being competitive online, and showing that people with disabilities can play just as well. Now I can say I'm as happy as I was before my accident."

Julie's the mother of Aaron, who has muscular dystrophy and plays mainly with his feet. She sees additional benefits: "It's about his independence. He hasn't got the same sort of social side of life as most teenagers. My other kids would have been out and about at his age with their friends, but he doesn't have that because he can't go anywhere without a carer, and that's a big restriction on things like conversation and developing relationships. His friends can't really go up to him and start talking too freely. But the gaming gives back that huge social plus - the headphones go on and he's chatting with his friends. He can talk openly about stuff he wouldn't talk about in front of me or other adults, and he can also talk to friends with disabilities, swapping experiences."

Accessibility and gaming certainly complement each other and like SpecialEffect we want to make sure that this conversation stays in the gaming community. Whizz-Kidz is planning to explore these matters further and enter the gaming for good market in order to promote its benefits

BECKY'S A TEENAGER WITH CEREBRAL PALSY WHO'S BENEFITED FROM IT. "I CAN'T DO MUCH BY MYSELF," SHE SAID, "BUT I CAN PLAY GAMES, WHICH GIVES ME A GREAT SENSE OF INDEPENDENCE AND ACHIEVEMENT."

HELP SAY

GOODBYE

TO BUMPY

RIDES

Are you a young wheelchair user who could do with some extra wheelchair skills?

A Whizz-Kidz Wheelchair Skills Training session could help boost your confidence and ability whilst out and about, at school, work or play. It might also reduce reliance on parents, teachers and carers, which can be nice.



WE'RE

RECRUITING

VOLUNTEERS

Can you help run our youth clubs and workshops for disabled children and young people?

Apply online at www.whizz-kidz.org.uk/volunteering
Email: volunteers@whizz-kidz.org.uk
Telephone: 07833 475987

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Whizz-Kidz is the working name of The Movement for Non-Mobile Children (Whizz-Kidz). Registered charity No. 802872. Company registered in England and Wales No. 2444520. Charity registered in Scotland No. SC042607



A brief history of Whizz-Kidz

30 years of moving lives forward

Did you know...

In a recent survey, 96% of young people reported that attending services at Whizz-Kidz helped them to promote or maintain their well-being. Of these, 80% reported that their well-being had increased through attending Whizz-Kidz services.



1995 - Disability Discrimination Act is Passed

Making it unlawful to discriminate against people with disabilities.

2001 - Whizz-Kidz launches wheelchair skills training

Helping children and young people develop their confidence and independence.

2004 - Ruth Owen becomes our second CEO

2007 - Whizz-Kidz launches its first NHS partnership in Tower Hamlets

1990 - 30 years ago Whizz-Kidz is founded

The purpose of creating the charity still rings true today: to give disabled children and young people their independence.

Co-founder Mike Dickson becomes our first CEO

1997 - Kidz Board is launched

Made up of 12 young wheelchair users supported by the charity. It tackles issues that affect disabled people every day.

2006 - Whizz-Kidz launch clubs across the UK

Bringing young people together to help them build a supportive peer network and learn new skills.

2009 - Work placements are piloted by Whizz-Kidz

To help young disabled people get into work and to help employers improve accessibility.



In a recent poll, on direct measures of loneliness, 10% of 16-24 year olds at Whizz-Kidz report 'often' feeling lonely. This compares to a similar 9.8% of 16-24 year olds surveyed by the Office for National Statistics in 2018 made up of predominantly non-disabled young people.

In 2019, **92%** of young people received their wheelchair in routine cases on the same day as their assessment.



MY MODELLING JOURNEY

BY *Caitlyn Fulton*

Caitlyn has been coming to our Scottish Whizz-Kidz activity clubs for some years. Whilst studying, she's been striking a pose or two to help shake up the fashion industry to wheelchair users. We caught up with Caitlyn to find out why.

I AM PASSIONATE ABOUT SEEING CHANGE WITHIN THE FASHION INDUSTRY TO BECOME AN INCLUSIVE PLATFORM FOR EVERYONE

Why did you get into modelling?

Because I am passionate about seeing change within the fashion industry to become an inclusive platform for everyone, especially people with disabilities as we're no different from an able bodied person. To break down the barriers of stereotypes and to normalise inclusion. In the last year or so there have been positive changes made within the industry but we still have a long way to go.

How did you get into modelling?

Starting out, I applied to many mainstream agencies and didn't receive a response, so it was quite the setback but I wasn't going to let that stop me. A couple of years ago, I was scrolling through my social media one day and I came across Zebedee Management – a start-up agency that specialises in representing people with disabilities/differences... [I thought] may as well give it a try.

I submitted my application and a few weeks later heard back that I was successful. I travelled down to London for a test photoshoot and met with the founders, Zoe and Laura. I was apprehensive on the day, not wanting to get my hopes up as anything can happen but it couldn't have gone any better and afterwards they told me I was signed. I was rather ecstatic to say the least. My passion became a reality.

Has it changed you?

Modelling has changed me for the better. My confidence has grown in ways which I didn't think were possible, I've made great friends and most importantly, I've learnt to embrace my disability.

Has it led to anything exciting?

It has led to so many wonderful opportunities and experiences, none of which would've been possible without the support of my family and Zebedee.

Last January, I modelled for the launch shoot of Kintsugi Clothing – an accessible, adaptive and fashionable clothing range which is founded by Emma McClelland. She saw a gap in the fashion industry for this. Yes there is accessible clothing out there but it's very basic and bland. I had an absolutely fab time being a model for the first ever shoot to launch the company and it has taken off which is brilliant, long may it continue and that other fashion brands take note!

What advice would you give to someone considering modelling for themselves?

I would say don't be afraid to go out there. If you do have a setback when applying to agencies and don't get accepted, don't let that be the end – keep trying. Be determined and you will get there in the end, I did.



THE KINTSUGI LABEL

The clothes Caitlyn is wearing is from the fabulous designer label, Kintsugi:

"I created Kintsugi after becoming aware of the lack of consideration that fashion designers give to disability when creating their collaborations. I wanted to see whether it was possible to create an inclusive line, where clothes were designed to accommodate a range of physical impairments but could still be worn by anyone. It's been a huge challenge, but one of the highlights was the photoshoot, where Caitlyn modelled alongside Becky Barnes and they both did an incredible job. The photos are beautiful."

Emma McClelland, founder

KINTSUGI

Thanks to Emma McClelland and designer Harriet Warrilow. Images copyright Nikita Raja.



Whizz-kidz
30 years of moving lives forward

GET

READY

FOR

YOUR

FUTURE



Work placements to launch your career

A work placement to match your ambitions hosted by accessible employers.

Are you a 14-25 year old wheelchair user living in London?

Whizz-Kidz can help you find that big break in:

- Law, finance and IT
- Sales and retail
- Media, marketing and the arts
- Leisure and tourism

and many other sectors!

Whizz-kidz
move a life forward

Whizz-Kidz Employability Hubs for 16-25 year old wheelchair users

Get expert advice from leading industry professionals on how to develop the skills needed to thrive in the workplace including:

- Teamwork and problem-solving
- Creativity and communication
- Decision-making and being flexible



PENNY SPENT AN HOUR WITH A FASHION ICON AND THIS IS WHAT SHE LEARNED

PENNY GOT THE CHANCE TO CATCH UP WITH PARA ATHLETE AND FASHIONISTA, SAMANTA BULLOCK WHO IS SHAKING THINGS UP IN FASHION WITH HER UNIQUE LINE OF ADAPTIVE AND INCLUSIVE CLOTHING LINE 'SB'.

How has the role that fashion plays in your life changed over time? Fashion has always played a considerable role in my heart because it makes me happy. I've always considered myself to be very stylish and my style changes to suit my lifestyle and location. When I lived in Brazil, I adored bright, fluorescent clothing, but now I've moved to England, my style is more minimalist and muted in order to suit the minimalist style of London. I pre-plan my outfit every night, I find this notably cathartic as it gives me an allotted period of time in which I can focus on myself.

Who are your fashion icons and why? Designers I have worked with in the past such as Caroline London, Gunda Hafner and Peter Twist. They put priority on being beautiful, comfortable and sustainable. I also greatly idolise the acclaimed designer, Alexander McQueen. Twenty years ago, he began a project to include disabled people in high-fashion which culminated in a model with a disability gracing the runway in his designs.

You have positively changed the conversation surrounding fashion and disability with your activism, why do you think it's important that disabled people are seen at events like New York Fashion Week? What's the point of feeling beautiful if you can only do it inside your house? There is none. If individuals with disabilities aren't seen at events like these, the wider world will either forget we exist or see us as lesser. On top of this, disabled people should be allowed to express their passions – like the rest of the world.

Where do you see adaptive fashion by the end of the decade? By the end of the decade I see both fashion and the stores that it's sold in as being adapted. This is because, just like everything else, fashion is for everyone. You shouldn't segregate. In recent years, I've seen more consumers focus on the morals of brands and I believe that will push those that don't already to act in a more cohesive, inclusive and ethical manner.

How has tennis impacted your work? It developed my confidence and perseverance and paved the way for my career as a designer and model. I was active every day so I gained and increased my knowledge on the need for both beautiful and comfy adaptive fashion. Feeling pleasant in the clothes you wear fuels your mood for the day.

What are some of the clothing items you have that are old, or hold a lot of sentimental value to you? A beautiful, bohemian body warmer that was passed down to me from her mother. I still wear it sometimes. The top I wore when I met my husband is still tucked away safely in my wardrobe. We met via a joint love for tennis. It'll come as no surprise to readers that I also still own and fondly look back on the dress I married him in too. I also regularly look through my older possessions so that I can gather them up and donate them to charity.

Where do you go when you need inspiration? My first port of call is my own Instagram page. In life, you can only be your own competition because nobody else is going through the same things as you are. Nobody goes through precisely the same chronic pain as I do or has been through the struggles I have. Therefore, my main source of inspiration is a burning desire to be my own biggest rival, to be a better person than I was the day before.

How do you motivate yourself? I believe that it's important to be present wherever you are, that way, you can constantly progress. Because of that, I prefer not to watch TV. Although I do like Oprah Winfrey (who I sometimes watch on Youtube whilst cooking) as it helps me follow real-life success stories. When you're old, you remember stories, and those stories should be real and tangible.

Considering it's our 30th anniversary this year, what advice would you give to your past self? Just do your best every single day, it doesn't matter what you do, just do your best for that one day. Sometimes we worry, especially when we are young, about the future and what we want to be but it's okay not to know; if you do your best every day, you'll get there.

What helps you relax? I still play tennis regularly, but I also have a passion for cycling and swimming as I feel a sense of freedom when the air hits my face. I also love cooking. My signature dish is soup and I often make it while listening to an audiobook or music from the 1950s.

What's the silliest joke you know? Because of my husband's sense of humour, when somebody says, "You're welcome," I can't help but think, "No, I'm Samanta."



Check out Samanta's line of clothing at samantabullock.com



W O R K

W O R K

W O R K

W O R K

W O R K

W O R K

W O R K

(so said Rihanna)

Work Placement Buddies

These guys are a key part of Work Placements, working alongside the young person throughout the placement. A young person may have lots of questions during a placement, such as where the bathroom is, may appreciate company at lunch (we all hate being the new guy or gal!), or help to introduce themselves to the rest of the team. This is where the buddy, who is a volunteer from the host company, steps in to be the link between company & young person.

Whizz-Kidz Employability Skills Days (ESD)

These sessions are hosted by businesses in their offices and are by staff volunteers. The focus is on developing the skills for employment & job application. Young people also get the opportunity to network with potential employers, other young wheelchair users, as well as taking part in mock interviews!

Employability Hubs

These 10-week sessions are hosted in local schools at the end of the school working day. The Hubs follow a syllabus covering vital skills such as time management and interviews and are swiftly followed by an Employability Skills Day and relevant work placement in weeks 8-9. Watch this space for travel training in 2020.

Whizz-kidz
30 years of moving lives forward

Work placements are just one way we help young disabled people into work. We also run Employability Hubs and Employability Skills Days to help them become work-ready. If you're aged between 14 and 25, get in touch to find out how we can help find a work placement with accessible employers who are super keen to help us change that dismal statistic.

At 16 years old, disabled people are half as likely to be in education, or employment than a non-disabled person. At 16-19 that rises by 16%!

In 2018, Henry contacted us to ask if we could find him a work placement. He was studying Software Development and wanted to find a placement which would give him the chance to use the skills he was learning at college, in practice.

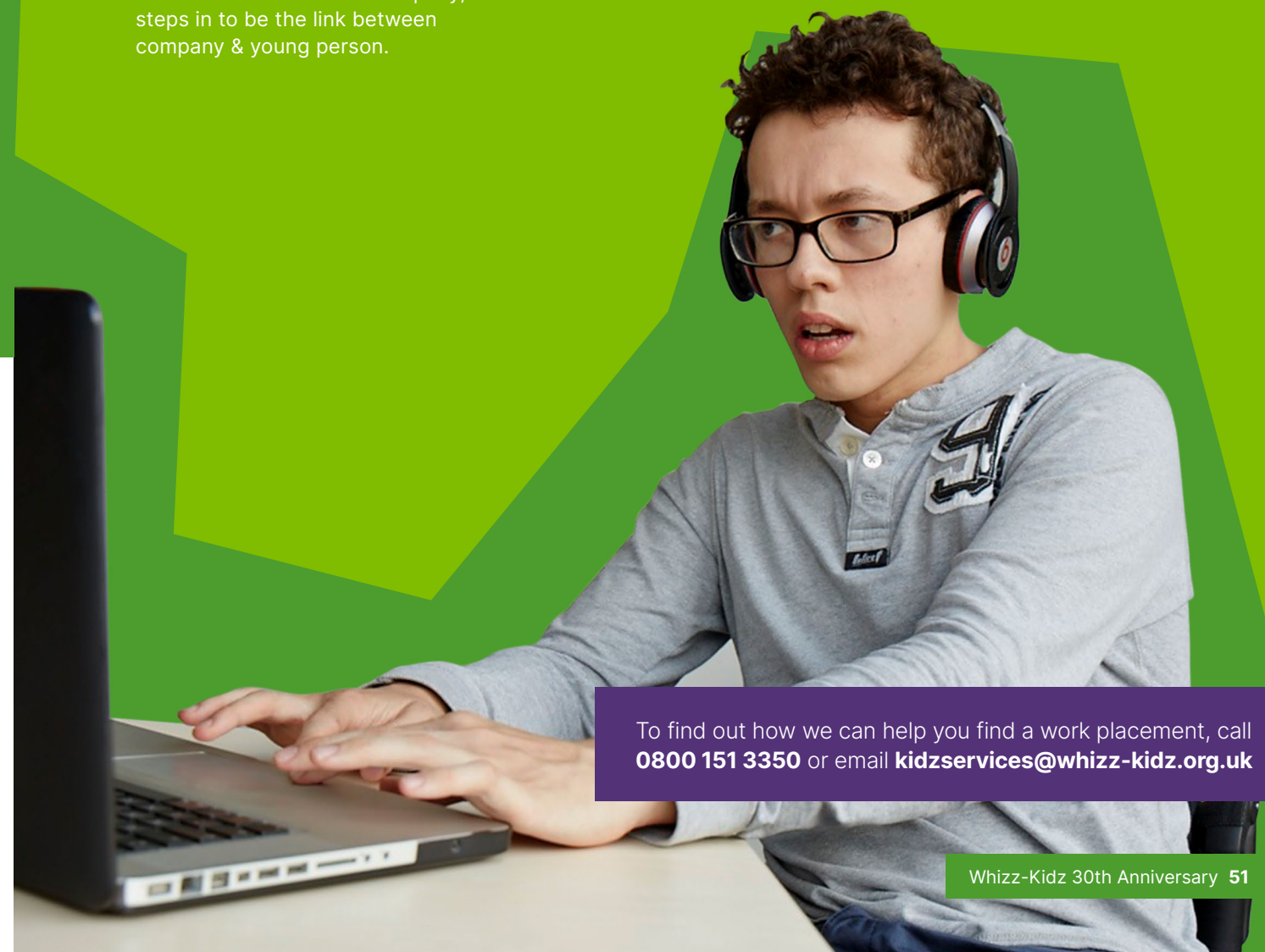
After speaking with some employers, Callum suggested Henry begin a one week work placement with Funding Circle, an online-based financial services

company. After working alongside the sales team, Henry switched to working with the underwriters and began analysing applications under supervision. Henry explained this was his favourite team since

the team members were very thorough when explaining the different processes...I was actually allowed to see and work with actual data.

Henry's work placement buddy, Izzy, chosen to mentor Henry during his time at work, told us,

Henry showed a clear understanding of the fraud process and was able to complete good quality fraud reviews.



To find out how we can help you find a work placement, call **0800 151 3350** or email kidzservices@whizz-kidz.org.uk

ADE ADEPITAN

Lexian caught up with TV Presenter, Sports Personality and Author, Ade Adepitan about his latest book. Lexian first came across Whizz-Kidz at one of our Wheelchair Skills Training workshops over 10 year ago. She still attends her local Whizz-Kidz club and is part of the Kidz Board. She is featured on page 2.

How's life as a disabled person now compared to when you were a kid? There are more opportunities for children with disabilities today compared with when I was growing up in the 70's and 80's. There are more sports clubs, better employment prospects. People with disabilities are more visible in society and there are more disabled role models for children to look up to.

However even though we've come a long way, I still think there's a long way to go. Transport public buildings and spaces could all do more to increase their accessibility. Disabled children face more challenges than their able-bodied counterparts if they want to succeed in every area of today's society. We have to continue to challenge major institutions and fight to level the playing field.

What would your elder self tell your younger self? How to better balance my life as an athlete and a TV presenter.

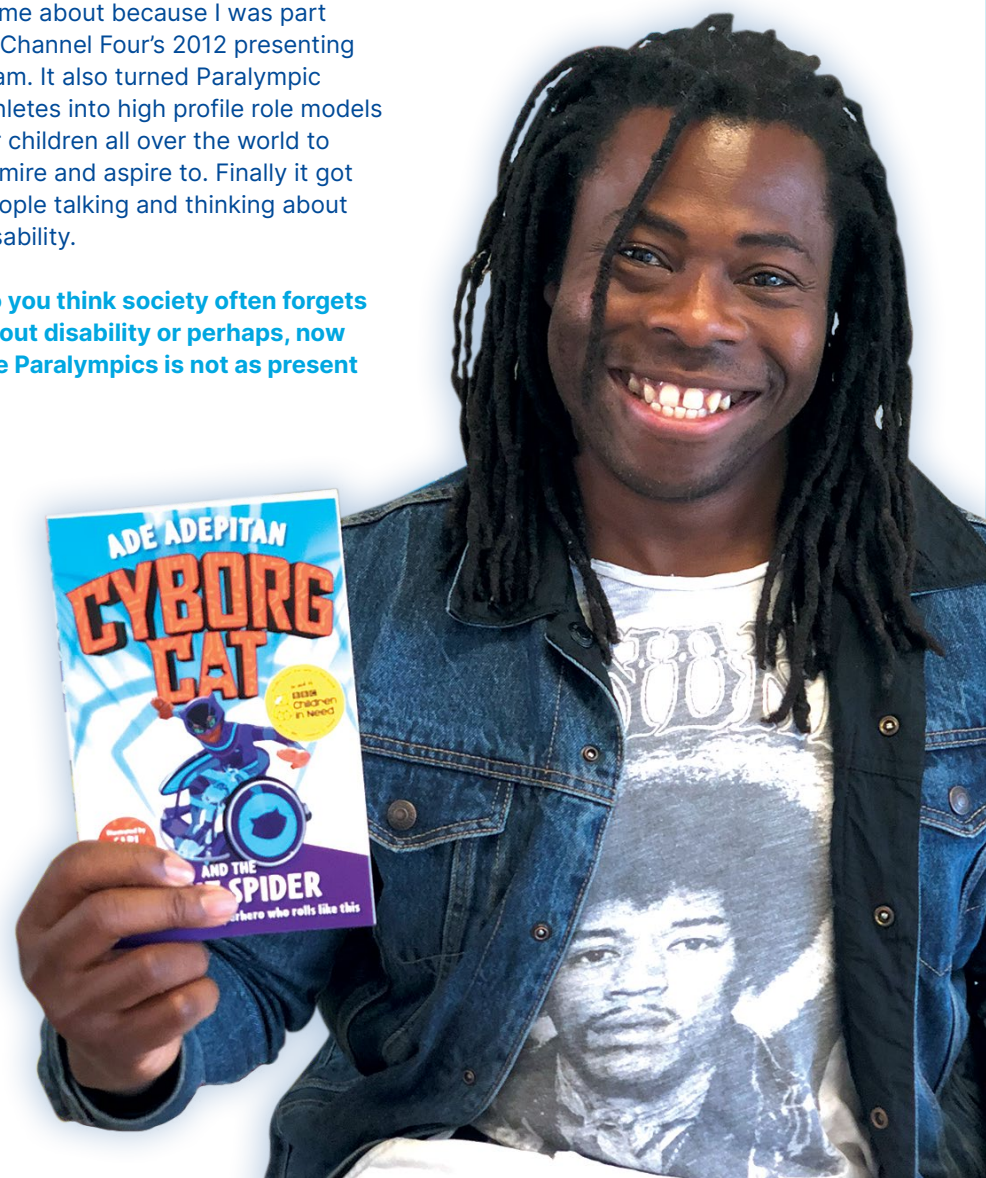
As a Paralympian, what do you love about the Paralympics? The Paralympics gives disabled athletes the opportunity to show the world that it doesn't matter who you are or what you look like, you can be great!

What kind of impact has 2012 Paralympics had on you and other people with disabilities? 2012 took my TV career to another level and I haven't looked back. Most of what I'm doing today on TV has come about because I was part of Channel Four's 2012 presenting team. It also turned Paralympic athletes into high profile role models for children all over the world to admire and aspire to. Finally it got people talking and thinking about disability.

Do you think society often forgets about disability or perhaps, now the Paralympics is not as present

in people's minds, don't try as hard to enable change? Both of these are true. We live in a world where visibility is key! Out of sight out of mind. Many people live in their own bubble mainly because of the pressures that society puts on them in work and with family. So unless they're directly affected or have friends or family that are affected by disability issues, they don't think about it. We must help the younger generation to believe in, and fight for equality for everyone.

What do you think we can expect from the 2021 Paralympics? Who are the Rising stars? The public's engagement? Will there be Increase of disability representation?
I haven't started my preparations for Tokyo so come back to me in a few months time for rising stars. Public engagement will be high as it's in Japan! It's an exciting country with an interesting culture that we rarely



see on TV. We've also been able to engage a whole generation with Paralympic sports because of 2012 so hopefully they'll stick with us for 2021. However, the time difference could make it challenging to keep people interested throughout the whole games.

What inspired you to write children's books? There aren't enough children's books with disabled superheroes! I wanted to change that.

If you can pick one thing that you wish all children could take away from reading your books, what would it be? That it's cool to be different.

What life lesson can children learn from Cyborg Cat and the Masked Marauder? That friendship and empathy are two of the most important things you can have in life.

Listen to Ade's story as part of our '30 Years, 30 Stories' oral history project with the British Library on our website: www.whizz-kidz.org.uk



Looking for an accessible holiday in the Lakes?

Try a short break at Brathay Hall

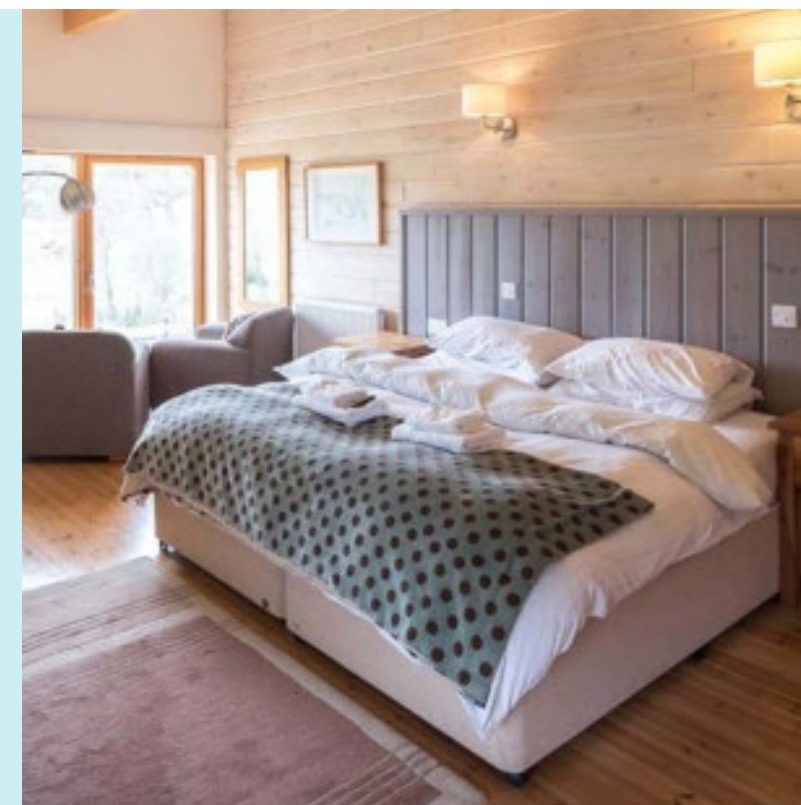
Brathay Hall has bed and breakfast rooms, which have disabled access, a wet room and shower chairs available. The Scafell Lodges are suitable for families and are dog friendly, so that your four-legged friend will be able to enjoy a touch of luxury too.

The lodges offer stunning views across the estate to the Lakeland fells and boast large, luxurious rooms. The Hall is situated in the beautiful Lake District, close to the picturesque town of Ambleside.

Profits from staying at Brathay go towards their continuing work with children and young people.

To book please ring reception on 015394 33041, email hello@brathay.org.uk or visit www.brathay.org.uk

Wheelchair users will receive a special Whizz-Kidz 15% discount from the standard rates. When booking please quote 'BDWK'.



Sarah Wallace

A day in the diary with Sarah Wallace, a Whizz-Kidz Senior Mobility Therapist.

Sarah has been working with us at Whizz-Kidz for 21 years!



The Whizz-Kidz

Business Alliance

This year, we launch the Whizz-Kidz Business Alliance – a membership scheme to help businesses across the UK demonstrate their commitment to supporting young wheelchair users.

Companies often support charities like Whizz-Kidz through employee fundraising or a Charity of the Year programme, which means colleagues can get together in the workplace to raise awareness and support. Why not ask your company to join our Business Alliance and spread the word in your workplace?

Businesses that join can help ensure more young people get access to the life-changing equipment, training and opportunities they need to reach their full potential and live active, independent lives. The Business Alliance also means more companies will be aware of the needs of disabled customers and colleagues, helping them to champion diversity and inclusion.

There are three levels of membership available to ensure the scheme is flexible to various sizes and types of businesses – so both small businesses and big companies are welcomed.

Each level offers members the chance to create opportunities and deliver change for young wheelchair users, including hosting a Whizz-Kidz work placement, inclusivity assessments with feedback from young wheelchair users and more! The top two levels also offer companies a chance to engage with our Whizz-Kidz Families Network, which will feature discounts and access to products and inclusive experiences for parents who sign up.

To find out more about how you can get your workplace involved in the Whizz-Kidz Business Alliance, please email us at businessalliance@whizz-kidz.org.uk.

You've probably come across one of our Whizz-Kidz therapists and engineers at work. They would have handed over your wheelchair or trike. They play a huge role in making our service personal and bespoke.

My alarm goes off at 6:15

I'm responsible for screening all the applications, assessing the children allocated to my clinics for appropriate wheelchairs, ordering the wheelchairs and handing them over and all the paperwork and organisation that goes alongside that.

I got the job about 25 years ago when my children were small (now they are both adults). I worked part time them and it fitted in around them fairly well.

My typical day - I walk the dogs and let the chickens out before breakfast, then, on an admin day I get to my desk about 8:30 and work through notes, orders and assessments until about 5:00. On a clinic day I travel to clinic to arrive about 8:30 then I usually start to see children from 9:00. We typically see between 4-6 children in clinic depending on how complex they are and at what stage of the process they are - longer for assessments, shorter for handovers and reviews.

My most proud Whizz-Kidz work moment - not one specific thing, but when I come across therapists that I know I have helped to train and young people who have made something of their lives because I got it right, I am proud.

The best part of my job

Every time I see a smile on a child's face or a tear in a parent's eye because what we have done has made things better for them.

After work I spend as much time in my garden growing things as the weather and light allow. In the dark and rain I make jams and chutneys and cakes and knit things for my grandchildren.

If I wasn't a Whizz-Kidz therapist, I would work in a plant nursery or a tea room.



Interested in working with us? Check out our jobs board at www.whizz-kidz.org.uk/jobs



Ramping up policy change in the UK

Whizz-Kidz CEO, Ruth Owen is doing her bit to shake things up in the UK.

For Whizz-Kids CEO, Ruth Owen, the challenge has always been about more than just getting people the right equipment. She should know – a wheelchair user since the age of 7 she struggled, and still faces daily challenges, to ensure she can live her life like anyone else.

“Recent events have brought home to all of us how hard it is to be isolated - unable to go out and travel, meet friends and eat and drink where you’d like. For wheelchair users, including myself and the thousands of young people we work with annually, those challenges are sadly still something of the norm.”

The problems are varied and many – some by bad design, some by poorly guided good intention and some from simple ignorance. A lot of these hurdles could be easily resolved before they ever become a problem by planners, designers, builders and businesses working with organisations like Whizz-Kidz to understand the problem and thus “build it out” – as Barratts are now doing through their partnership with our Kidz Board. “Do things with us – not for us” has to be our battle cry.

That is why as CEO Ruth has recently taken up the battle right at the heart of some key places that decisions are made - last year she took on the London chairmanship of a new Government initiative to break down the barriers disabled people and their families face in everyday life. She was also invited to advise the Mayor of London as part of his Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Panel.

“Whizz-Kidz is only doing half its remit if we don’t work to increase the opportunities young wheelchair users get in life. Since

I was a young girl, I have seen the difficulties we all face and how hard we have to fight for small changes in society. I have continually been told things are impossible to change, or it would take too long, or it couldn’t be done. But if we persevere it is amazing just how much can be changed.

I am determined that our country should positively embrace people with any form of disability and allow everyone to live the life they wish

and make whatever contribution to society that they are able. Some will say it is a dream - I genuinely believe it is a reachable goal.”

Yoko Ono once said “A dream is only a dream, when it is dreamt alone.” Join us in making that dream a reality.

Keep up to date with Ruth’s exciting work on our website: www.whizz-kidz.org.uk



Stepping up accessibility in new build homes

Going above and beyond the legal requirements on accessibility, we’re excited to be working with Barratt Developments to work out what the future of housing for wheelchair users might look like.

It’s fantastic when our work with companies extends beyond work placements to help make societal change outside the office and on an even larger scale. After having hosted a number of Whizz-Kidz work placements, last year, Barratt Developments asked us to work more closely with them on improving accessibility of the built environments they are working on.

Our Kidz Board were invited to visit developments across the UK looking at the accessibility of communal areas, producing a list of recommendations, and presented their findings to the CEO of Barratts. CEO, David Thomas told us, “As a

business it is really important that the developments we are building work for the entire community. By spending time with Whizz-Kidz and the Kidz Board, it provides a great opportunity for us to hear from wheelchair users about the challenges they face, and how we can get better when designing new housing developments. It was incredibly interesting to visit developments with members of the Kidz Board and see how little things can transform wheelchair users’ experiences and mobility around the area. We took a lot from it and are actively looking at how we can improve our designs.”

The Kidz Board recommendations have since been shared around the business with a focus on a specific area - dropped kerbs. “After a lot of discussions with the Kidz Board we now appreciate just what a problem it is for wheelchair users

and hopefully it’s something that we can make a practical difference on. With the help of the Kidz Board we want to raise awareness of how serious this issue is, and how local authorities, builders and car users all need to think about it.

Following swiftly on from auditing their builds, Barratts have now also asked The Kidz Board to audit their regional offices across the UK. David said, “We are planning an audit to ensure that we are creating inviting places to work for wheelchair users. On this, we’re really keen to support work placements where we can so please get in touch with your Whizz-Kidz representative if this is something that would interest you.”



**Come on
London,
let's mind
the gap**



Katie has been part of our London club's campaign to make the capital easier to get around for wheelchair users.

Some readers may already be aware of the social model of disability that states that people are disabled by obstacles in society, NOT by their impairment or disability. These are mostly physical barriers, for example, a building not catering for the wide range of disabilities and challenges that people face day to day. This social model helps to highlight the difficulties that make life harder for those with disabilities. Therefore, it was so important for me to become a member of

the youth-led London campaign team. By joining the young person's campaign team, I'm an active member to improve society and try to remove the barriers creating a more accessible London, which in turn creates equality and offers people with disabilities more independence, choice and control.

I've faced many accessibility challenges myself. I'm 20 years old, a wheelchair user and have Cerebral Palsy which affects all four of my limbs. I've often found that premises are difficult to enter or are totally inaccessible. From shopping areas and leisure facilities, the places I go to are often not set up to cater for my needs. I'm pleased to see an improvement in changing room facilities.

With support from the London Mayor's Fund, here at the London Whizz-Kidz club, we're getting our ideas and of how to make London more inclusive, communicated to organisations and the London Assembly. By auditing youth organisations businesses and public buildings, we're making recommendations of how not only their physical environments can be adapted, but also attitudes and behaviours inside those buildings become healthier towards wheelchair users. Through this work, we can help drive down the rates of youth loneliness amongst young wheelchair users.

Happy 30th Birthday Whizz-Kidz and my sincere thanks for all your marvellous support over the years.



PENNY RECEIVED HER FIRST CHAIR IN 2009 AND LEARNT TO USE IT AT A WHIZZ-KIDZ WHEELCHAIR SKILLS TRAINING.

SHE IS CURRENTLY CHAIR OF THE KIDZ BOARD KIDZ BOARD AND FEATURES IN OUR WORK PLACEMENTS ADVERT.

**FASHION,
WHEELCHAIR
FRAYED SLEEVES
& THAT PINK COAT!**

IF THERE'S ONE THING EVERYBODY WILL KNOW ABOUT BEING A CHILD, IT'S THAT VIRTUALLY EVERYTHING IN THEIR LIVES IS CONTROLLED BY ADULTS.

the colour pink. To say that damaged my self-esteem would be an understatement. It imposed an immense volume of self-loathing onto me.

I would typically gaze longingly at each mannequin, daydreaming about all what I would do if I owned that outfit when I went shopping. I would meander confidently in the rain, see my boots sparkle in the moonlight, have passers-by call me something other than a "brave little soldier." But of course, none of that could happen because, every time I wheeled into a shop, I would be forced to come to the unfortunately frequent realisation that designers didn't think of people like me. They thought of kids who could run and jump – not kids who needed sleeves that wouldn't fray when they were wheeling their wheelchair.

That was until the pink coat. This coat didn't look particularly extraordinary, the opposite actually: normal thickness, puffiness, weight, which wasn't normal to me. It was a coat that represented how I wanted to be seen, that didn't bunch up, fray or break as soon as I sat down. It was a coat that I freely chose. That's just the thing: choice. It was never about just clothes, think about it. When you were a kid, you didn't plan your outfit's days in advance or wake up earlier to dig through your chest-of-drawers... You adored the concept of independence. So do I! We like the ideas of adventure, expression and a sense of self. How we dress is just the beginning of that!

As a child you would yearn, whine and tug for even the smallest amount of control because you just wanted to feel like a big, independent grown-up.

With fashion you got to choose how you looked. You got to express how you felt and influence how society saw you, because the choice was yours. Yet I couldn't wear the clothes I wanted to, due to the fact they weren't designed with wheelchairs in mind!

At first, I tried my hardest to ignore the heartache that realisation caused, but over time, it evolved into a monster that I felt like I couldn't overcome. I had no way of making a stranger notice something other than my wheelchair and letting them see a kid who just loved

We're supporting better accessible transport in Scotland

Last year, a group of young people from our Scottish clubs presented their personal travel experiences at the national Accessible Travel Conference in Scotland. Framing them as "The Good the Bad and The Hopeful", together we shared the experiences that young people and their families face when trying to get out and about in a wheelchair.

As a result, we're proud to have helped the Scottish Government's Accessible Transport Group develop a new app to help tackle some of these issues of isolation. The Thistle Card and app is a new nationwide transport support scheme to help people use public transport. Next up, we're going to run an accessibility audit at Glasgow Airport in 2020!

McKenzie at the Whizz-Kidz Challenge 75 event last year

Celebrating

our Challenge

75 success

Whizz-Kidz celebrated wheelchair users and non-wheelchair users alike this August, as they joined forces during our bespoke Challenge 75 – Your Own Way event, a UK-wide event to raise vital funds and awareness to support young wheelchair users.

Challenge 75 started with a simple statistic, “across the UK there are an estimated 75,000 young wheelchair users”. Whizz-Kidz wanted to find a way to both support and celebrate these young people and from this Challenge 75 was born.

Last year we launched Challenge 75 by gathering in The Olympic Park for 75 minutes of family friendly, track lapping, fundraising action. This year we invited anyone, anywhere to take on their own personal Challenge 75 by completing their own 75-related activity. We very much look forward to welcoming the event back in 2021 and combining both events in one so that everyone can take part no matter their geographic location, or ability. This event is for all!

Paula McGoveney, Head of Public Fundraising at Whizz-Kidz, said: **“Challenge 75 is all about setting your own challenges. We’ve seen people all over the UK come together to help us support even more young wheelchair users. We may not have been together physically but we celebrate together knowing that every effort makes such a big difference!”**

Some of our returning competitors are the family of McKenzie O’Reilly.

McKenzie, a solid supporter of Whizz-Kidz, loves being out and about, going swimming, playing wheelchair tennis and wheelchair rugby. His lightweight wheelchair from Whizz-Kidz helps him keep up with his friends and stay active.



McKenzie said: **“I wanted to do Challenge 75 to help other boys and girls like me. The best bit was crossing the finish line! I was really excited about how well I’d done and could show my medal to my friends at school!”**

Whizz-Kidz couldn’t function without the energy, determination, enthusiasm and creativity of our supporters’ fundraising efforts. Thank-you to everyone who dusted off their sweatbands and took on Challenge 75 this Summer. Here’s to coming together again in 2021. Get in touch with Whizz-Kidz’ Events Team at events@whizz-kidz.org.uk to be the first to hear about Challenge 75 2021!

Word search answers!

Check to see if you got all the answers right!

Q	S	C	V	G	Y	U	F	U	N	K	L	P	P	O	I	J	F	N	B
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R	N	D	O	U	S	W	E	L	D	A	K	S	K	I	L	L	Z	A	J





Lean on me

We all need somebody to lean on - said the soulful singer songwriter Bill Withers. And sometimes, it's not your clinical team you need, nor friends or family. Sometimes, it's another parent or carer of a wheelchair user – their shoulder to lean on. No long explanations required. Someone who just gets it.

As part of our 30th anniversary celebratory year, we're launching a new community for Whizz-Kidz families. A place where parents can seek advice from the experts - other families! Whether it's booking an accessible family holiday, transitioning from paediatric to adult clinical services, choosing a college or navigating financial pressures, there are people out there that have been there, done that. And they want to help you get the t-shirt.

The parents and carers of some of our Kidz Board members told us that having the chance to meet other families through Whizz-Kidz

has been a real benefit to them over the years. So we've been putting plans in place to make it easier than ever for you to keep in touch with everything on offer at the charity and connect with the wider Whizz-Kidz Community. A place to share your challenges, questions and top tips with other parents and carers.

Parents and carers of our Kidz Board members told us that what they found most valuable in having a network of other Whizz-Kidz families, was to be able to lean on other families that understand and to share advice from their experience so far.


"Being part of the Whizz-Kidz community and parents group has been immensely helpful over the past few years."

"...Having a space amongst parents of young wheelchair users reminds me that I am not going this alone. I have a plethora of individuals that I can rely on, not only for disability related advice, but also for general emotional support."

Share your experience, learn from and help others.

We'll be providing helpful videos, tips and resources from Whizz-Kidz, and letting you know about other relevant support available to your family at www.whizz-kidz.org.uk/FamiliesNetwork

Sign up now and join a network of like-minded families with top tips, advice and a shoulder to lean on.



Leave a gift in your will to transform the lives of young wheelchair users, now and in the future.

Hopefully our 30th Anniversary magazine has given you an insight into all the great work Whizz-Kidz is doing to support young wheelchair users but there is so much more we can do.

Our mission is to transform the lives of disabled children by providing the equipment, support and life skills they need, when they need them – giving them the chance to develop their full potential.

By supporting Whizz-Kidz with a Gift in your Will, you could help a young wheelchair user have a fun and active childhood, and the chance to live their life to their full potential.

Together we can work towards a future where all disabled children's lives are full of fun, friendship and hope for an independent future.

If you have any questions or you like to talk to us about the difference a gift in your will could make please get in touch.

Call: 0207 798 6111

Email: legacies@whizz-kidz.org.uk

Visit: www.whizz-kidz.org.uk/leave-a-legacy

Happy

Birthday!



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 Whizz-Kidz



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