



Make Them Smile
Children's Charity

Registered Charity No: 1150013

Registered with



FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR

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www.makethemsmile.org.uk

Introduction and Welcome

Welcome to our very first Newsletter.

We have put this newsletter together to highlight some of our achievements throughout 2020 and to also request your support towards the projects we are undertaking and are hoping to achieve this year and beyond.

A little about Make Them Smile, we are a small national charity that helps disadvantaged children and young adults within the UK that have a wide range of adverse medical conditions and debilitating disabilities such as cerebral palsy, epilepsy, leukaemia and Duchene's muscular dystrophy amongst others.

Our aim is to improve the quality of life of children and their families by providing medical equipment and aids, financial support with hospital travel, white goods, sensory equipment, and respite breaks at our specially adapted holiday homes. Due to the terrible pandemic, 2020 was an incredibly challenging year, but due to supporters such as yourself we were still able to continue to assist and improve the lives of children and their families.

We achieved this by way of providing equipment, practical and emotional support, holidays, and respite.

None of what we achieve would be possible without funding from people such as yourself.

A selection of our achievements over the last 12 months

Covid-19 Pandemic

The covid-19 pandemic has had a major impact on everybody's life, Sadly, some more than others.

In the first weeks of the National lockdown in March 2020, we were inundated with calls for help, on a scale we were not expecting, and we were ill-prepared for.

We very quickly set up and manned our 24 hour help and support line where we were able to offer practical and emotional support, as well as advice and comfort.

We have provided food parcels, food vouchers and helped families struggling with utility bills.

Whilst the Hydrotherapy pools are closed, we are loaning hot tubs to children unable to attend Hydrotherapy sessions.

We have also provided laptops and tablets to children to assist with home schooling.



Equipment

Eye-Gaze System

It is with thanks to our supporters and donors that we have been able to change a young lady's life by the provision of an Eye Gaze System. She has juvenile pilocytic astrocytoma (a rare childhood brain tumour) that left her severely impaired to co-ordinate movements.

This has made it difficult to use technology and other implements that her peers can use comfortably. Because of this, she has felt withdrawn and left behind and even more so during the pandemic.

The Eye Gaze system has enabled her to use and control her computer with her eyes meaning she can now independently communicate with her friends, manage her own schoolwork, and conduct her own research.

This has given her a real boost in confidence and a new lease in life, she feels more included than before.



Electric Hoist

We have purchased a desperately needed electrically operated hoist for a family of an 11-year-old girl, diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy – Spastic quadriplegia, Global development Delay, Epilepsy and Visual impairment.

Mum and dad, numerous times a day, were having to lift her in and out of bed as well as in and out of the bath, previously, family members were able to help occasionally to relieve some pressure from mum and dad but with social distancing and having to remain within a family bubble this could no longer be achieved.

Receiving the electric hoist has not just eased the pressures put on this family, it has been life changing.



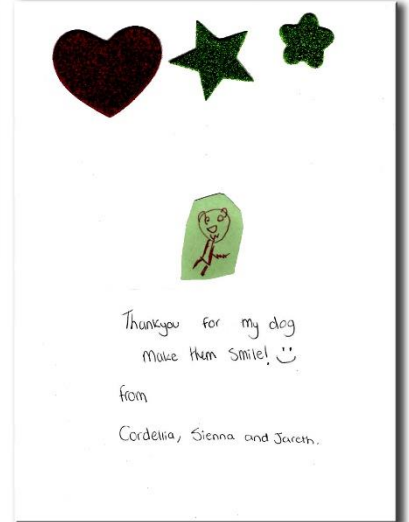


Amongst other purchases in the last 12 months were:
 Wheelchairs to give 2 children their own independence.
 Bathroom aids to assist bathing in a wet room.
 White goods for a family who tragically lost their appliances due to a house fire.
 Beds, Mattresses and clean bedding for children living in terrible conditions.
 New carpets for a child's bedroom who was regularly hospitalised due to severe Asthma.



Together we can, and have, Made A Difference

Support Dog



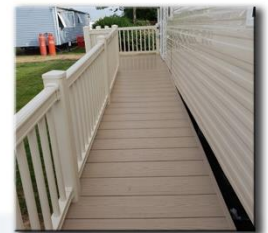
We have now purchased "Bear", a 10-month-old Labrador, he is now undergoing intensive training as an Autism Support Dog for a family with 3 children (Cordelia 10, Jareth 3 & Sienna 8). Two of the children have autism and the other has an exceedingly rare form of epilepsy resulting in 40+ seizures a day. We took the decision to provide the family with a support dog after taking advice from the Psychologists at Sheffield Children's Hospital who recommended that

Cordelia and Jareth would both benefit from an Autism Support Dog, as this would allow them to develop their confidence and build up their social skills as well as to help regulate their emotions as they grow older.

We have been assured that the wellbeing dog will provide invaluable support regarding their anxiety issues, we are also informed that Sienna's anxiety issues will improve and that she will also benefit from having a wellbeing dog as it would provide comfort and support for her when she is out of the house, she also has a tracheotomy and poor mobility which has left her wheelchair bound.

We wish the family well and will document Bears progress on our website: www.makethemsmile.org.uk.

Respite and Holidays



A short break away is often key for the survival of family relationships during the roller-coaster ride of childhood illnesses, for this reason, we feel it is important to give families the quality time together that they need, away from hospitals, doctors, and treatment, during the covid-19 pandemic, this has never been more so. Sadly, we had to re-arrange some of our bookings due to lockdown, however, thankfully, were able to secure the use of another holiday home in Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, which enabled us to make good the bookings that could be arranged. Our holiday homes are situated at Haven's Golden Sands Holiday Park, Mablethorpe We can now provide respite for between 90 and 100 families each year. (When not in lockdown). The Park has amenities to suit all ages whether rain or shine, it is wheelchair friendly throughout and are within proximity to all the amenities. Our holiday homes are well equipped with the following: Wheelchair access ramp, Hoist in Main Bedroom, Adapted Wet Room, Lowered work surfaces, lowered light switches and sockets, Wheelchair access to each room, Extra wide sliding doors, Fully accessible throughout, Central Heating, Double glazing, External Electric sockets for charging electric wheelchairs.



Christmas 2020



With COVID-19, families enduring the tier system restrictions, and rumours of another National lockdown threatening to ruin Christmas for families throughout the United Kingdom, it was a true privilege and absolute pleasure to have been able to spread some joy by providing children with presents from Santa Claus.

Santa did however, get help from the staff and exceedingly kind customers of the Co-op at Wyberton. It was a pleasant end to a terrible year.

Our projects for 2021 and beyond

Snapdragon Wheelchair

We wish to purchase a Snapdragon wheelchair for Josie, an 8-year-old girl who is growing up fast and rapidly growing out of her wheelchair. Josie has a diagnosis of Spinal Muscular Atrophy Type II; this is a genetic condition that affects the muscles. Because of poor muscle strength, she is unable to walk or weight bear and depends on her wheelchair. This, in turn, causes the simplest of tasks to become a tremendous struggle for her.

The chair which Josie has been using since nursery, allows her to rise and fall in height depending on what activity she is doing. The Snapdragon would crucially provide her with the necessary support she requires to meet all her postural needs. Obviously, mobility is not just all about the physical aspects of moving around, there is an especially important social and emotional impact of the ability to move as well. The Snapdragon wheelchair would enable Josie to live a much more normal life, allowing her to interact with her peers and adults alike with greater ease. It would be extremely safe, for both Josie, and for others around her. With your help, we would like to make Josie's dream come true by replacing her old wheelchair at the cost of £24,000. Below is an extract from a letter sent by Josie's doctor.



"Josie is used to her current chair and manages very well both at school and on family outings. Her condition does not affect cognitive function and she will be able to use a new chair very safely, as she does with her current chair. As it is exceptionally light to use, it is therefore likely that it is safer for people in the vicinity, as it can be manoeuvred with great ease. Unfortunately, this type of wheelchair is not available on NHS provision and Josie's parents are applying for a grant to enable them to purchase another chair. If she were unable to have another Snapdragon and had an inferior chair this would affect her both physically and mentally. It would be likely to affect her interactions with other pupils and friends at school, as well as family members. The Snapdragon chair is custom built, and the seating can go from floor to eye level. As you will agree, this will much more easily mimic able-bodied function and allow her to interact with people with more ease. Since Josie spends so many hours of her day in the wheelchair it is very important that it is comfortable and will reduce the risk of her having pressure sores."

Innowalk Walking System

We wish to purchase an Innowalk for 5-year-old McKenzie, who is diagnosed with type 1 SMA. His parents really want to get him into an Innowalk as soon as possible so that this wonderful personality trait can shine. An Innowalk will help him to move and stand independently which will release pressure on his lungs enabling him to breathe better, this in turn will strengthen his respiratory system allowing him to move his muscles, thus preventing irreversible deterioration, in addition to giving him the independence he visibly needs and wants. An Innowalk will help him to interact socially and allow him the freedom and independence it provides.

It is the versatility and adaptability of an Innowalk that the family are confident will improve his standard of living. Without one they are concerned he will not achieve the developmental milestones he needs to have as a young child. At this point in his life, it is key that he does not feel inhibited by his disability and it starts with becoming mobile and independent like his peers. The total cost of an Innowalk Pro is £13,000.

Social and Educational: (Dependent on Restrictions)

We believe it is fundamentally important that all children suffering from any form of illness, disease or disability or are from disadvantaged backgrounds should be equal in having the chance to learn and understand about their culture, history, and future. We also feel that children and their Families who are going through these stressful and traumatic experiences need a break from their normal day to day routine.

For these purposes we propose to organise excursions that will include trips for educational, therapeutic, respite and recuperation purposes.

Listed is a small sample of some of the places we intend to send them:

London planetarium - History and science museums - Horse riding - National heritage sites - Eden project - Tower of London Zoos - Horticultural projects - Sea-life centres and Adventure experiences

To fund a family day trip or respite break including travel, food and expenses will range from £250.00 to £500.00.

To fund a group day trip including travel, food and expenses will range from £750.00 to £1,500.00.

To fund a group week/weekend for an educational or adventure programme including accommodation, travel, food, and expenses will range from £3,000 to £5,000.

Autism Support Dog

An Autism support dog for Kieran.

This will be the 3rd Autism Support dog that we are privileged to be involved with, we have seen first-hand the difference an assistance dog makes to the life of an Autistic child.

Kieran is diagnosed with Autism, ADHD, Anxiety (associated with Autism), hypermobility and Sensory Processing Disorder.

Some of the effects of his condition mean that the daily life for this family is incredibly challenging.

The main concerns are;

Kieran escalates into meltdowns very quickly and can be physical towards his siblings. He does not adhere to boundaries and he does not share. Kieran shows echolalia tendencies (meaningless repetition of another person's spoken words) and lacks the understanding of language. Kieran finds it extremely hard to cope with change and this has worsened since March 2020. Kieran's behaviour is deteriorating, and his parents are finding it increasingly harder to cope with his aggression. This is why the family are praying for a therapy dog which will help aid Kieran to interact better with his siblings.

Kieran's Mum and Dad are desperate to be able to enjoy family activities with all the children.

They have researched about support dogs and decided to have their needs assessed, some animal assisted therapy sessions were arranged with the family to ensure it was the route they wanted to take. His parents noticed improvements in Kieran's and the other children's behaviours during the trials and have approached Make Them Smile for help to purchase their very own therapy dog.

The main positives will be:

Reduction in Kieran's controlling behaviour, more positive sibling relationships, ability to go out together as a family, create a positive routine for all the family to take part in the care of the dog and use a reward scheme to encourage good behaviour.

All the above outcomes are achievable by having a therapy dog to support Kieran and the whole family. Some results will be immediately apparent, and some will develop and show over time. A variety of training for the whole family and one to one training will be included as well as Liaising with Kieran's school to introduce the dog to the school environment.

The cost of purchasing and then training an Assistance Dog to the required level, is £7,900.00



New Holiday Home For 2022

One of our two holiday homes is 10 years old this year.

Owing to its continuous use, it is now beginning to show signs of severe wear and deterioration.

Due to its age and it being specially adapted for wheelchairs and disability use we have been advised that a refit would not be cost effective, nor practical.

We will not compromise the safety of our families and therefore, our only viable option is to exchange it for a later or brand-new model that is also wheelchair and disability friendly.

The replacement will cost between £38,000 and £48,000.

We appreciate this is a large amount of money, however each of our holiday homes provide respite breaks and holidays for more than 50 families each year. That would be approximately 500 families over its 10-year lifespan.

That will be equal to each respite break/holiday costing between £76 and £96 per family.



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