

## Baby of Mine

*A diagnosis of blindness, with or without other disabilities, sets families reeling across Ireland every single day. But knowing what they and their children have overcome, and will go on overcome thanks to you, shines a light like no other. Here, two ChildVision mums share with you the stories of their beloved babas...*

### RÓISÍN, THE FIGHTER

Róisín's fighting spirit might never have been fully discovered if not for your generosity. As little as three years back, Ireland still had the highest rate of invasive meningitis in Europe<sup>1</sup>. Yet statistics aside no family is prepared for the words Róisín's were to hear just nine days after their baby was born. Meningitis, Group B Strep. "They told us that her MRI was 'devastating.' That Róisín would be completely blind. Never walk. Never talk. Never swallow. Then they told us they were taking her off the

ventilator that was keeping her alive." But Róisín took a breath. And another. And another.

### Mountains and milestones

Step by step, mountains became milestones. The day Róisín started feeding on her own. The day her parents, Lauren and Thomas, found ChildVision after weeks of panic and doubt. The fear, even then, in coming to campus. "When I saw the equipment lined up outside the preschool and how medically fragile the children were, to be honest, I was scared. But we



Your support of ChildVision's special preschool is helping Róisín reach milestones that mum Lauren was told her baby would never see. Thank you!

were welcomed straight away and Róisín is just so happy coming in and out."

Because of your support Róisín's fighting spirit now has a place to soar, free of the stigma that too often still surrounds disability (story page 3). And as mum Lauren shares two recent milestones they were told Róisín would never see, her eyes sparkle. "It happened just weeks ago – just before Róisín's second birthday – when she sat up in

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Photo: Your kind support is giving Róisín and Caoimhe the chance to go to school, have friends, and grow to their fullest potential. Thank you!



## Baby of Mine

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her cot for the very first time. Then, at five o'clock in the morning, there was singing. She's such a little fighter."

### CAOIMHE, THE MYSTERY

As quickly as Róisín's family received a diagnosis, Caoimhe's remains a mystery. And if not for your help in giving visually impaired children a school of their own, her learning might have remained in limbo as well.

"We heard about ChildVision from our local primary care team. My husband, Noel, looked at the website. We were just so relieved to find that Caoimhe might have somewhere to go and make friends, and have an education," mum Martina remembers.

### Shadow world

The family's relief at learning people in Ireland cared enough to help fund a school for Caoimhe is understandable – for nearly two and a half years they lived in a shadow world. Waiting months for appointments. Travelling to specialists. Being told Caoimhe



"To the donors who support ChildVision and are reading this newsletter, I don't want them to feel sorry for Caoimhe...I want them to feel happy that they are doing something so worthwhile to help her," says Martina, mum of Caoimhe.

was perfectly healthy. Her eyes rolling back in her head and the desperate screaming in public places, and knowing something wasn't right. People telling Martina, a first-time mum, that she was overreacting. Having the courage to press for more appointments. More waiting. More tests. Then at last to hear there were 'great concerns about Caoimhe's vision.'

Still, no one's yet told them if Caoimhe is blind. "We had a week to find out whether it was a tumor or not. We thought she would die. Then we started to realise that she was crying and scared about her surroundings because she couldn't see them. We still don't have an answer."

### The one true answer

If you can imagine holding it together through so much doubt and fear and strife, then you can imagine as well the relief and gratitude when a weary, waiting family finds ChildVision. At learning about the therapy that's free of charge because of you. At being welcomed when they've found door after door closed to that point. At watching a child like Caoimhe happily sit down and eat her lunch, and listen for her favorite preschool staff. "To the donors who support ChildVision and are reading this newsletter, I don't want them to feel sorry for us or for Caoimhe. I want them to know, she's the happiest, most loved child. And I want them to feel happy that they are doing something so worthwhile for her." ♥

**Thank you for believing in a future for Ireland's blind babies, and for bringing new hope to their families. You are our hero.**

<sup>1</sup>Source: Irish Times, 8 May 2014, "Ireland has highest rate of invasive meningitis in Europe, conference hears."

## The Greatest Words You May Ever Write...

**W**riting your will is important for so many reasons, from protecting your estate from taxes to looking after your loved ones. But if you choose, it can also stand as a testament to you and to causes close to your heart, so the future

for those in need will be better for your having lived.

A gift in your will to ChildVision, small or large, is a legacy that will shine in the faces of Ireland's blind children long after your lifetime. And for your generosity, when the time comes, we'll plant a rose with

your name in our gardens to remember you always.

To check on proper wording to bring to your solicitor, or for a confidential chat with no obligation at all to you, **ring Ruth on 01 837 8635**. We're here to help. ♥





# Voices of Change

*Blindness and other disabilities can happen to anyone, at any time. And as a supporter one of the wonderful things you help to fund is our vocational programme for blind and multi-disabled young people aged 16 to 23. Here they prepare for independent living, further training, and supported employment in a sighted world. In a recent workshop on how to ease the fear around blindness and other disabilities, they talked about what they'd like for people they meet to know about them...*



I can see a bit and when people stare at me with my cane, I worry that I've done something wrong. If they could be considerate and respectful of people with visual impairments and give us space, I would like that."



Remember not to feed a working guide dog. They are allowed to go everywhere except the zoo and certain parts of hospitals."



If people see me out I would like them to pay attention to my cane, but not use it as an excuse to treat me differently. There are lots of things I can do for myself."



If sighted people want to help a blind person the best thing they can do is to ask first if that person needs help."



I would like for drivers to be more considerate if they see me with my cane, and not park on the footpath because that makes it hard to get by. In the shops it also helps when people move their trolleys out of the way."



People can think all blind people are the same. But all visually impaired people see things differently. Some can see more than others. Some can only see shapes, or only be able to tell if it's light or dark. We're not all the same."

As part of the vocational programme you help fund at ChildVision, seven visually impaired students recently had a chance to speak out about blindness, disability, and life in a sighted world. (Clockwise, starting top left, they are: Sean, Luke, Chris, Matilde, Grace, Eilis, Edvard.)



If someone wants to help a blind person get somewhere they should ask if they take my elbow or if I take theirs, and not grab my arm. They can also ask how they should guide me."



"What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us."

— Ralph Waldo Emerson



**A day for your diary that blossoms with joy and thanks!**

## You're Invited: Annual June Garden Party

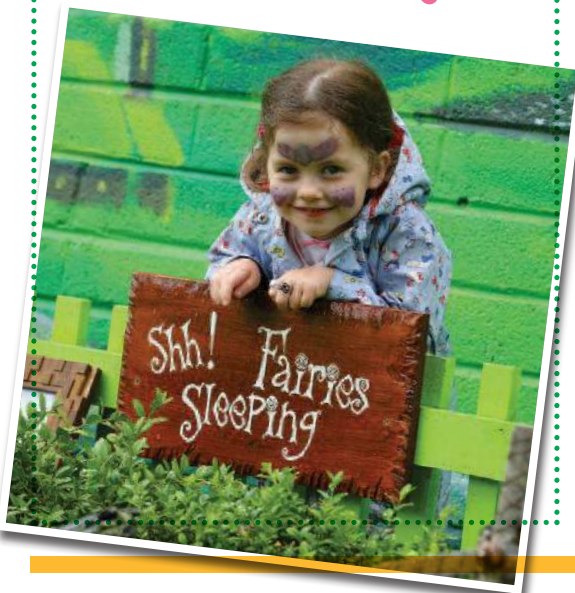
Please join us for ChildVision's annual Garden Party to thank families, friends, and wonderful donors like you who make it all possible. With pony rides, spring plants to purchase, a bouncy house, and more, it's a fun, free day for young and old, blind and sighted!

**When:** Saturday 10th June, 2017  
from 12 noon to 4.00pm

**Where:** ChildVision,  
Grace Park Road,  
Drumcondra, Dublin 9  
(enter via Gate 3)

**Who:** All welcome...  
bring your friends!

**Admission:** FREE!



**You ask. We answer:**

## Why Do ChildVision Send Me Mail?

*If you've ever wondered, 'Is the mail I receive from ChildVision worth the effort and expense? Do those newsletters and letters really help Ireland's blind children?' The answer is Yes. And it may surprise you just how much they do help...*

### WHY WE SEND MAIL:



#### To Help Ireland's Blind Children

The State now funds less than half of our work each year. Without the kind funds raised from mailings like this one, Ireland's blind children would have nowhere to turn.



#### To Report Back to Those Who Support Us (Like You!)

The ChildVision Newsletter is one of the most effective ways to directly show how much your gifts accomplish. And when you share it with friends, the good you do for blind children is multiplied.



#### To Open Doors and End the Stigma

There is much that multi-disabled blind children can do – and much they have to say – if we give them a voice and a chance. In receiving our newsletters and letters you help their stories to be heard.

Newsletters like this one, on average, **raise more than €2 in kind donations for every €1 it costs to produce and post** them. These funds are vital for keeping our doors open and continuing the programmes and therapy that help blind children in Ireland to learn, grow, and thrive. **Thank you!** ♥

*You can trust us to do  
what's right. Today, tomorrow,  
and always!*



**ChildVision**

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