

Helping Blind Children Make Their Way

The ChildVision programmes that encompass Orientation & Mobility (O&M) are often a mystery to many people. Today our lovely O&M specialist Laura Cleary guides you through what it's like helping blind and visually impaired students learn to safely make their way in the world, thanks to your kind support...

Staff O&M specialist Laura Cheney begins simply, "O&M is about knowing where you are, how to get to where you want to go, and doing so in a safe manner." But "80% of your learning is through vision," she continues. "Imagine learning to make your way without the ability to interpret and understand information from your eyes." Therein lies Laura's special gift: she knows how to help even little ones through that very big challenge.

"I'm proud to be an O&M specialist"

Laura's eyes are bright and warm as she describes her day – giving you an instant sense of why she's so good at what she does. "When I start working with a new child, they might be only aged 3 or 4. The world is a huge place and whether it's the sound

of the toilet flushing from the bathroom or the smell of food from the kitchen, every sound and smell can be scary unless you know how to process it." With the help of your donations, Laura shows her young students how to use these sounds and smells as cues. She pauses, then smiles and says, "I'm proud to be a qualified O&M specialist."

Trust matters most

"Ultimately," Laura goes on to say, "we are teaching blind and visually impaired children and young people to safely explore and navigate their world. But they can't do that unless they believe I can keep them safe from harm." So to build trust, she says, she keeps each O&M session as fun as possible. "For

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Thanks to you, O&M specialist Laura Cleary helps blind children like Georgia learn to make their way in a sighted world. (Story above.)



When Callum Flanagan finished speaking at Family Night about his beloved brother Richard, a student at ChildVision, there were few dry eyes left in the house. Today we share an excerpt of Callum's heartfelt speech with you, to take you inside the amazing lives you touch...

My Brother Richard

by Callum Flanagan

My name is Callum Flanagan and I am big brother to Richard and Anna Flanagan.

I was 4 years old when Richard was born and he turned my world upside down but I loved the bones of him from the very start. When we went to the hospital after he was born, mammy was there and there was a cot but no baby, only a photo. I couldn't wait to have a little brother to play football with, and to teach him all the things I knew.

We were at home a lot because Richard was too sick to travel or go anywhere. We missed out on years of going places as a full family, but it was great to have Richard at home. Richard was 3 when he started going to ChildVision and we could see an improvement from the get-go. Richard's confidence

was growing all the time and he began to include himself more and more in family activities but was still very sick at times and was in and out of hospital regularly. Thanks to our Auntie Jo we got to get away a couple of times and we really enjoyed it, but I always felt a little sad too because Richard wasn't with us and sometimes I wondered how he was and what he was doing.

So I was over the moon when Mam told us about ChildVision's respite weekend because for the first time ever Richard could come with us. We were so excited travelling we took a wrong turn and ended up driving down a lane and Dad got chased by a donkey when he opened a gate to turn. When we finally got there we were greeted by Richard's nurse for the weekend. All of the staff



The Flanagan Family, (clockwise L to R) Aidan, Anna, Brigid, Callum, and Richard... thank you for helping them!

from the preschool was there, Richard was very happy to see them and so were Mam and Dad as they knew Richard was in great care. The weekend was brilliant because Richard was not just being minded but was totally included in the holiday. The weekend taught us that we weren't the only family going through this, and it made us feel a little more normal.

Richard discovered horse riding thanks to Audrey at ChildVision, he put up a huge struggle before he got on the horse but then discovered that he really enjoyed it and put up

Thank You for Their Spectacular Summer



This past summer as a direct result of your kind support, the learning didn't end: twenty visually impaired children and young people with multiple disabilities were able to enjoy the fun and friendship of ChildVision's Summer Camp. And it couldn't have happened without you...

an even bigger struggle when his session was over. Horse-riding has really improved his core strength. Mam attended swimming lessons in the ChildVision pool specifically designed for children with complex needs and now swimming is one of Richard's favorite pastimes. He even had a pool party for his first holy communion.

There is always a warm welcome for us in ChildVision, they continue to see the potential in Richard and help him to become the best that he can possibly be. I hope that ChildVision can continue to help families in the way that they have helped us and I would like to thank everyone in ChildVision for helping Richard to become the person that he is today. I know that he will continue to grow and learn under their professional care and guidance.

Special recognition as well to Richard's big sister Anna, who is also featured in the photo: she recently helped raise €540 at a mini-marathon, for the work of ChildVision! ❤️

Among the Highest Standards In the Country

Every day at ChildVision we take great care to ensure that your generosity always accomplishes the extraordinary for Ireland's blind children and young people, in ways like these...



Upholding high standards: When ChildVision's residential student houses recently came up for re-registration with the Health and Information Authority (HIQA), you will be pleased and proud to know they achieved among the highest standards in the country.

Operating with accountability: As one of just 70 listed charities in Ireland with the Cii Gold Standard Triple Lock of Governance, ChildVision gives you the confidence that your kind donation is put to use under ethical fundraising principles, transparent accounting, and good governance structures.



Investing in what works: For every euro it costs to place this newsletter in your hands, two euro are raised to help our blind and visually impaired children here – a sound investment indeed.

Sharing openly and honestly: ChildVision's Annual Reports, including our latest report for 2018, are always available free to you online, 24/7. If you ever have questions about the work, we're here: ring Ruth anytime on 01 837 3635.



**Thank you today and always for the trust you have placed in us.
And thank you for caring about Ireland's blind children.**



They did equine therapy and horse riding...



Played in the gym and on the field...



Spent loads of time laughing and learning and exploring...



And even test-drove some new wheels!

Thank you for a summer to remember. You are the heart of ChildVision. ❤️

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example, a trip to Tesco can incorporate cane skills, negotiating obstacles, coin recognition, and money management." For the youngest students, "a game of hide and seek can really help them to learn in a variety of safe and exciting settings here on campus. We are very fortunate our supporters help us to have such great facilities on site!"

Helping the whole family

No matter what disabilities her students and families are living with, Laura's goal is to support



Little Georgia, who is now nearly blind, started learning to use a cane when she was only 3 years of age. Thanks to Laura – and your generosity – she's a star student!

all her children and young people to lead as independent a life as possible. And she speaks with great heart as she talks about those first steps at Orientation & Mobility you make real. "Giving a child a cane for the first time can be a daunting experience for both parents and child, so I also teach sighted guide

techniques, protective techniques, and cane skills. Knowing when to use the cane and using it safely can give more independence than anyone can express with words. Simply by holding it in front of them, they gain confidence." **Safely making their way in the world, because of you: thank you! ♥**

Could you visit us this school year?

Now that the school year is underway we hope you'll visit the ChildVision campus for a guided visit, to see ALL the magic you make possible for children! To arrange a time that suits, contact Ruth on **01 837 3635** or **ruthallen@childvision.ie**.



Grateful Greetings From A Garden Party

Whether or not you were able to attend this year's Garden Party, please know that on this very special day – as every day – our thanks are for you. And in miles of smiles, our families, supporters, and students sent grateful greetings back to you...



We hope to see you at Garden Party 2020! 😊



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