

## Field of Dreams

*Due to cerebral palsy and cortical visual impairment, Jay's brain doesn't process the signals his eyes are sending. But thanks to you, his future – and his dreams – remain bright...*

**S**ix weeks passed from the day Jay was born to the day he came home from hospital. Weeks that his mum Niamh had spent “clutching onto any hope I could.” She remembers looking at her beautiful baby boy, covered in tiny pricks and bruises from the

procedures and injections he'd endured, and worrying. *Would he talk? Would he walk? Would he be able to follow his dreams?*

### Medical mystery

No one can say for sure why or when the bleed to the brain occurs that causes cerebral palsy:

symptoms tell the tale. Jay's – called Spastic Hemiplegia Cerebral Palsy – affects his left side. It was a diagnosis made just hours after he was born, and it wouldn't be the last. One day his mum Niamh noticed that Jay wasn't doing the things that his brother Ben and sister Ana before him had done. He couldn't grasp objects. Couldn't return facial expressions.

Cortical visual impairment, the doctors said. Structurally, Jay's eyes were perfect. However his brain couldn't process the signals his eyes were sending. Jay was blind. Again, the family were

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Your support in action —

## Blind Judo... And Beyond!

*How do you help a blind child to minimise the risk and fear of falling? And how do you give them a sense of spatial orientation in the first place? As sixteen-year-old Paul explains, you bring all this (and more!) to children like him in ChildVision's blind judo programme...*

**H**is eyes are closed. The ChildVision judo area, quiet. As he grips his opponent there is a flurry of activity. Residential student Paul

is pinned on his back and then – before you know it – he has righted himself and regained command of the match. There is a confidence and flow to his



Paul has won three All-Ireland competitions, and all against non-visually impaired people. Thank you for supporting blind judo at ChildVision!

movements that would leave you more than a bit surprised to learn that Paul, who now holds the rank of All-Ireland orange belt, is nearly blind. He has been so almost since birth.

### Sense over sight

"My condition is Leber Congenital Amaurosis. I can see rough shapes, far – but not any details," Paul says as he describes his world. "But when I'm in a tournament, I close my eyes. I feel balanced and can sense where people are in their movements when I do that." It's a vital skill learnt that as you can imagine, helps him navigate the sighted world well beyond competition day.

### Not-so-secret agenda

Like so many programmes you make possible at ChildVision, these weekly blind judo classes have a not-so-secret agenda: helping blind and visually impaired children to build spatial orientation, balance, touch and muscle sensitivity, and yes, self-confidence – all while keeping safe and having fun. With its focus on grip and reacting off an opponent's movements, judo is

It officially opens on 6th April. But you can see it first —

## You're Invited: Exclusive Library Preview Tour

*What does a library look like when it's custom-made for disabled blind learners? Join us for this exclusive supporter preview tour, and be first to see the "sense-ational" space that's been remade by your generosity...*

**T**ouch and feel the tactile and braille books. Hear from staff how 'IT Heaven' will bring technology to children with profound sight loss – and test it for yourself. Immerse yourself in the wonders of the wheelchair-accessible Story Zone. The "new"

ChildVision library opens on 6th April. But with gratitude for your support in making this refurbished space real, we'd like you (and your friends!) to tour it first. Here's how:

**RSVP by 1st April** to reserve your preview tour for either 4th or 5th April at 11am or 2pm. >>



so well-adapted to blind learners that it's one of the most popular competitive sports in the world for the visually impaired. In fact, of the All-Ireland competitions that Paul has won, ALL have been against fully sighted competitors!

### On beyond judo

Paul has lived on-campus at ChildVision since sixth class, thanks again to support like yours. "Including me there are six students in my house, all boys and all blind or visually impaired. We have good craic in the evenings! I'm in Junior Cert year, and I use the donated braille note I've been given for almost everything. I want to go on to study either music, history, astronomy, or metallic studies." Then he quickly adds, "Or maybe judo!"

And as Paul steps off the ChildVision bus every Friday for his weekends at home, his little sister is waiting for him – one of her brothers who just happens to be almost blind, but who in her eyes can go on to do anything he puts his mind to. Thanks to you, we have no doubt she's right. 🇮🇪



Simply ring **01 837 3635** and let Ruth know which day and time suits. See you there! 🇮🇪

[www.childvision.ie](http://www.childvision.ie)

## Champions of ChildVision... And How to Be One!

*See who's doing big things for our disabled blind children, AND how you can become a fundraising champion of ChildVision in your own right! Details right here...*

**One Wild Ride:** In just a handful of months he'll set sail around Ireland in an open boat the size of two bathtubs – all to raise much needed funds for the children of ChildVision. Rally for skipper "Ted" Sargent and his fearless crew at [www.justgiving.com/onewildride](http://www.justgiving.com/onewildride).



**Apollo "Hell and Back" Challenge:** Northgate's Dave Dwyer wears his heart on his sleeve for blind children. So to help us out, he and his team tackle this aptly titled and devilishly difficult obstacle race on 25th June. <https://hellandback.everydayhero.com/ie/northgatechallenge>.



# ChildVision

**YOU, the champion? Yes!** You don't have to run a race or sail round Ireland to fundraise for ChildVision. From hosting a knitting class to lunch break bingo, there are ideas from A to Z on [www.childvision.ie/site/get-involved](http://www.childvision.ie/site/get-involved). Or ring Ruth on **01 837 3635** for more.

*From little to tall, ChildVision supporters are champions all. Thank you!*



## ...Dreams

*continued from cover*

thunderstruck. Yet there was hope even then.

### Surpassing expectations

Because of support like yours, doctors were able to give Niamh, Jay, and the family somewhere to turn. ChildVision. Since then Jay has surpassed all expectations. From preschool to now primary school, the pet farm, music, equine therapy – and especially Fred the horse – have brought

great changes in Jay. With an infectious laugh and a family that have been “towers of strength and bravery” for him since the start, Jay is hardy, confident, and loves riding the specially outfitted ChildVision bus to school. But there is one last thing you should know.

### Field of dreams

Years ago, when Jay’s family were facing some of their darkest, most uncertain hours, a friend said tenderly, “He will run a marathon one day.” And on

10th April, Jay will line up beside his mum and the other contestants for a 1.6km fun run in the Phoenix Park. He won’t be running... not just yet. But thanks to you, he will be there, walking across a rich and colorful field of dreams. Thank you! ■



Would you like to sponsor Jay’s steps as he and his family raise funds for ChildVision? It’s safe and secure when you visit his page at <https://give.everydayhero.com/ie/niamh-4>.

A garden of gratitude for the good you do —

## Will You Join Us for a June Garden Party?

*Bouncy castles, community spirit, plants to purchase, face-painting, and more... please join us for ChildVision’s annual Garden Party to thank families, friends, and wonderful donors like you. A free event for young and old, blind and sighted!*



**When:** Saturday 11th June, 2016  
from 12 noon to 4.00pm

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

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



How your bequest can bloom in the lives of blind children —

## Roses for Your Love, Everlasting



**W**hen you leave a gift in your will to ChildVision, we’ll plant a rose with your name in our gardens – a living symbol of love and gratitude for your legacy that will bloom in the lives of Ireland’s blind children after your lifetime.

For a confidential chat around a gift in your will or to request the proper language to take to your solicitor, ring Ruth on **01 837 3635**. ■



**ChildVision**

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