

## If Ashleigh Met Ed Sheeran

*Everybody at ChildVision knows: inside every child here there is a beautiful, talented personality waiting to be discovered – and it never matters how long it takes to unlock that beauty. It's down to your faithful support. Because without you, no one would ever have known the music that was within Ashleigh...*

**A**shleigh Fagan has one dream. She wants to sing with mega-star and singer/songwriter Ed Sheeran. The message she has for Ed is this:



*Hi Ed Sheeran, this is Ashleigh Fagan on behalf of Gentili House. I'd just like to meet you in ChildVision campus where I do the Rock n' Road Festival. I'm singing this year and I was wondering if you'd like to duet with me for 'Castle on the Hill.'*  
Kind regards – Ashleigh.

### To hear Ashleigh sing

If you have ever had the immense privilege of hearing Ashleigh sing, you will wonder. Why on earth hasn't her dream come true? You see, Ashleigh Fagan has the voice of an angel. Her musical gift will leave you spellbound.

Without people like you to support ChildVision year after

year, this place – these programmes for Ashleigh and other visually impaired children and young people – would not exist. Like many of the students here, Ashleigh deals with multiple disabilities on a daily basis. Sight loss, always. Which in her case is due to optic nerve hypoplasia (where visual signals don't reach her brain) and nystagmus  
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A joy to have in our Lifelong Learners residential programme, 18-year-old Ashleigh Fagan has the voice of an angel, and a singular dream. (Story above.)



# They Row for Blind Children

*It's the world's longest true rowing race – and in solidarity with a ChildVision dad, this year the Fingal Rowing Club signed on to the Celtic Challenge to help Ireland's blind children...*

**A**fter circumstances prevented ChildVision dad Tom Ryan from participating in this year's Celtic Challenge, his team mates pressed on. The mission? Row ninety nautical miles to raise money for the children at ChildVision, and for the Irish Cancer Society. Tom is dad to Josie, a residential student like Ashleigh (see cover story) and one of our Lifelong Learners. Tom's also one of the many parents here who do whatever they can to help multiply the good you do. And we **thank you, Tom, and the Fingal Rowing Club for going to such great lengths for the children!** ♥



♥ To support the Club's generous efforts – even after their quest from County Wicklow to the shores of western Wales – visit [www.gofundme.com/f/celtic-challenge](http://www.gofundme.com/f/celtic-challenge).

Meet one of equine therapy's most cherished staff:

## Fred the Wonder Horse

*For this lovable, 'well-furnished' Irish bred cob, making life better for multi-disabled blind children is all in a day's work thanks to your kind support. He wouldn't have it any other way...*



**L**ike many equine therapy horses here, Fred was hand-chosen for ChildVision by Sargent Brendan Duffy of the Garda Mounted Unit. With a made-for-children size between horse and pony, Fred's a typical cob. That's as far as typical goes for Fred, who in the five years he has been working with staff and children, seems to understand that beneath the friendly calm he maintains, serious therapy is going on. Often sporting a bright blue Thomas the Tank engine blanket, he happily allows toy cars and trucks to zoom across his stout back during therapy sessions. Some of the children being helped by your generosity

are non-verbal, so we start out by teaching them to ask Fred to go by gently patting the front of his special roller saddle. Fred waits for even the slightest tap. He absolutely will not go until this happens.

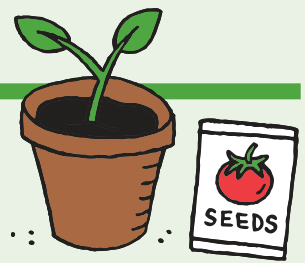
The children love Fred for all those reasons and more – and Fred loves them right back. He can sniff out a treat at ten paces, listens carefully for instructions, lingers for extra pats and snuggles, and is always first with a good morning 'whisker' to greet each child and staff as treasured friends – which is just what Fred has become to all of us. **Here's to a wonder of a horse called Fred. And here's to you, for making the magic happen. Thank you.** ♥





One wish come true, and one 'mini wish list':

## It's A Polytunnel Paradise!



*The polytunnels have finally been installed as part of the new Horticulture Project at ChildVision, with special thanks to Essential Supplies and an amazing, anonymous benefactor. Students in our Lifelong Learning programme share what it means to have their wish come true — and see how you can be part of this budding venture to help them grow and sell their own produce...*

**T**he new polytunnels on campus are positively paradise. Extensive enough to be accessible for all the students here, including children and young people who use walkers and wheelchairs, these special structures are already in daily use. It's got everyone eager to potting on the seedlings they planted, from broad beans to courgettes – and of course, lots of flowers and herbs. And thanks to your kind support, the plants will get extra help from our new resident experts as well: Chris (pictured), and Johnny, two students in the Lifelong Learning programme you help to fund, are awaiting results of their QQI Level 4 Horticulture Certifications!

Said Chris "I think they will



Chris, left, and Darragh, right, are all smiles in the magnificent polytunnels that are part of the new Horticulture Project for Lifelong Learners at ChildVision.

be great to be able to plant bigger, longer plants that we were never able to plant before – I am thinking of the giant sunflowers and hanging tomatoes."

Darragh added, "I love planting and do work experience every week in the garden so

these polytunnels mean everything to me." ♥

➤ **See the polytunnels firsthand – and return home with some plants for your patio – check for your official Garden Party invitation on page 4!**

## Granting the Wishes on this Mini List Would Be Like Miracles

When your arms and legs don't work like everyone else's, the joy of digging in the earth and making things grow can feel miles away. But with a bit of help from you, the polytunnels can soon include:

- Accessible, raised gardening tables for our students in wheelchairs
- Easy-grip gardening tools with arm support cuffs



**To help support this remarkable venture and all the work by making a donation,** simply use the enclosed Freepost envelope, or ring Ruth on 01 837 3635.

*Thank you for helping bright tomorrows grow!*

## If Ashleigh Met Ed

*continued from cover*

(eye movements she can't control). She also has autism.

### More than their diagnoses

Yet the diagnostic labels don't come close to describing the young woman she's become. Ashleigh now rises independently every morning, participates in managing her medication, organises her breakfast and gets herself off to her college course. She's also one of our residential student reps at Gentili House, her home away from home. It's miles from the 8-year-old who first came here ten years ago, anxious and locked away in her



**LISTEN:** To hear and share Ashleigh's extraordinary music and help her towards her dream, visit her on: [www.facebook.com/ HelpAshleigh MeetEdSheeran](https://www.facebook.com/HelpAshleighMeetEdSheeran). You'll be glad you did!

autism. Your donations meant staff, who have deep expertise in all kinds of visual impairments and developmental disorders, combined with specialised therapy, could help her grow and learn.

### Ed, please will you say YES!

You also fund the music therapy that held the key to a part of Ashleigh no one would have known was there. Now an accomplished multi-instrumentalist and vocalist with over 229,000 followers on her "Help Ashleigh Meet Ed Sheeran" Facebook, music is Ashleigh's go-to. She wants to further share her gift with the world by singing a duet with Ed Sheeran.

Just a dream? Listen to her music. Remember her story. Know it couldn't have happened without you. And know: anything is possible. For seeing the music that waits inside every blind child here, we thank you. ♥

*Because it won't be a party without you.*

## Your Official 2019 Garden Party Invitation

Please be our special guest at this day of delights to thank families, neighbours, and steadfast friends... like YOU. Tour the polytunnels, purchase plants, braille your name, enjoy the ice cream, music, pets' corner, pony rides, and more. Fun for young and old, blind and sighted!

### When:

Saturday 8th June, 2018  
from 12 to 16:00

### Where:

ChildVision, Grace Park Road,  
Drumcondra, Dublin 9



### Who:

All welcome...  
bring your friends!

### Admission:

€5 or FREE when you  
bring this newsletter



## Become a sighted guide, for free!

**10 Free Spaces!** ChildVision now offers an eLearning course around how you can offer assistance to someone with a visual impairment, and do so in a comfortable, non-threatening way. As a special thank-you we have ten free spaces for supporters available online now, on **[elearning.childvision.ie](https://elearning.childvision.ie)**.



# ChildVision

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