

ANNUAL REPORT 2012

Formerly St. Joseph's Centre
for the Visually Impaired



ChildVision

National Education Centre for Blind Children





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Chairperson's Report



As I have learned more about ChildVision and what the organisation achieved in 2012, I have been surprised in the best possible way. Not only has the organisation faced the economic challenges of a country in its fifth year of austerity with good humour and grace, it has triumphed over the obstacles in its way. But even more importantly, it has done so while keeping our children at the forefront of our thinking and our actions.

Despite yet another cut to our funding ChildVision did not cut its services. In fact it added a whole new suite of supports built around equine therapy, with the generous support of the Baxter International Foundation. Equine Therapy has a remarkably therapeutic effect on the children who participate, helping them not only learn but to create bonds and build relationships.

Our decision to open up our campus to our neighbours is very much based on the needs of the students here; the need to be integrated and included but also the need for the local community to grow more familiar with their abilities. Of course, it also generates some of our much needed funding but, as with everything we do, it is the children who come first.

That too is at the core of our rebrand.

Children with disabilities of whatever nature always benefit from early intervention. The reason we have chosen to establish a national brand is to ensure that parents know who we are and where to find us should their children be diagnosed with sight loss. Despite the fact that the new brand is less than a year old we are receiving plenty of feedback that indicates it is well on its way to achieving that.

The last of the major developments in 2012 is a challenge, but one that we relish. The new regulations that are being introduced for charities will demand greater levels of reporting and transparency than before. We believe that this can only lead to more people becoming aware of the quality of what we do and the tremendous milestones our students reach here each day.

For achieving all of this I have to thank the Chief Executive, management team, staff, volunteers, donors and my board.



Chief Executive's Report



Sometimes someone else has to say it, if only to remind you that it is true. When the President, Michael D Higgins, visited here last September he said "this is not just a school, it is also a real community". He was right for two reasons.

The first is practical; we have far too many services, facilities and therapies being offered here to ever think of ChildVision as just a school.

The second is much more emotional. For the third year in a row ChildVision's funding was cut. For the third year in a row we had to tell our people. And for the third year in a row our people responded magnificently. They responded as you would if you were part of a community, not as you would if you were just showing up for a job at a school.

So, for the third year in a row, the thanks of myself and the Board go to everyone here for doing more with less. This is not just a piece of rhetoric – over the year we managed to increase the numbers being assessed and *maintained* the numbers being cared for in our residences.

Alongside that, there were some major tasks to undertake or to complete. We launched our new brand officially on March 1st. With the new name came a new advertising campaign, website, logo and signage. One of the jobs of the new brand is to raise our profile as a charity, and that has to be underpinned by ChildVision being transparent, accountable and in compliance with the new Charities Act, so we started preparing for that in 2012.

Part of the roll out of the new brand was our first garden party. Our goal here was to let our neighbours and key people from across the country know about what we were doing. While it's always a worry when throwing a party that no-one will turn up we need not have worried. 1800 guests attended. And while I am dealing with the *fun with a serious agenda* items Horse Sport Ireland, Tattersalls and Tracy Piggott helped us bring Rupert Isaacson to Ireland to train our equine therapy staff. He also put on a showing of his film *Horseboy* attended by most of the equine world.

Our Multiple Disabilities and Visual Impairment (MDVI) steering group has examined how this group of children can make the transition from primary to our new MDVI second level education unit in Pobalscoil Rosmini. Part of the research included a visit to the RNIB's Pears Centre for Specialist Learning. We subsequently updated and re-submitted our MDVI report to the Department of Education. It emphasised strongly the need to have the centre open in September 2013.

We have also prepared ourselves for Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) inspections due to start in the next two years.

As we cannot be certain how the Irish economy and the Irish Government will behave over the coming years we have taken steps to have greater control over our finances. On top of the renewed focus on fundraising that our ChildVision brand has helped create, we have started planning for how we will tackle the big changes that may be coming. MCO Projects presented, to our capital planning development group, a 5 year rolling infrastructural plan showing how we could continue to use our current buildings but at the same time upgrade and expand - focussing on the pre-school, library, assembly hall and pool.

We have started talks with our closest neighbour, All Hallows, to explore cost-saving measures like sharing some of our resources. For example, accredited training with All Hallows has been developed so that both organisations can avoid the prohibitive cost of such training in the UK.

ChildVision is a community. It is not a self-sufficient community but it is a much more self-reliant one courtesy of everyone's contribution in 2012.



Our Centre of Excellence

2012 was a significant milestone in the story of education for blind and visually impaired young people in Ireland. St. Joseph's Centre for the Visually Impaired became ChildVision, the National Education Centre for Blind Children – thereby claiming its rightful place as a national centre of excellence in education.

Assessment and Pre-school

We experienced a 20% increase in demand for our assessment service; this increased exponentially following the roll out of the re-brand campaign and subsequent heightened awareness. These assessments also resulted in direct referrals to our pre-school, 42 children attended during 2012 with six children attending respite care one afternoon a week.

Primary School

The primary school had 41 children enrolled in 2012. They enjoyed many varied events throughout the year including a joint music project with The Royal Blind School and Jordanstown School, a day of library activities to mark World Book Day, and participation of the whole school in the Corfheile at the National Basketball Arena in Tallaght. The Lord Mayor visited the school for sports day on the 13th June and presented the school with their second green flag for conservation of energy.

During the year the school hosted a meeting of 7 different schools for the visually impaired from across Europe with a view to submitting an application for a Comenius Project. This is an Orientation and Mobility project entitled STEP UP.

We also received the excellent news that 4 pupils received funding for assistive technology. The total grant was in the region of €8,000. This included laptops and distance view cameras. The technology will transfer with the pupils to post-primary and has been purchased to ensure that pupils are as independent with the equipment as possible prior to leaving the school.

Secondary School

Pobalscoil Rosmini appointed a new principal in 2012, Ms. Philomena Cherry. Phil was also appointed to the

Senior Management Team of ChildVision facilitating improved communication and generating a campus approach to all shared projects.

The VI students enjoyed great personal successes at second level in 2012. Zac won the Dublin City Enterprise Award with his school company 'Sun Beams', a bracelet that changes colour to indicate that you are getting too much sun. Zac received his award from Dublin's Lord Mayor Naoise O'Muiri. The first 'Rosmini's Got Talent' took place on 17th May 2012. It was a resounding success and the overall winner was Greta, a V.I. student who brought the house down with her engaging and polished performance of 'High Five' delivered in English and in her native Lithuanian. James, also visually impaired, treated us to a dramatic rendition of Fagan's 'Reviewing the Situation' from the musical 'Oliver', and Aoife O'Dowd gave Imelda May a run for her money with her confident version of 'Johnny's got a Boom Boom'.

The Homework Club, run in conjunction with DCU and All Hallows College, was a great success and is particularly popular with some of our VI students who find the one to one assistance especially helpful.

Vocational Education

11 Vocational students attended ChildVision last year. The majority of the students completed FETAC accredited modules *Learning for Life*. The work experience programme expanded to include on campus work in the garden centre, National Braille Production, accounts department, The Learning Tree Crèche & Montessori and off-campus with The Skylon Hotel and Drumcondra Credit Union. Extracurricular activities included horticulture, horse-riding, swimming, dance, music and art classes.

Outreach

In 2012 National Braille Production had its highest ever overall transcription output of 3,455 orders and the highest ever proportion of new titles transcribed into braille. The library also experienced an increase in members, 91 people joined during last year. An in-depth look at National Braille Production and the library appears in this report. Six dots AND all combinations appears on page 24 of this report.

Our families were given a choice of 65 events in 2012 from Family Resource, including two Irish-based summer camps. Excellent collaborations happened with Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind who hosted a visit to their Cork branch and a presentation at the NCBI family day in Galway. There was a 15% increase on participation levels last year and over 500 families benefitted from the service.

2012 also saw a successful expansion of our Cork Outreach and assessment service. The Parent & Toddler Group is an integrated group for children of all abilities and their Parents / Carers to meet up. The group, consisting currently of 20 families, has a mixture of children with Visual Impairment, Developmental Delay and mainstream children without any additional needs. We had guest speakers attend the Parent & Toddler group including Diane Canny Play Therapist, Danielle from Gymboree and Rachel Lynch who gave a demonstration on Baby Massage. We also have regular visits from our 4 legged neighbours and friends in The Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind. There are about 20 families who attend this group on a regular basis.

We also conduct a vision assessment service in Cork each Monday which gives us an opportunity to offer further advice and support to parents.

Support Services

Our support services consist of Residential service, Nursing, Low Vision Clinic, Eye Clinic and therapies. 45 students availed of places in our 5 residential houses while attending education programmes at ChildVision, 35 social care workers formed the teams. You can read more about Residential care on page 13 of this report.

Our occupational therapists looked after the needs of 170 children, carrying out home visits for particularly complex children nationally. Speech and Language therapists had 120 young people attend and provided an outreach service for a further 100 external children. The S&L therapists delivered training to parents / carers, health and social care workers and professionals.

They also taught on under-graduate and post-graduate programmes at UL and TCD. Our Physiotherapist had 45 users to the service in 2012 and introduced a Rebound trampoline therapy for therapeutic use.

The growing medical needs of our student base from pre-school through to vocational education meant 150 children were cared for by our nurses this year. As a result further training was undertaken by the department in providing care for children with tracheotomies.

Performance through our People

ChildVision works with partners from the higher education sector in England and Ireland to develop and teach a portfolio of academic courses associated with the wider field of visual impairment and to provide opportunities for study at postgraduate level. ChildVision understand how important it is to encourage our staff to partake in further study and equally important to support them in the upskilling necessary to cope with the changing demands of our students.

University of Worcester

During 2012-2013 seven students completed the Certificate in Higher Education: *Working with People with a Visual Impairment*. This is an undergraduate programme equivalent to the first year of a degree. Uniquely, this course is simultaneously taught to a cohort of students from our partner organisation in England, namely the Royal National College for the Blind, Hereford. Four of the Dublin-based students are employed at ChildVision and the remainder were adults working in disability related occupations and a parent of a child with multiple disabilities/visual impairment. A third cohort of students will commence their studies in October, 2013.

Tutors on the course are employed by ChildVision in other capacities (e.g. therapists, pre-school teacher, members of the care team), each having been awarded Accredited Tutor status by the University of Worcester. Two members of the ChildVision staff will be awarded an MA (Education) under the auspices of the University of Worcester, graduating at Worcester Cathedral in November.

All Hallows College (DCU)

During the past 12 months we have been working with colleagues at All Hallows College to develop an academic framework at Level 8 (second year equivalent of an undergraduate degree) to accommodate academic courses in disability-related fields. In July, 2013, the Dublin City University Academic Board gave validation

approval for a Professional Diploma: "Mobility and Independence" which we anticipate will commence in the autumn term, 2014. This represents a breakthrough in the development of part time academic awards within the Irish university sector. Tutors on this 12 module programme will be drawn from ChildVision and All Hallows College. It is envisaged that further courses will be validated using this academic framework as ChildVision positions itself as a credible higher education provider working in partnership with DCU. One member of the staff is presently studying for an MA with All Hallows College (DCU).

TCD, NUI Galway and University of Ulster

Three staff members have also obtained masters degrees in the past year; MSc in Child Protection and Welfare at Trinity College, a Masters in Business Administration (MBA) at the University of Ulster and a BA (Hons) in Training and Education from NUI Galway.



Staff Training and Development January to December 2012

Course Title	No. of Participants		
	Internal	External	Total
January			
Safer Manual and Patient Handling	9		9
Induction	14		14
February			
Safer Manual Handling	4		4
Safer Manual Handling	4		4
March			
Sight and Sound Technology Information / Training Day	9		9
Safer Manual and Patient Handling	5	5	10
FETAC Level 5 Occupational First Aid	8		8
SNA Group Conference – Understanding and Managing Challenging Behaviour			
April			
FETAC Level 5 Occupational First Aid	2	6	8
Introduction to Impact of Visual Impairment and Sighted Guide	6		6
May			
Use of Apple iPad for Persons with Disabilities: Enabling Participation and Socialisation	26	15	41
Negotiating Mealtime	4	2	6
Safer Patient Handling – Pool Area	14		14
June			
Introduction to Impact of Visual Impairment and Sighted Guide	4		4
Supporting Social Skills – Positive Eye	19		19
July			
Fire Warden – Fire Safety and Evacuation Training	6		6
August			
Induction Programme	6		6
Safer Manual and Patient Handling	6		6

Staff Training and Development January to December 2012

Staff Training and Development January to December 2012		No. of Participants		
Course Title	Internal	External	Total	
Safer Manual and Patient Handling	9		9	
Safer Manual and Patient Handling	3		3	
Safer Manual Handling	3		3	
Seizure Management Training	26		26	
Seizure Management Training, Paediatric CPR and Choking	8		8	
Seizure Management Training	6		6	
September				
Seizure Management Training	19		19	
Blood Sugar Monitoring and SC Injection Training	3		3	
Zomajet Needles Injection Training	3		3	
EVEIL Conference	1		1	
Seizure Management Training	6		6	
Induction to Working with Vocational Education Students	6		6	
Supporting Social Skills – Positive Eye	21		21	
October				
Safer Patient Handling – Pool Area	5		5	
FETAC Level 5 Occupational First Aid Refresher	1	5	6	
Sighted Guide Revision	3	2	5	
Rebound Therapy Training	11		11	
Safer Manual Handling	10		10	
November				
Lámh Module One	11		11	
Lámh Module One	4		4	
December				
Driver CPC – Module Health and Safety of the Professional Driver	1		1	

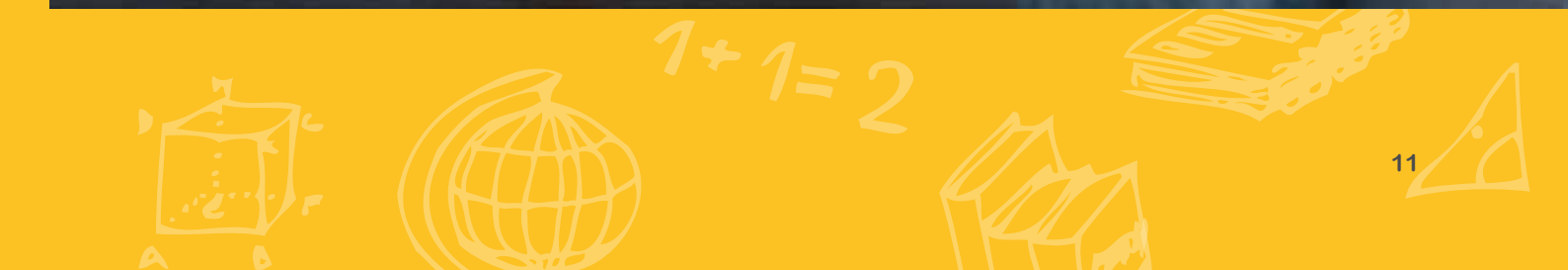
Fundraising

ChildVision has experienced devastating cuts to core funding in the last few years. The fiscal situation has brought with it an uncertainty that makes planning for development of services impossible. Our state funding is now not sufficient for the services we are expected to deliver. We now must fundraise for sustainability, development of programmes and maintenance of buildings.

In 2012 to coincide with our new brand awareness campaign we also ran a donor recruitment campaign and donor engagement events. We diversified our appeals into community, corporate and trust & foundation sources. We had a surge in connectivity with new people as a result of our activity and many people organised fundraising events around the country. We would like to thank everybody for the time, effort and care they put into raising money for the education of blind children in Ireland.



Aidan O'Brien, Cian O'Connor, Rupert Isaacson and Helen Kearney at Tattersalls



Mila and her
mum Olga



Mila

Our journey with ChildVision started in spring 2010, six months after we watched our firstborn, a three month old daughter Mila being resuscitated. She had suffered a brain haemorrhage, endured endless near fatal seizures in ICU, had dozens of MRIs and CAT scans, two brain shunt surgeries and multiple touch-and-goes.

When Mila was discharged from the hospital, after two months, we were left with no diagnosis except for confirmed brain damage, and at the time, lack of any reaction to light, i.e. blindness. While she had an occasional content smile and was the sweetest thing we've ever held, Mila's state of health or mind was unknown - she was not responsive to much of her surroundings. For us, the parents, two professionals in their late 30s used to planned lives, the reality felt like a life sentence. Scary. Painful. Isolating.

First time we came through the front doors of then St Joseph's, a man introduced himself as the CEO, Brian. He shook our hands, relaying warmth and efficiency. Audrey brought us into early services room, showed us amazing toys and equipment and introduced us to the kids - small ones (like ours), doing the same motions and making the same noises (as ours), having a giggle following a joke or a tease made by Fran or Catriona. We had not mastered much laughter in our household by that point. Mila was offered two hours of group play / therapy twice a week and we left ChildVision with a perspective on Mila and our family's future being just that little bit less desolate. Even optimistic, at last.

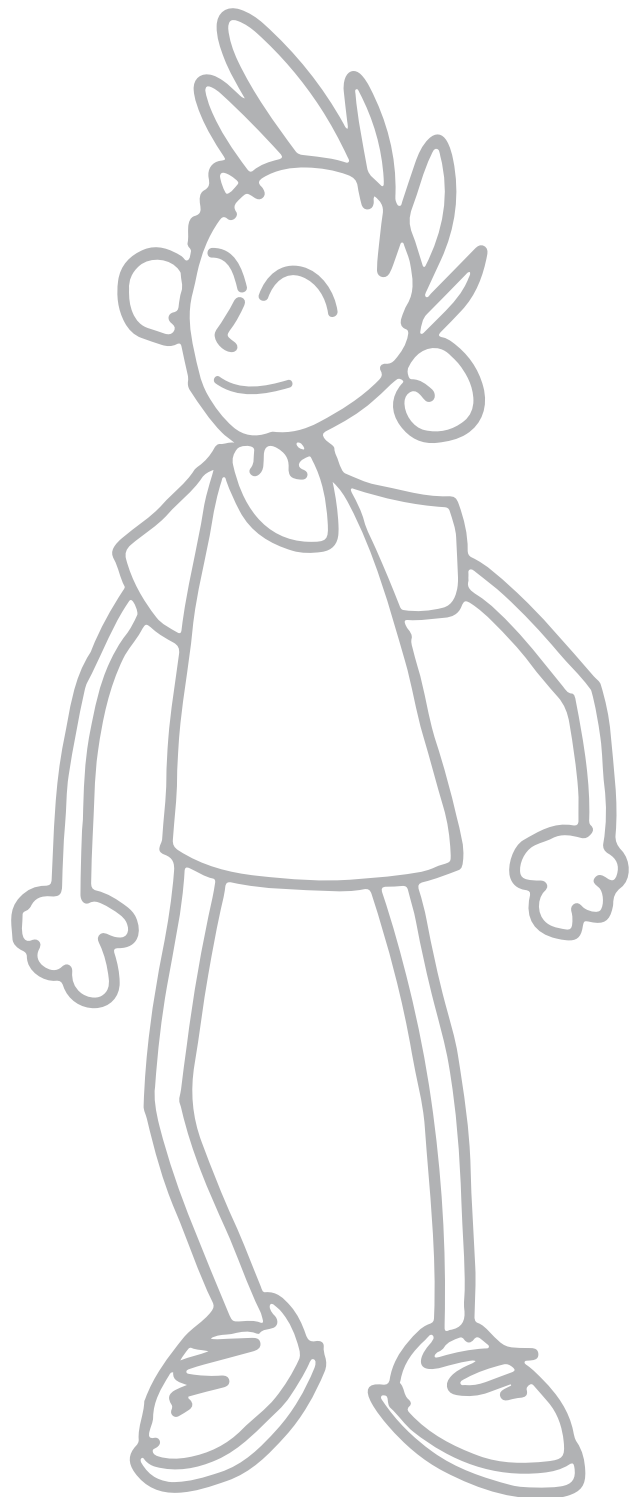
It is now three years on and the impact that ChildVision has made on Mila has been immeasurable. She has blossomed. She chats to us about her work and her friends – it is so important to her. It is remarkable to see her physical and intellectual progress, and mostly the confidence she gains in her social interaction, undoubtedly from the skills and the affection of her teachers, Lorna, Michael and Elaine.

We all look forward to our trips to ChildVision for school days. But, we also come Saturdays, Barack, the pony, needs Mila's help to take his walks, so she must rush out the door and attend to him!

ChildVision is a happy place for Mila, she beams walking through the doors.

She is a just a kid we really love.

Thank you,
Olga and Marcus Williams





Rebranding Our Future

In 2012 St. Joseph's Centre for the Visually Impaired changed its name to ChildVision – The National Education Centre for Blind Children. The decision to undertake this rebrand was not taken lightly, the organisation had been in existence for over 150 years and was very well established. However, it had become apparent in recent years that the name did not reflect the purpose of the charity and didn't present a strong enough brand for our fundraising efforts to join their place alongside other national children's charities.

The Fundraising sector has become increasingly challenging, there are over 3,000 registered charities in Ireland. The recession has brought disposable income, otherwise considered for charitable giving, to an all time low, and for the third year in a row, we have suffered savage cuts to our government funding.

An extensive consultation process with children, parents, staff and other stakeholder groups was undertaken in 2011. This process determined what our new name should communicate; a national service, the only one of its kind in the country. There are over 350 schools in Ireland with the name St. Joseph's including St. Joseph's School for Deaf Boys and St. Joseph's Special School. Many parents believed that St. Joseph's Centre for the Visually Impaired was for children who were visually impaired in the area of Drumcondra only.

ChildVision, The National Education Centre for Blind Children was chosen our new identity. Following a competitive process Target McConnells was engaged to develop the creative for the advertising campaign to announce the rebrand. They, very kindly, worked on the project with us on a pro-bono basis, at a time with the advertising industry was experiencing dissemination of spend from all clients. Their energy, commitment and talent was extraordinary and we will always be honored to have had such a talented team work so tirelessly with us at this important time.

Our new identity and name reflect the happy, nurturing environment our children experience here. We have an icon to go with the name, a smiling blind child named Joey. He was created to give the children a sense of warmth and fun, in time we hope it will be recognizable in isolation.

The advertising creative was also structured to appeal to children, our blind and visually impaired students and their sighted peers, the next generation of possible donors. A full communications plan was implemented to ensure all our stakeholders were informed of the new name.

The radio, TV and press adverts were developed with a central theme of achievement at ChildVision, what our children can do, rather than what they can't.

Our goal is that everyone associated with us, students past and present, their families, staff, the local community, our professional partners and our donors will be proud to tell people the new name and to see the brand recognition grow, and the achievements of our children, grow and grow.



Sinead Kane

Residential – A Choice In Education

The Residential Service at ChildVision is all about care. Not just care of the child but care of their world and for their future. We support the young person to find their voice so they can become advocates for their own path in life.

Coming to ChildVision is a choice in education. In the past ChildVision was the only education option for blind children but now, many of them can attend mainstream school with support from resources. For many inclusion is considered the best choice, while for others a specialist setting where visually impaired children learn together is more appropriate.

In 2012 our five houses catered for 35 children with 27 social care workers working in teams between the houses. At ChildVision we can take children as young as seven, but we experience a marked increase in interest from blind and visually impaired children & young people when they reach the age of 12 and upwards. By this age a realisation sometimes dawns that mainstream formula is not always the right choice for secondary education. For many students they are just seen as different and they may become isolated. We help families rationalise the choices they face to progress their child's development and education as a whole person.









If a student and their family do decide to come to ChildVision we work with them to develop an individual care plan centred on the student and their goals. The team leaders in each of the houses have a strong presence on campus and communicate daily with teachers, therapists, nurses and vocational staff ensuring the synergy of school life and home life progresses positively.





The Residential service provides a 24 hour opportunity for the students to learn about independence, mobility, self-care skills, becoming part of a community, developing social skills and building relationships. We encourage the students to develop relationships with their fellow students, with their teachers, with the people who work with them and with those they encounter on a daily basis. They observe, learn by example and watch how their peers achieve, thereby inspiring each other to succeed.

Throughout their time in ChildVision we provide each student and their family with a plan that subtly prepares them to deal with the future.

One of the integral parts of being a resident at ChildVision is finding a hobby or a passion for something that can be part of the student's life forever. All the students follow an afterschool programme of activities that expose them to a myriad of fun activities.

Some of the highlights for Residential students in 2012 were;

-  All residential students attended I.T. skills classes and attained various certificates from the Commercial Examining Board of Ireland in Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced Word Processing and PowerPoint / Excel
-  Aoife and Patrick successfully passed their Junior Certificate
-  Amy, Shauna, and Aaron completed the LCA successfully and Ronan, Brendan and James completed their Leaving Certificate. Amy began Vocational Education in September. Ronan is now studying Business Studies in DIT Aungier Street. Brendan started his Business Studies Degree in Thurles I.T. and James began a one year P.L.C. at the Drogheda Institute of Further Education in Heritage and Cultural Studies
-  Louis and Amy travelled to Space Camp in Alabama
-  Robert, Jessica, Niamh and Adam began rehearsing with their peers for the Pobalscoil Rosmini production of Macbeth due to take place early in 2013
-  Two of the houses travelled to The Cavan Centre for an adventure weekend of kayaking, team building, zip lines, archery and night walks
-  In May the week long summer holiday took the Vocational Education students to Galway and the Aran Islands for a week of traditional music, country walks and pony and cart rides
-  Paul, Sean and Ashleigh playing violin, tin whistle, uilleann pipes and bodhran participated in a three day recording session for the CD 'A Musical Vision', featuring the playing of past and present students of ChildVision. They then performed live at the launch in All Hallows in front of an audience and special guest, Michael Flatley who joined the group on his traditional flute for an impromptu session

-  Kieran and Shane travelled to Turkey to spend a week on a boat at sea, jumping into the sea to swim and eating the fresh fish caught off the boat
-  All residential students undertook an I.T. programme in computer skills and word processing
-  One student from each of the houses sat on the student council for ChildVision – a platform to allow them voice their opinions and needs as students on campus
-  Lauren, Grainne, Amy, Louis, Shane, Harry, Kieran, Ciara and Stephen took place in a RTE showcase on our equine therapy programme. This was broadcast on RTE on St Stephen's Day, live from Leopardstown Race meet

In addition to these fantastic achievements the students in the Residential Service also enjoyed the following activities; **Off campus** night classes in local colleges in art, beading, film & media, French, yoga and zumba; **On campus**: swimming, pottery, horticulture, horse-riding; athletics through Blindsports in Morton Stadium, Santry and regular attendance at groups such as Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann, Choral groups, local Arch Club and Headstarts – a local drama, art and dance club for all young people with an intellectual disability.





Daniel and his
mum, Sinead



Daniel

Daniel is my little boy. He is six and a half years old. He lives in Tallaght with my husband Keith, his sister Shauna and me.

When he was born he was a big baby, 12lbs, a healthy weight some would say, but it wasn't long before I started noticing Daniel was different. He was not doing things at the same time his big sister had. As his mum, I had an innate sense something was wrong. When I think back on that time it was his eyes that alerted me to his problems. They didn't look at me or follow lights or move when he was taking his bottle.

When Daniel was three months old, it was confirmed. Daniel was blind. My world fell apart. The paediatrician at the maternity hospital said he didn't know why Daniel was blind, or how serious it would be, and I was told there was nothing I could do but wait and see.

All I could think was Daniel would never see my face.

Another few months passed and Daniel could still not hold his head up on his own. I knew something was seriously wrong. After many tests we discovered that Daniel also had a condition called Sotos Syndrome, which causes a global developmental delay.

My world was lost.

A friend of mine rang up NCBI to ask for some advice and we were referred to the Solas Centre, in Clondalkin. Daniel began attending the centre once a week for sensory therapy. I was devastated to think that Daniel would never go to school or have pals that he could interact with on a daily basis. But then a visiting teacher told me about St. Joseph's Centre for the Visually Impaired in Drumcondra. I thought, as we lived in Tallaght, we would be out of the catchment area but soon understood that St. Joseph's is a national service.

After one visit to ChildVision, as it is now called, I knew this was the place for Daniel. I immediately saw possibilities and knew he would have an education.

Since he started in the pre-school, three years ago, Daniel is a different child. He is now content and much more sociable. Every day I pick him up from St. Joseph's, his teachers tell me something positive about Daniel's day - that really gives me a lift. Instead of worrying and focussing on the negative, I hear about what Daniel managed to do that day, something new, or even something again.

I understand what we, as a family, should be doing to stimulate and interact with Daniel. His day is all about learning, visual stimulation, speech therapy, occupational therapy and mobility training. In such a happy, safe, environment.

Without ChildVision I would have no support for Daniel's vision loss. He would be attending a general intellectual disability centre and be classed as severely disabled but now, through specific work on his vision impairment, his disability is mild and he can live a life of possibilities.

His mum, Sinead.



Breaking Down Barriers – Social Enterprise And Engagement

The ChildVision campus is situated on 21 acres in the heart of North Dublin, just minutes away from the city centre and the M50. Since its inception, over 150 years ago, the site has been a curiosity, much of the local community not understanding the level of education conducted behind the red-bricked stone walls. In 2012 we decided to open part of our campus to the public and invite them to come in, seven days a week.

The Garden Centre, JoJo's Coffee Shop, the Equine Centre and the Petting Zoo are all now open to the public. There is no charge to come in but our hope is that as people discover more about the work that we do, they will become supporters of our children through fundraising activities of their own or by supporting our endeavors.

The past number of years has seen a consistent increase in the complex needs of the children coming through our door. Most children in our care have increasing additional disabilities combined with their visual impairment or blindness.

Visual impairment itself often causes developmental delays in several key areas such as motor development, sensory development, self-concept, cognitive development and language development. When visual impairment is coupled with other disabilities, such as Cerebral Palsy, Global Developmental Delay, Learning Disability, Autism Spectrum Disorder or any of a number of complex syndromes, the result is that the child needs significant assistance through therapeutic input to reach their potential. At ChildVision we are constantly looking for innovative ways of engaging with our students.

In 2012 a grant from the International Baxter Foundation helped us set up an equine therapy centre. Equine therapy has tremendous benefits for blind and multi-disabled children. The Garda Mounted Unit very generously advised us on the stable set-up and requirements and chose our horses as part of their own stock recruitment around the country. Fourteen horses are now stabled at ChildVision.

The interaction with the horses has been extremely beneficial for our students. This project helps them develop emotionally by building a connection with these sensitive animals and a profound bond is experienced between the child and the horse/pony that is immensely valuable, especially for those with autism or a disability where communication is impacted. There are also many other physiological benefits such as improved balance,

respiration, digestion and sensory integration. The simple process of developing a love and respect for animals has brought a lot of happiness and fun to the education of our students.

During 2012, the children, aged 1 to 21 approximately, were involved with our horses to differing degrees. The preschool children (age 1 to 6) and a small number of primary school aged children (up to 10 years old) were involved with Therapeutic Horse Riding, where an Occupational Therapist and Horse Riding Instructor made and met therapeutic goals for children through the use of the horse.

Children who attend the Primary school based at ChildVision were able to avail of horse riding sessions with an instructor and an experienced side walker. They loved the connection with the horse, the sensory experience of the horses movement, and the increased demand on their postural control. It was wonderful to see their confidence blossom.

The Vocational Students (aged 18 to 23) also availed of the on-horse experience, but they also cared for the horses by mucking out, feeding and grooming. In May we opened our Sensory Trail, conceived by our occupational therapists and built on a volunteer basis by the staff of Coca Cola Ireland and Verve Event Management. The materials were gifted by builders and garden centres all over Ireland and has resulted in an amazing sensory experience for our children. Tracy Piggott, a loyal friend of ChildVision, launched the sensory trail at our inaugural donor garden party which was attended by 1500 people.

140 term-riding lessons and pony camps brought income from children in the local area which enabled us to provide 45 therapeutic riding lessons per week to our own students. Expansion of the service to other disadvantaged children with and without disabilities is underway to provide an integrated learning environment for all.

Following on the success from our public opening we also offered over 90 children's birthday parties through our garden centre / petting zoo last year. A Halloween Scarefest and Christmas Santa Experience made excellent use of our outbuildings in the farmyard area and bringing in a whole new community to ChildVision for seasonal fun.

Over 130 energetic and committed helpers volunteered in our stables, garden centre, pet farm, Halloween and Christmas activities and the development of the equine sensory trail. We would like to extend a special thank you to Coca Cola, Verve Management, Conor Galvin & his Celtic Crusaders, the Botanic Gardens, the Zoo, the Garda Mounted Unit and all of our volunteers.

When we decided to open up our farmyard area to the public we under estimated how popular it would be to the local community. Our own students benefit from more social interaction with new and different groups of people.

We will continue to find new ways to interact with all of our communities and welcome feedback on our events.





Kieran



Kieran

Someone Who Inspires Me

A lot of people today are inspired by celebrities, their favourite sports star or musician. The sort of person that they will never meet or talk to or even see in person.

But not me.

The person who inspires me most is a person that I talk to nearly every day, a person who has known me since I was a little baby, a person who has been with me through everything and has shaped my life and made me who I am today. They are a person who is everything that I want to be when I grow up, even if I'm only half the person they are.

That person is my older brother, Kieran.

He's turning twenty-one this year, and he has been my idol for as long as I can remember. We've always had a special bond that is stronger than I have with any of my other three siblings.

Kieran was born on the 22 June, 1991. He was born three months premature and he was so tiny that mum and dad took a photo of him in the incubator beside Dad's watch, the watch was longer than him! When he was two weeks old he had to have heart surgery and had many complications, including Hypoplasia (visual impairment) and a learning difficulty known as dyspraxia.

However, Kieran has never let any of this hold him back, he started going to school at St. Josephs or ChildVision when he was 5. He loved everything about it and I loved it too. I used to go to Christmas parties and weekends away with his school, they always made me feel like I was part of the school. In fact my other brothers and sister and I used to always ask our parents, when can we go to Kieran's school?

ChildVision feels like home.

Kieran went on to secondary school at ChildVision and took his junior certificate, he now has a part-time job while he continues to attend Vocational Education where he is learning how to live independently, and he has always had many friends and one of the best social lives I've ever seen.

He didn't have all of this handed to him though he worked hard to get it. Harder than anybody I've ever seen, this is why he inspires me, he never gives up, and not only that, but always has a smile on his face while trying.

Due to his visual impairment, he does not really watch television, instead he listens to the radio, this is one of my favourite ways to spend time with him, as we both share a love of music.

A lot of people always assume that living with somebody with a disability is difficult, but to be honest, I could not compare the two, as I know no different.

Another thing that I am told often is "what a good brother I am" and "how I always take care of him" but to be honest I have been taking care of him for so long that I don't even realise that I'm doing it anymore, it is only when people make comments such as these that I am even aware that I'm preferring brotherly duties outside the norm.

The funny thing is, I have never told him how much he means to me, or how everyday he inspires to never give up and never back down to what everybody else expects.

The doctors gave him a few hours to live when he was born. But this June he will turn twenty one.

How can you not admire that? How can that not impress you?

On his birthday mum and dad are going to give him a present of dad's watch that lay beside him in the incubator when he was born.

Whenever things look bleak and I'm about to give up, I always think to myself, if Kieran can get where he got from the circumstances he was given, why can't I?

A person who inspires you is something that everybody needs to have in their life, and I have my big brother Kieran.

He truly deserves to be praised, as the person who inspires me most.

This essay "The Person I Most Admire" was written by Aaron Shanagher, aged 16, for a school exam. ChildVision would like to thank Aaron for letting us reproduce it here.

Six dots AND all combinations

In recent years, with the advent of electronic media and different electronic formats, the future of braille was uncertain. But, by the reliable provision of braille books, we have seen a renaissance. Braille is now a high priority format choice and also provides an electronic option to paper-based literacy.

Since 2007, the National Braille Production at ChildVision has seen the number of braille readers double. This is due to earlier diagnosis of visual impairments and very encouraging work by the Department of Education Visiting Teaching service and National Braille Production's service delivery. In 2012 the production of braille books was up 11% on the previous year.

We believe braille is very important for literacy in children with a visual impairment, but also instrumental in forming computer literacy. With a braille display addition on a computer a visually impaired child can have equal access to the information available to sighted children. Without proficient braille skills this isn't achievable.

DAISY

In 2004, National Braille Production began producing DAISY files, a digitally accessible format of text, background and digital sound. For some students DAISY is an excellent alternative to paper based format. Since 2010 DAISY production has progressed rapidly, experiencing a growth of 70% during this time, this is partly due to the advent of tablet technology use in schools. DAISY allows a blind, or visually impaired, child accessing their education access to a new world - full of possibility and imagination.

Large print

Large print remains the format with the strongest demand. In 2012 we delivered 2,291 large print books – over 8,000 volumes - to children throughout Ireland. At National Braille Production we love opening up the returned books and seeing the obvious fun and use the books have had with notes in columns and coloured markers visible throughout.

OnLine Bookshelf

2012 also saw the highest number of registered users for OnLine bookshelf, a secure download facility for braille, text and DAISY files. This means that the children can access their textbooks more efficiently and, if required, material can be provided at short notice for emergency cases.

Links

ChildVision have developed an excellent relationship with the Department of Education's Visiting Teacher Service for the visually impaired. The Visiting Teachers are responsible for placing the book orders and are in daily contact with the staff at National Braille Production. In November 2012 four members of the Braille department presented to the Visiting Teacher's CPD meeting on DAISY and general operational issues of alternative format transcription.

The manager of the Braille department, Ilka Staeglin, was instrumental in setting up INBAF (Irish National Braille and Alternative Format Association). The purpose of INBAF is to give Ireland a voice at international level. The group comprises ChildVision, Arbour Hill Prison and NCBI. INBAF work to promote the unique code of Irish language braille production. INBAF launched in May 2012 and subsequently joined the International Council on English Braille (ICEB). In December 2012 Ilka was appointed to the executive of ICEB. The information exchange with colleagues throughout the world who use English Braille, and who have already introduced Unified English Braille, has proved to be invaluable for both INBAF, and the work of National Braille Production.

Staffing

All our books are transcribed, proof-read, edited, printed, bound and posted from ChildVision. In 2012 we had 14 full-time and 11 part-time staff working on production. This team was supported tirelessly by our ten enthusiastic volunteers.

Promoting literacy through alternative formats

ChildVision has taken an active role in promoting the use of braille. In 2012, 14 people graduated from our Learn Braille, Fetac Level 5 course and a further 18 people enrolled in September. This course provides participants with a high level of excellence in reading and writing braille for sighted learners. Since the inception of Learn Braille, four years ago, we have developed a network of skilled teachers, SNA's, parents and providers who work with schools all across Ireland.

In 2012 we welcomed 98 new members to our Library. The library makes children's bestsellers available to visually impaired children in alternative formats. Events throughout the year also serve to promote literacy amongst our children.



In April of last year, Aideen McBride, a traditional storyteller, gave three readings to the children from the primary school, bringing Irish myth and legend to life.

Imaginosity, the Children's museum, invited ChildVision to participate in their Festival of Stories. Patricia from the library and Derval, deputy manager in National Braille Production provided sighted children and their parents with the opportunity to view some of their favourite books in alternative formats. Participants also gained an insight into how a blind child may experience a sensory story and were introduced to the concept of braille through fun activities such as braille puzzles, with each child receiving a sticker with their name produced in braille.

The 5th annual braille reading day took place on November 19th. Forty braille readers participated this year, largest to date. With 25 primary school children, aged from 4 years upwards. The evening session was also well attended with 15 young adult braille readers participating. There was a special presentation to Victoria de Oliveria, one of the participants, to acknowledge her achievement in beating stiff competition to win 1st prize in the junior category of the European Braille Essay competition.

In 2012 we piloted a Tactile Book Project with the purpose of augmenting our tactile books available through the library. We approached Home Economics departments in five schools, asking transition year students to create and donate tactile books as part of their Home Economics project. During the autumn term we visited three schools (60 students at St. Mary's College Arklow, 120 students at Dominicans College, Drumcondra and 60 students at Convent of Mercy, Coolock) and gave a presentation on ChildVision, the impact of visual impairment on young children, ideas for tactile books, what's involved, collecting materials etc.

The Vocational students came to weekly workshops to promote communication and creativity amongst the group. In the sessions the group worked towards creating an original story. Stories were elaborated on each week with focus on plot development, character descriptions and role-play scenarios. At the end of the 2011-2012 academic term, these stories were edited and printed in both braille and large print and disseminated by the students to their parents, friends and staff at graduation night.

The Family Resource centre at ChildVision also held their Braille Fun Day, an event to encourage primary school children to celebrate braille. Fun activities included 'Braille Buddies', 'Braille Treasure Trail' and 'Clay Play'.





The Role And Membership of Our Board

The Board of ChildVision has the responsibility to ensure that the Company's missions, principles, values and long term needs and priorities are regularly reviewed and take into account the influence, ethos and spirit of the Institute of Charity (Rosminians). The day to day management of the Company shall be exercised by the CEO as delegated by the Board of Directors.

The Finance Committee assists the Board in fulfilling its responsibilities by providing an independent review of financial reporting, by satisfying themselves as to the effectiveness of the Company's internal controls and as to the sufficiency of the external and internal audits.

The Governance Committee has responsibility for induction and briefing of new Board Members, Succession Planning and monitoring and implementation of Directors selection, appointment and expertise.

The Board of ChildVision are fully committed to complying with the new Code of Practice for Good Governance of Community, Voluntary and Charitable organisations in Ireland and the Fundraising Guiding Principles. We will continue due diligence throughout 2013 to ensure we are fully compliant with the Code.

Membership of the Board:

Shane Cowley (Chair)

appointed 7 July 2013

Anthony Bates (Chair)

resigned 2 July 2013

Catherine Ryan

Alan Crosbie

David Myers

Desmond Kenny

Aoife Thornton

Monica Leech

appointed 3 January 2012

Daniel Browne

appointed 3 January 2012

Michael O'Shea

appointed 4 February 2013

Christopher Cassidy

appointed 4 February 2013

Joseph O'Reilly

resigned 2 July 2013

Patrick Pierce

resigned 3 February 2013

Maureen Mulligan

resigned 3 February 2013

Anthony Slein

resigned 6 February 2013

Finance Committee 2012 – Maureen Mulligan succeeded by Christopher Cassidy, Dan Browne and Anthony Bates.

Governance Committee – Desmond Kenny, Aoife Thornton, Catherine Ryan

The Board met eight times in 2012, on the following dates:

6th February, 26th March, 14th May, 25th June, 10th September, 22nd October, 26th November, 17th December.

Independent Auditors' Report To The Members Of ChildVision

(A Company Limited by Guarantee and not having a Share Capital)

We have audited the financial statements of ChildVision for the year ended 31 December 2012 which comprise the Income and Expenditure account, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and the related notes. These financial statements have been prepared under the accounting policies set out therein.

Respective responsibilities of directors and auditors

As described in the Statement of Directors' Responsibilities the company's directors are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and generally accepted accounting practice in Ireland including the accounting standards issued by the Accounting Standards Board and published by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland.

Our responsibility is to audit the financial statements in accordance with relevant legal and regulatory requirements and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland).

This report is made solely to the company's members, as a body, in accordance with Section 193 of the Companies Act, 1990. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditors' report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the company and the company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

We report to you our opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland and are properly prepared in accordance with the Companies Acts, 1963 to 2012. We also report to you whether in our opinion: proper books of account have been kept by the company; and whether the information given in the Directors' Report is consistent with the financial statements. In addition, we state whether we have obtained all the information and explanations necessary for the purposes of our audit and whether the financial statements are in agreement with the books of account.

We also report to you if, in our opinion, any information specified by law regarding directors' remuneration and directors' transactions is not disclosed and, where practicable, include such information in our report.

We read the directors' report and consider the implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent misstatements within it. Our responsibilities do not extend to any other information.

Independent auditors' report to the members of ChildVision (continued) (A Company Limited by Guarantee and not having a Share Capital)

Basis of audit opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) issued by the Auditing Practices Board. An audit includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgements made by the directors in the preparation of the financial statements, and of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the company's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

We planned and performed our audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations which we considered necessary in order to provide us with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or other irregularity or error. In forming our opinion we also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information in the financial statements.

Opinion

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view, in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland, of the state of the company's affairs as at 31 December 2012 and of its deficit and cash flows for the year then ended ; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the Companies Acts, 1963 to 2012, and the European Communities (Companies: Group Accounts) Regulations, 1992.

We have obtained all the information and explanations, which we consider necessary for the purposes of our audit. In our opinion proper books of account have been kept by the company. The financial statements are in agreement with the books of account.

In our opinion the information given in the directors' report is consistent with the financial statements.



Colm Farrell for and on behalf of

**Moloney + Farrell
Apex Business Centre
Accountants & Registered Auditor
Sandyford
Dublin 18**

23 September 2013

Income and Expenditure Account

for the year ended 31 December 2012

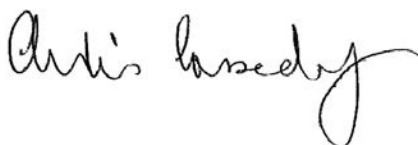
	Continuing operations	
	2012	2011
	€	€
Income	6,710,954	6,622,218
Expenditure		
Deficit/(surplus) on ordinary activities before interest	(7,110,157)	(6,499,878)
	(399,203)	122,340
Other interest receivable and similar income	32,231	76,550
Interest payable and similar charges	(3,347)	(1,085)
(Deficit)/surplus on ordinary activities before taxation	(370,319)	197,805
Tax on (deficit)/surplus on ordinary activities	-	-
(Deficit)/surplus on ordinary activities after taxation	(370,319)	197,805
Allocation to building reserve		
Transfer to revenue reserves	(35,516)	(405,835)
	(206,380)	(8,575)

There are no recognised gains or losses other than the surplus or deficit for the above two financial years.

On behalf of the board



Shane Cowley
Director



Christopher Cassedy
Director

Please note these accounts are an extract from 2012 accounts. A full set of financial reports are available upon request.

Balance Sheet

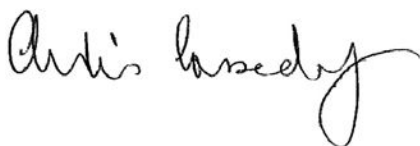
as at 31 December 2012

	Notes	2012	2011
		€	€
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets		722,267	585,619
Financial assets		1	1
		<u>722,268</u>	<u>585,620</u>
Current assets			
Debtors		79,051	166,411
Cash at bank and in hand		2,282,902	2,510,810
		<u>2,361,953</u>	<u>2,677,221</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year		<u>(612,451)</u>	<u>(446,343)</u>
Net current assets		<u>1,749,502</u>	<u>2,230,878</u>
Total assets less current liabilities		<u>2,471,770</u>	<u>2,816,498</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year		<u>(25,591)</u>	<u>-</u>
Net assets		<u>2,446,179</u>	<u>2,816,498</u>
Reserves			
Other reserves		241,896	206,380
Revenue reserves account		2,204,283	2,610,118
Members' funds		<u>2,446,179</u>	<u>2,816,498</u>

On behalf of the board



Shane Cowley
Director



Christopher Cassedy
Director

Please note these accounts are an extract from 2012 accounts. A full set of financial reports are available upon request.



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