

PARTNERS  
IN CREATING  
A **BRIGHTER**  
FUTURE...



**ChildVision**

National Education Centre for Blind Children



# Who we are

In the heart of Drumcondra, Co. Dublin, the ChildVision campus is the only environment dedicated to the education and development of children with visual impairments and multiple disabilities in Ireland. On the 21 acre campus sits a pre-school, primary and secondary school, a centre for vocational training as well as a therapy centre, National Braille Production. We also have stables, a petting zoo, a coffee shop, a garden centre, playing fields and a FETAC accredited training centre.

Meeting the individual needs of each child at ChildVision is at the core of what we do. Our staff work together to realise the unique potential within each boy and girl no matter how severe the disability. The team includes speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, teachers, nurses, braille specialists, social care workers, pet and equine therapists as well as many care, maintenance and household staff who work across the pre-school, primary and secondary schools.

ChildVision is also the nationwide resource centre for parents of blind, partially sighted and multi-disabled visually impaired students and for mainstream schools. The outreach resource team provides support to hundreds of students and families in communities throughout Ireland and all of our services are free of charge.



# Why Partner with ChildVision?

Over 150 years old, ChildVision is Ireland's only education centre for blind children. Throughout this century of care and learning, thousands of children with sight loss and multiple disabilities have bravely overcome their obstacles and grown into their own person under our support and expertise.

Every year, we welcome over a hundred new babies and children to our schools. When parents first arrive at ChildVision they are worn down by diagnosis and looking for answers. They're grieving for the loss of possibility. But that changes very quickly. They soon realise that ChildVision is a happy place, devoted to freeing up all the promise, talent and love inside their son or daughter.

Partnering with ChildVision not only makes a lasting impact on our work, helping us to provide children with expert specialist care and equipment to guide their learning and see them develop with confidence, it can also have a hugely positive impact on your company and staff. Joining us as a corporate partner means working alongside your organisation from the outset, so that an association with ChildVision will fit your particular CSR needs and is of real benefit to you and your staff.

From the moment a child is born they begin to soak up their environment, learning and developing at a rapid pace. Their world is full of boundless potential. Boundless but time-limited potential. What a child can learn when they're eighteen months old cannot wait until they're three or four. The window closes. For children with visual impairment and other disabilities, the window slams shut - never to open again.

Breakthroughs do happen. Some very small. Some more major. All significant. Please take time to read here about the work we do with children from newborn to 22 years old, or come to see our campus in the heart of Drumcondra for yourself. Your company can be a key partner to make more breakthroughs happen for the children at ChildVision.

# SPECIFICALLY, THE PROJECTS WE NEED **SUPPORT FOR** OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS ARE:

- Creating Ireland's **National Library for Blind Children**: a multi-sensory library that will stimulate learning and development for all visually impaired children in the country.
- Developing a new **therapy pool**
- Expanding our range of **assistive technology** to allow our students access their education
- Installing a new multi-sensory soft **play area**
- **Growing our facilities** and services so we can meet demand for the steadily increasing number of children coming to ChildVision from across the country.





## The staff at Coca-Cola Dublin recently helped out at ChildVision

"We built a **sensory trail** for **therapeutic horse riding sessions** which stimulates a child's sight, and the other senses. While we were building the trail, we were also privileged to get a taste of life at the centre, talking to some of the children and their parents about what horse riding means to them. It was a fantastic experience for us and we hope the trail will be a valuable resource for ChildVision."

- Jennifer Heaphy, **Coca Cola Ireland**



# WE FOCUS ON POTENTIAL

At ChildVision we have **four classes** of 45 lively children in our Pre-School ranging from **birth** to **five years**.



# Meet Daniel and his mum Sinéad

"Since Daniel started in the pre-school, a year ago, he is a different child. He is now content and much more sociable. Every day I pick him up from school, his teachers tell me something positive about Daniel's day. Instead of worrying and focussing on the negative, I hear about what Daniel managed to do that day... His day is all about learning, visual stimulation, speech therapy, occupational therapy and mobility training."

"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."



# Meet Jenny

Jenny underwent critical surgery at the age of two in order to reduce daily epileptic seizures. As a result of the surgery, Jenny was left with a significant one-sided weakness (hemiplegic) and a severe visual impairment. Trying to motivate Jenny to incorporate her right side has been a significant challenge. But since the first time Jenny met Bailey, one of our horses, she has never looked back.

The rich sensory experience and motivating goal-orientated activities worked into sessions, coupled with the special bond Jenny has built up with Bailey has resulted in her motivation to incorporate her right side dramatically increasing. Her teachers and parents have seen a lot of carryover to other activities throughout her day also, such as her play skills, dressing skills and her ability to feed herself.



# WE FOCUS ON BUILDING CONFIDENCE

**Equine therapy** is a progressive form of therapy which involves setting goals for children with a range of disabilities that are met through sessions on horseback. All our students from toddlers to our young adults love their connection with the horse, the sensory experience of the horse's movement and the increased demand on their postural control. The difference this therapy makes is remarkable; children like Jenny (pictured), who prior to engaging with the horses were unresponsive to treatment, have since made huge progress.

# WE FOCUS ON GROWING IMAGINATIONS

As part of our goal to provide our inspirational children with the best possible facilities, we run an **on-campus library service**. Our students and eight hundred other children from across Ireland hold membership of the library, with access to a selection of **braille books and materials**, as well as tactile books for younger children with sight loss.

The educational and therapy team at ChildVision have identified a strong need to create a newly **modernised multi-sensory library** with extended technology services and facilities which will be Ireland's only National Library for Blind Children.

Alannah reading a poem  
in braille in the garden of  
ChildVision





# Meet Kieran

Kieran was born at 26 weeks, a complete shock. I arrived at the hospital and Kieran was born five minutes later. He was 1lb 14 ounces. The paediatrician gave him an hour to live. There were drugs that would help his lung capacity but they didn't administer these as the outlook was so grave. Kieran was so tiny, his skin was translucent, and he had no eyebrows or hair. We didn't even know what his little personality was like as we couldn't touch or hold him. We spent the night waiting and waiting. We hadn't even held our baby at that stage.

One day passed and another – there was still no hope but it was a matter of time. The strange thing was we didn't think of what would be or what could be, we were operating on automatic pilot, just coping. At four weeks he passed 2lbs weight and went for heart surgery to stop his heart beating so fast. Week after week passed, infection after infection, and six brain bleeds but finally at seven weeks we got to hold Kieran. Then the hope started. Every meeting with a consultant brought another potential problem but Kieran batted them off and we started to plan to bring our baby home.

At twenty weeks I remember coming home with Kieran. Adrian shut the door behind us and we sat and looked at each other, wondering how we were going to cope. But no hospital and our little baby home gave us hope. Six weeks later we were back with pneumonia. Home for Christmas Eve, back in on New Year's Eve.

Months passed and with each one, Kieran got bigger and stronger, and although a bit delayed, he was reaching milestones. When Kieran reached his first birthday we went for several paediatric checks with consultants in Temple Street. The Ophthalmologist, Mr O'Keefe, said 'there will be problems', but we were more concerned with height and weight and walking and talking. At 2, Kieran had a CT Scan and we were told he had optic nerve hypoplasia – basically the optic nerves at the back of the eye that connect the messages between the brain and the eye never developed. Kieran has 20% vision in one eye. This wasn't ever going to improve.

Then we were referred to the National Rehabilitation Board for a two day prodding, poking and pulling which was very difficult but brought us to a much needed reality. We were told Kieran might be able to attend a special school called St Josephs. We planned to go and see the school. When we arrived we went straight to the primary school. We loved the small classes, everybody was happy, some kids were worse than Kieran and some were better and I strangely felt glad that he wasn't as bad as the others. Everybody was really nice and explained everything. It was just happy.

Other people would have said he will have no friends in the local area and would be better off in local mainstream. But we didn't want him to be alone, with kids running around in the playground etc. I remember being grateful that we were in Dublin and wouldn't have to board. When he was 5 years of age, I took the month off work and went on the ChildVision bus every morning with Kieran and cried the whole way home. I wasn't sad for Kieran. He couldn't wait for school. But it was the first time I had to let go and it was hard putting your trust in other people. But, every day, Kieran would come out happy, talk about his friends, and every day I could see the other children looking out for him and taking care of him.

"ChildVision gave me confidence, support and it gave me security and life. I just enjoyed it from the time I moved in to the time I left. My advice is it's a great place to go and the staff are all nice – it's a great place to live, work and to enjoy being around the campus."

Kieran has never had an unhappy day in ChildVision – they are like his second family. He has graduated now, having spent the last few years of his time there as a residential student. He now lives in a supported independent living house with other past pupils of ChildVision. We always felt this was a home away from home and we trusted them implicitly. They are professional, but warmth and care comes before anything else. There was no wait in reception, no unauthorised areas, no barrier to us being Kieran's family. No matter what time of day or night I could pick up the phone, and never once did I feel they needed to be somewhere else doing something else.

Kieran has three brothers and one sister and every one of them, without fail, has asked when are they starting in Kieran's school. Now, when I look into Kieran's big 'Malteser' eyes, I can still see the vulnerability of our little baby who fought so hard to live beyond that first hour, that first year. But he won the fight and is a gift to us all.



# WE FOCUS ON NURTURING IMAGINATIONS

The residential service at ChildVision offers blind and visually impaired young adults a **unique opportunity** to develop and practise the many skills needed for meaningful **independence**. We accommodate our students in five houses situated in the local community, staffed by fully trained social care workers and team leaders, so that these young adults can live safely among peers in a **supportive environment**.

# WHAT CAN WE OFFER YOUR COMPANY?

By partnering with ChildVision you and your staff will share in the amazing community spirit that exists at our campus. You'll be part of providing life-changing opportunities for our children, helping them to grow and learn in an environment that is dedicated to their needs.

At ChildVision we focus on developing mutually fulfilling, long-term strategic partnerships which meet our partners' business and community objectives as well as helping to fund our much-needed programmes. Existing ChildVision partners have enjoyed a wide range of benefits as a result of a partnership with ChildVision including

- **Generating positive PR** through demonstrating commitment to ChildVision and therefore our Corporate Social Responsibility
- **Increasing brand awareness**
- **Engaging staff and customers** in new ways through sharing messages of support for ChildVision
- **Motivating staff** through their involvement in team building, fundraising & volunteering activities
- **Gaining knowledge and expertise** on issues affecting people with disabilities – blind and visually impaired people as consumers

# Corporate Giving in Ireland

In general, companies have found investing in a charity over a 1-5 year period to be an extremely valuable exercise in demonstrating their social commitment to stakeholders. In fact, research shows that **61%** of Irish CEOs see engaging with their CSR responsibilities as giving them a direct competitive advantage (Business in the Community Ireland/Amárach Research 2011).

Equally, market research shows that consumers respond favourably to companies engaged in proactive CSR with 75% of consumers who have read about a company's social responsibility agenda on its website more likely to purchase products or services from the company in the future. Consumers who take a positive view of a company's social investment are in turn more likely to make recommendations to friends and remain loyal customers (\* The CSR Branding Survey 2010 Penn Schoen Berland)

"At Vodafone, we think we have a responsibility to give back to the Irish community. I believe it's important for all businesses to give; our employees expect it, our customers expect it so I don't know how anybody could be in business without giving back"

- **Anne O'Leary**, CEO, Vodafone Ireland.

We are confident that broadening your CSR activities and joining us as partner could bring a real, tangible difference to your organisation's success, while creating the opportunity for improved services, better educational facilities and a brighter future for the children and young adults we support.

"Smart companies understand that philanthropy is part of a broader economic-recovery strategy, both for them and for the communities in which they invest."

- **Doug Conant**, Former President & CEO, Campbell Soup Company

In the face of difficult economic times, ChildVision has met serious challenges in increasing demand for places in our schools and a pressing need to create greater access to therapies and support. As our corporate partner you would play a huge part in helping our community as we move forward with our plans to grow our facilities and services to meet the individual needs of all our residents and students.

There are lots of ways we can work together...

# Charity of the Year

**Adopt ChildVision as your Charity of the Year and encourage your employees and customers to take part in key events throughout the year to celebrate our partnership.**

Why not offer staff the opportunity to spend a day or two at ChildVision helping out? Having fun on our campus and visiting our kids and students would be a great way for your employees to spend a day out of the office and boost morale. For the ultimate team experience, a group of champion staff fundraisers/volunteers can spend a team-building weekend at our campus in Drumcondra and enjoy our leisure facilities.

## **An Annual Fundraising Event**

An annual event can be a successful way to integrate a CSR policy throughout a business whilst creating a buzz around the workplace. Staff and customers could organise a dress-down day, golf classic or choose to walk, trot, jog, run, cycle, sprint or even jump out of planes to help the children at ChildVision. Many of our supporting companies also add to their employees' efforts by matching funds raised. However you decide to support ChildVision, every idea is a good one and we will help you by sending a support pack and by helping to promote your event on our website and Facebook page etc. Any fundraising materials you require we will gladly provide; we have a selection of t-shirts, balloons, collection buckets and sponsorship forms for whatever you choose to do to support us.

## **Payroll Giving**

This is a simple way for your employees to get involved and if everyone gives just a little each month, it would mean a lot for the children at ChildVision who can look

forward to improvements to our facilities in the near future.

## **Online raffle**

A quick and easy way to make a big difference – we can help you to set up a bespoke online raffle for your company in support of ChildVision to give your employees an opportunity to win prizes while supporting a great cause.

## **Gifts in Kind**

Donating products or services displays your support for us and allows you to contribute to our work in a manner that is entirely relevant to your business.

## **Sponsorship**

Sponsorship of an event or project is an effective way to demonstrate your charitable credentials on a large scale. Your company might consider sponsoring our annual Garden Party or Therapeutic Horse Riding centre. Your logo and business name would then be associated with developing opportunities for our children.

## **Cause-Related Marketing**

Companies have on occasion taken the opportunity to promote or sell a product or service and offer a donation to ChildVision through this sale, another effective means of associating your brand with a very worthwhile cause.



# HOW CAN WE SUPPORT YOU?

It is our priority to ensure your company's CSR policy is adhered to so ChildVision will work with your CSR and charity committees and individual staff members to guarantee your goals are reached. We would be delighted for the opportunity to collaborate with you on a programme designed together that is right for your company and brand.

We want to make life easy for you.

## Our team will be able to support you by:

- Working with your staff to develop an **appropriate partnership**
- Offering **advice** on fundraising events and activities
- Providing **branded promotional material** such as t-shirts, hats...
- Advising on **potential media/PR opportunities**
- **Promoting the partnership** on the ChildVision website and on all social media
- Attracting **high profile personalities** to endorse the partnership
- Giving you access to our educational and therapy teams to advise you on issues affecting people with visual impairments
- **Presenting** to your staff and customers

# Meet Mila and her parents Olga and Marcus...

Our journey with Childvision started in the spring 2010. Half a year after we watched our firstborn, a three-month-old daughter Mila resuscitated following a brain haemorrhage, endure endless near fatal seizures in ICU, have dozen 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 a 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, such reality felt like a verdict of a life sentence, scary, painful and isolating.

The 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, there were small ones (like our Mila), doing the same motions and making the same noises, having a giggle following a joke or a tease made by Fran or Catriona. We have 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 and quite optimistic, at last.

It is now three years on and the impact that Childvision has made on Mila has been immeasurable. She has blossomed. Mila tells us now of her work and her friends - it is very important to her, for sure. 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 (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). It is a happy place for Mila, she beams walking through the doors, she is a just kid we really love. Thank you.

## Olga and Marcus Williams

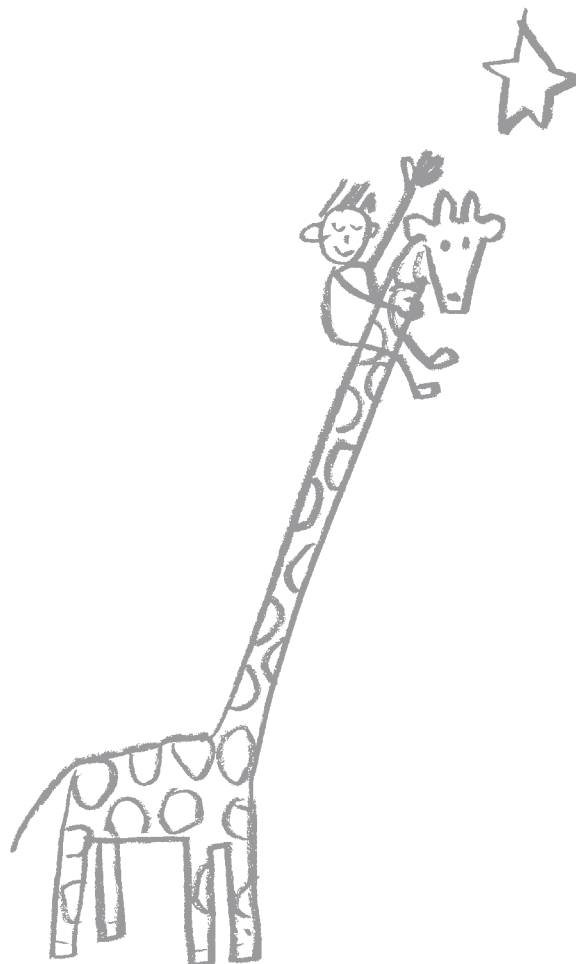


HELP US  
MAKE THINGS  
CLEARER

PARTNERS  
IN CREATING  
A BRIGHTER  
FUTURE...







Just because our children can't see the stars,  
doesn't mean they can't reach for them...

A Vision for Partnership:  
together creating a brighter future for the children at ChildVision

**ChildVision**

National Education Centre for Blind Children

Gracepark Road, Drumcondra, Dublin 9, Ireland. [www.childvision.ie](http://www.childvision.ie)

