

RSBC

Royal Society for Blind Children

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Life without limits

Your supporter
newsletter

Life
Without
Limits
For Blind
Children





Welcome

Hello and a big spring welcome to the latest edition of your supporter newsletter – **Life without limits**. This time of year is all about new beginnings and we have lots of budding growth to tell you about.

Fresh starts don't come much better than receiving an AQA award, an award recognising the achievements of blind and

partially sighted children and young people. Find out more on page four. **Abigail** comes on in leaps and bounds on page three.

A big thank you to all those who sent Christmas star messages to hang on our tree and share with the children and young people we support. The heartfelt words meant so much. Words like: **"I wish you a life of joy and love – nothing can stop you!"** and **"Keep shining – you are a STAR!"**

Thank you so much for giving blind and partially sighted children the chance to bloom and grow with your support!

Mandy, Supporter Care

Selling on eBay for RSBC is as easy as 1, 2, 3

And could mean you raise crucial funds for blind and partially sighted children.

1. Use 'charity search' to find RSBC, and opt for 'Donate a portion to charity' when listing your item. Add RSBC and choose your donation percentage before finalising your listing.
2. Sell and ship to your buyer as usual.

3. After your buyer has paid, eBay's partners PayPal Giving Fund will automatically send the donation to RSBC and send you a receipt.

Thank you so much!



Abigail the awesome

When we last caught up with Abigail in spring 2021, she and mum Debbie had just done a sponsored walk dressed as a pirate (Abigail) and princess (Debbie), raising a smashing £2,000 for RSBC. Debbie tells us what Abigail, eight in April, got up to next.

What's Abigail been up to since we last spoke?

Abigail met with a new RSBC Family Practitioner, Kim. Because Kim could go into school again, Abigail was absolutely made up. She didn't really like the online stuff, preferring face to face to video calls – she likes to feel people around her.

How has Kim been helping Abigail?

Abigail's really confident but she struggles to say to people, at school or appointments for example, "I can't see that." She always just gets on with things. Kim's been helping her with feeling confident to say things like that. She also has some sensory issues so Kim's been



helping her with sensory things too.

How are things at school?

They've got a good nurture programme, and obviously RSBC go in too. Abigail's really happy with all that. RSBC directed us to help at school, where Abigail tells me her favourite subject is maths! If we hadn't learnt about RSBC, she wouldn't be doing as well. As a parent, sometimes you feel a bit lost and you don't know who to turn to. That's a side of RSBC I'm very grateful for.

What message do you have for RSBC's supporters?

To all the supporters I say thank you very much. Families like Abigail and myself couldn't get support if we didn't have the support from people who donate.

AQA hip hip hooray!

Every year at RSBC, we come together to celebrate the achievements of young people who have received AQA awards for their hard work throughout the year. And 2022 was no exception.

Our AQA Celebration Ceremony was a truly wonderful occasion held on Saturday 29 October at our Life Without Limits Centre in London.

AQA qualifications recognise the achievements of children and young people across a range of skills and activities. AQA provides accredited qualifications and RSBC is part of AQA's Unit Award Scheme.

A day to remember

In 2022, 87 blind and partially sighted young people gained awards, and their achievements across a huge mix of subjects and activities were celebrated at the ceremony.

The event was also an opportunity for young people to showcase their talents in the company of family and friends, alongside RSBC staff and volunteers.

Nine young people took to the stage to wow us with their performances – giving solos, carrying out piano and poetry recitals and even performing a saxophone solo!

Elizabeth's mum had this to say about the day: "The performances were amazing. My daughter loves music but she didn't like singing or playing musical instruments – today I asked her, 'Do you like the singing?' and



she said, 'Yes.' It's just helping her to change to a different path. What you have done is give hope to the young people."

Kaya's triumph

One of the awards presented at the ceremony was the Pamela Wright Award for outstanding achievement. This went to Kaya (pictured above centre), described as "an inspiration to those around her". Kaya has played a key role in RSBC's Youth Forum and has also recorded, edited and produced podcasts that have helped many blind and partially sighted children and young people. In addition, Kaya is RSBC's Social Ambassador.

Kaya said on the night, "I feel absolutely amazing. It has already boosted my confidence immensely, as I never thought I would win such a prestigious award."

An incredible gift

A lifelong supporter of RSBC, Pamela Wright sadly passed



away in 2018. We are so grateful to Pamela for leaving a significant gift in her Will to RSBC to continue her commitment to supporting blind and partially sighted children and young people in achieving their goals. The Pamela Wright Award recognises the achievements of a young person with sight loss.

Thank you to everyone involved on the day. And thank you to you, our supporters, for making events like these possible. Because of your incredible support, we can support children and young people to develop their skills and confidence to achieve amazing things.

If you'd like to find out details about leaving a gift in your Will to RSBC, please visit rsbc.org.uk/leave-gift-your-will

Lee starts a new chapter

Lee, 17, is partially sighted. He started at RSBC Dorton College in September 2022. We recently caught up with him.

RSBC Dorton College is an independent specialist day college in Orpington, Kent that welcomes vision impaired students aged 16 to 25. Students come from across London and the southeast region, and it is the only independent specialist further education provider for vision impaired young people in this area. Some students have additional needs. Young people develop the skills and confidence to progress to employment, university,

voluntary work and more after graduating.

Room to grow

“Before starting here,” Lee tells us, “I wasn’t in contact with people like I am here every day, or socialising with vision impaired people. Throughout my school years, I was the only vision impaired person and work wasn’t accessible. RSBC has all these connections to different businesses and partnership colleges.”

Lee is studying for a number of different accredited qualifications, including AQA certificates (you can read about our AQA Awards ceremony on page four).

Lee has a curriculum tailored exactly to him.

Most of his sessions are one-to-one. Lee says, “The work is made for your needs and mine is in Braille.”

A few months in and Lee is already an RSBC Dorton College student forum rep. Lee explains, “I meet with the other students



regularly to listen and ensure their views are heard. I report to Dorton College governors with suggestions from the students.”

Major changes

Lee feels Dorton College has made a big difference to his independence. “Already, after being here for three months!” Before Lee started at the college, he couldn’t make a cup of tea or coffee using a kettle. That’s all changed.

Lee explains, “Let me tell you, one cups are life changing! You press a button on the machine, you put the cup underneath and it fills it up with hot water, just enough for one cup. I’ve just recently in the last couple of weeks got that.”

No limits

There really is no stopping Lee as he recently secured himself a work placement.

“I went for my first interview last week. I like helping people, making people smile, chatting to them and letting them know they’re not alone. That’s why I thought why not get in contact with a

specialist school near where I live? And I got the job, one day a week for the next 10 weeks. What’s good is I’ll still get one-to-one support from a Dorton College member of staff, someone to support me through the placement.

“When I leave Dorton College, I want to be independent, or at least semi-independent in supported living. My dream job would be a radio presenter.”



Winter wonderland

In December 2022, blind and partially sighted children and young people and their families got together online and in person at our Life Without Limits Centre where much fun was had by all!

Creative and festive activities including gingerbread decorating and enjoying a Christmas movie made sure the day was a memorable one for everyone. The children and young people also rolled up their sleeves in a body scrubs workshop, designing and making their own personalised products.

To finish off the festive day, everyone got together to listen to the wonderful piano performance given by Chapman, 12, and enjoyed the song performed by Alice, 13. Alice said, "It's been amazing catching up with everyone and meeting



new people." While Chapman's dad said, "The kids were able to have hands-on experiences."

Jack's dad said, "Jack always enjoys these get-togethers. My observation is he feels just that bit more comfortable around people with similar issues to himself. He feels part of something."

Perhaps the most moving feedback we received was from a young person attending RSBC activities for the first time. They said, "I was really nervous coming today as I've never been to a day like this before, or worked with RSBC in person. But now I've come and met loads of people I feel a lot better. I'm definitely going to come to more."

Thank you for making events like these possible with your truly tremendous support!

RSBC

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