

Boy with cerebral palsy a step closer to football dream

By Laura Cooke
Health and wellbeing reporter

A seven-year-old boy with cerebral palsy hopes to become a top footballer for his Brighton Cerebral Palsy team with the help of a renowned therapy centre.

To help fulfil his football dreams, Chase Wells from Bexhill has attended nine weeks at the Footsteps Centre in Oxfordshire for two hours of daily intensive physiotherapy, which will be ongoing into the future.

Born 10 weeks too early, Chase weighed only 3lbs 10 ozs but it wasn't until just before his first birthday his family and doctors realised something was wrong.

Mum Candice said: "Chase was in hospital for a lung infection and as I left his side to look at a scan, the doctor asked if we should put up the cot-side on the hospital bed

but I said that he still wasn't able to move.

"This rang alarm bells for the doctor who then ordered a series of tests which identified that Chase has cerebral palsy.

"It broke my heart as I was told Chase may never walk or be independent.

"From then on I was determined to do the best for Chase so when I heard about the Footsteps Centre from someone at judo, I researched it and here we are.

"Before we came to Footsteps, Chase's left side was weak and he had very poor balance and got tired easily. Since Chase started Footsteps this year, his balance has improved so much and he is learning to walk with flatter feet and his hips are more in line with his feet and shoulders which has hugely improved his posture."

Chase uses a piece of equipment called the 'Spider'

and is held with a series of elastic ropes which creates a 'spider's web' holding him in a perfect postural position in which to exercise.

The Spider gives Chase a unique experience of moving and balancing in crawling, kneeling, one-legged kneeling and standing positions, while concentrating on creating essential movements such as supporting, reaching, grasping and holding.

Traditional therapeutic equipment is also used.

Candice said: "Chase rarely complains about the hard work that he has to put in.

"I told him that if he wants to be a footballer that all footballers must work on their strength so he is determined to do the same.

"He loves the Spider in particular and the physios at Footsteps are so good at putting him at ease while motivating him to try his best."



Chase Wells in the 'Spider'

— IN BRIEF —

Hearth 'causes lounge blaze'

Firefighters worked hard to put out a fire in a lounge on Friday (December 2). Two East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service crews from Bexhill and Hastings were sent to Reginald Road at around 10.10am after a fire in a lounge caused by wood in the hearth was reported. Firefighters wearing breathing apparatus used two hose reel jets to tackle the fire and a thermal imaging camera. Crews left the premises about 40 minutes later.

Messy Church Christmas party

Christchurch Methodist Church 'messy church' will be holding a Christmas party on Saturday, December 17, 10am to 12 noon and would like to invite all youngsters, aged three and over, along with a parent or carer, to join them. Games and food will be provided. To book a place or for further details call Jill on 01424 214451.

Christmas comes early for staff and pupils at St Mary's School

Christmas came early for St Mary's School and College as its annual festive fayre, held last Saturday at the school in Wrestwood Road, raised more than £3,200.

As well as a visit from Father Christmas, there was a range of local craft stalls and traditional games and raffles including the ever popular bottle tombola and a grand draw with a first prize of a hamper from Fortnum & Mason.

Staff from the St Mary's catering team were on hand to keep everyone fuelled throughout the day with cakes, flapjacks, scones and bacon rolls and



Kay and Jackie on the raffle stall

entertainment was provided by the St Mary's signing choir who performed a repertoire of favourite Christmas songs.

Jonathan Smalldon, fundraising and marketing

manager, said: "We'd like to thank all the local businesses and everyone from the Bexhill community for their support of our Christmas Fayre and for making it such a success.

"To see so many people here, including past and present St Mary's pupils with their families, was truly inspiring.

"All the money raised from events like this goes to helping our students achieve their potential and live as independently as possible."

St Mary's caters for up to 160 children and young people. Visit www.stmarysbexhill.org.

'Lives at risk' with £40m gap

'Eye-watering' underfunding of the ambulance service by £40m next year would put 'patients' lives at risk', according to paramedics.

South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SECamb) is currently negotiating its contract with the 22 clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) across the region for 2017/18 but has refused to sign it due to a 'huge financial gap'.

SECamb acting chief executive Geraint Davies said they were looking at a gap of £40m between what the commissioners were offering and what the trust thought it needed to provide the resources required.

Ambulance technician and UNISON spokesman Nigel Sweet said: "Our CEO stated that £40m underfunding proposed by NHS commissioners - the 22 CCGs in our area - is

completely unacceptable and he has the board's full backing alongside our UNISON members' backing in fighting to get proper funding for SECamb."

A SECamb spokesman said it is subject to further negotiation.

"We need to be clear with the public and our staff about the potential patient impact as a result of underfunding of services," the spokesman said.

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