

Winter Newsletter 2018

In our last newsletter of the year, we learn about Alfie and Melissa's Footsteps and let you know ways that you can support our work with disabled children.

Alfie's Footsteps



Alfie Hayes is 4 years old and has been coming to Footsteps for two years, all the way from Derbyshire. Charity manager Maggie spoke with his mum, Rachael about their experiences:

What is Alfie's Diagnosis? 1P36 Deletion Chromosome Disorder and autism.

When did you first realise that there was something different with his mobility? Around 5 months. He was floppy as a baby with not much trunk control and then would fling himself backwards, making it hard to hold him.

What was your experience of doctors' advice at this time?

Mixed. The geneticist, when we got our diagnosis said: "you will be lucky if he sits up at all, and he probably won't walk" This was pretty devastating at the time, but once I started looking in to this (rare) condition, I found there are a range of outcomes, so I started looking for ways to help Alfie. What I worry about is parents who just hear that negative diagnosis and then give up and don't get out there and try everything they can – they should give the worst case AND the best case scenario!

How did you hear about Footsteps? Another parent in a 1P36 group recommended it.

What has your experience of Footsteps been so far? The way the physios work at Footsteps is so different from other places. They are firm with him – and it gets results! Alfie started walking unaided towards the end of his 3-week session this August. Then, when he got home he just stopped...Without the therapists to egg him

on, he just stopped walking again. A few weeks later we were in a shop and I wanted him to try on a new winter coat. He wasn't keen – so he simply toddled away from me! My hands were full of coats – I had to put them down and run after him!

What do you think that Alfie has gained from the physio at Footsteps? It's made his life so much better. Who knows where he would be without it? The thing is – you just don't know. Would he be just crawling? Unable to stand? I certainly don't have confidence that he would be where he is now.

What a lovely story, we are all really proud of what Alfie has achieved this year! Please go to our facebook page to see a video of Alfie's progress <https://www.facebook.com/footstepsfoundation/>

December Donations Doubled!



Can you help Footsteps Foundation this Christmas? Thanks to a kind donor, any donations that we receive in December will be doubled!!! Please follow this link to donate online [HERE](#) or send a cheque to Footsteps Foundation Ltd, 4 Queen Street, Dorchester-on-Thames, OX10 7HR. Last year we raised nearly £3500 extra to help children like Alfie and Melissa take their first Footsteps... **Can we beat this in 2018?**

Other ways to support us this Christmas include: entering our [WINTER RAFFLE](#) ; coming to see us (or volunteering if you can?) at Waitrose Wallingford bucket collection on Saturday 15th December; buying some gifts or Christmas cards from our [ONLINE SHOP](#) or cheering on (or entering!) the [READING SANTA RUN](#) on Sunday 9th December, raising funds for our work.

Melissa's Footsteps Decade...



Melissa, age 13 from London, has been coming to Footsteps since she was a little three-year-old! Maggie spoke with Melissa to find out more...

What 3 words would you use to describe Footsteps?

Helpful; Exhausting; Fun!

Tell me about school: I go to school in Surrey. My friends are really supportive. I use a wheelchair in the day, but get up and use a walker at lunchtime for the exercise. I'm choosing my GCSEs this year and will do Russian, French and History.

How do you think Footsteps has helped you? It definitely helps me to be stronger. I try and stand more after a 3-week session and I am straighter. But I am also tired – so tired! I first learnt to walk at Footsteps, when I was 10 years old. Before that, I was in a wheelchair all the time. I made a lot of progress, then kind of went backwards a bit when I was growing a lot. My brother said I should go back to Footsteps, to get more mobile, and I said “Do you want me to live there or something?” He said he thought that was a good idea!

What's your favourite part of the sessions here? I love the 'Spider'! It is so much fun, you can go on a trampoline and play games – although now I am older it is a bit more 'serious' physio, I still LOVE the trampoline.

Well done Melissa. Thanks for talking to us about your ten years of hard work at Footsteps. It's not easy, pushing yourself, and we are all impressed with your determination.

Our Lovely Supporters....



2018 has been super busy, with lots of children reaching milestones and tons of fundraising to make it all happen. Many children have taken their first footsteps this year, or gained in strength, mobility and confidence through the Footsteps Programme. There are many new faces and people coming from all over the UK to access our specialist service. Our regular donors help us plan this essential work – we are grateful to all who support us in this way. Could you consider becoming a regular donor to help children like Melissa and Alfie? Any donors who sign up in December will have the first month doubled too!

Huge thanks to:

James Gesner; The Hospital Saturday Fund; Peter & Susan Twitchett; Berks, Bucks & Oxon NAFAS; Doris Field Charitable Trust; The Rotary Club of Didcot; Horsebox Coffee Co; The Ammco Trust, The Sobell Foundation; The Ernest Hecht Trust; Sarah McAdden; Doug Tillman and Christine Briggs and all who have bought raffle tickets, cards and merchandise!

WISHING ALL OUR SUPPORTERS A HAPPY CHRISTMAS, RESTFUL HOLIDAYS & A WONDERFUL NEW YEAR

Thanks for your ongoing support,

The Footsteps Team.



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