

A national loan scheme reaches its 250th free Wizzybug wheelchair for disabled children

Thursday 15 September, 2016

Celebrations took place today to mark the build of the 250th Wizzybug powered wheelchair in a loan scheme for disabled children.

The Wizzybug was created by the charity Designability, based in the South West of England who work to design useful products and technologies to help support people with disabilities or long term illnesses.

The national Wizzybug Loan Scheme was first established in 2011 when the charity identified the lack of NHS funding for powered mobility for children under 5 across the country.

With the cost of mobility equipment so high, they started fundraising to be able to loan Wizzybugs out free of charge to children who could benefit.

Thomas, 3, is the lucky little boy who will be receiving the 250th Wizzybug. His mum, Kim, said: "At the moment, Thomas spends most of the time playing and lying on the floor when he is at home. He relies on us to bring him toys and is sometimes frustrated that he does not have the toys he wanted.

"In the Wizzybug he will be able to fetch his own toys and see what is going on around him above floor level. I am looking forward to seeing Thomas exploring, especially at the park - we have not been for a long time because it's too far for me to walk pushing him in his pushchair.

"I do not work because Thomas needs so much extra care, so money is tight. If we had had to pay for the Wizzybug then we would have had to borrow money from family members or had to go without things that the family needs."

To date, the scheme has helped over 330 children to access one of the fun, powered wheelchairs to be able to move and play independently. Each Wizzybug is refurbished for another child upon its return which means that each wheelchair can help up to three children.

Wizzybugs have gone to children in all corners of the country, from Cornwall right up to the Shetland Isles.

Fiona Cromwell, marketing and fundraising officer for Designability, said: "The donations and support we have had in Wiltshire and further afield has been amazing. If it wasn't for such strong backing, we never would have reached this important milestone."

"However, our Wizzybug Loan Scheme has grown beyond our wildest dreams and we need to fundraise to be able to help more children."

The charity have a small workshop team building them all onsite and funds are needed to build more Wizzybugs and provide appointments for children to be assessed for one.

Designability are looking for people to support them to reach 300 Wizzybugs. To find out more about the scheme, please visit [their website](#) or call 01225 824103

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