No One Should Face Sight Loss Alone

Wednesday 29 May, 2019

I'm losing my sight; at the age of 8, I was diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa so have very little vision and will eventually lose it completely.

My mum and I felt totally isolated and very scared as we didn't know how to access support, despite seeing countless eyecare professionals; signposting and referrals to support services would have made our journey much less stressful. This BBC video highlights the challenges we faced as I grew up https://youtu.be/TLWARF8Alo0

Two million UK children, young people and adults live with sight loss, a number that is expected to double over the next 30 years, and although many support services exist, there is still a severe lack of awareness within the optical sector regarding what can be done to help patients on both emotional and practical levels when they experience the shock of diagnosis.

Lack of support can be far reaching and long lasting - according to an RNIB survey in 2018, only 1 in 4 registered sight impaired or severely sight impaired people of working age are in employment and 1 in 5 people will face living with sight loss in their lifetime; the total estimated annual cost of eye health and sight loss in the UK is £28 billion and the indirect cost associated with sight loss in the UK is £6 billion.

Having experienced the challenges sight loss brings, I was determined to improve things for other people in a similar situation so in my early twenties, thanks to the help of my family and support and guidance from the Prince's Trust, I founded Visualise Training and Consultancy which promotes inclusion and accessibility for people with disabilities. My current focus is to connect the UK optical and sight loss support sectors through our Seeing Beyond the Eyes project - this video explains how https://youtu.be/bWhtLbecatw

Thanks to excellent support from Thomas Pocklington Trust and our sponsors, our training roadshow has already empowered over 3,000 optical professionals with the knowledge to make referrals to support services, resulting in a better quality of life for patients facing sight loss. You can download the full impact report here

The funding stream for our first training roadshow has now ended so we need help to reach another 2,000 optometrists and opticians via 20 new workshops across England and Scotland where there is a high prevalence of people with sight loss.

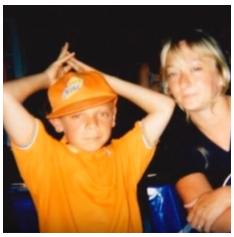
As you can tell, I'm a man on a mission (with low vision!) to improve the life chances of children, young people and adults who just need help to get on the right path, so please contact me if you are able to support our planned roadshow by offering free venues, goods and/or services and publicity. We also need finance to make it happen so please donate whatever you can afford at https://www.gofundme.com/seeing-beyond-the-eyes-project
If we don't hit our target, GoFundMe still allows us to use what's been raised (less their charges) so together, let's see how many workshops we can deliver!

Please share this feature on your social media and website and by email and newsletters and let all your friends, family and business contacts know that they too can be part of our exciting mission to improve the lives of UK children, young people and adults with sight loss!

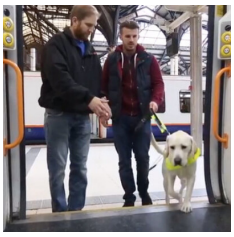
If you have any questions or comments, please email me at daniel@visualisetrainingandconsultancy.co.uk

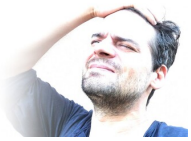
Thanks in advance for your support - together we'll be the difference for people with sight loss!

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Warmest wishes,

Daniel....and my trusty guide dog Zodiac

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