THE CHARITY BRINGING THE CORONATION TO LIFE FOR BLIND CHILDREN

Tuesday 4 April, 2023

- **The coronation promises to be a visual spectacle, but over 26,000 blind and visually impaired children and young people risk feeling excluded from the festivities.**
- **The national charity Living Paintings are giving away thousands of free sensory coronation gifts, so blind children can experience the historic occasion through touch and sound.**
- **Stars including Dame Joanna Lumley, Roman Kemp, Mel Giedroyc, Omid Djalili and Sir Derek Jacobi have lent their voices to bring the coronation to life.**
- **The project is designed to ensure every blind child in the UK has the opportunity to join in the celebrations at home and engage with learning at school.**

The coronation of King Charles III promises to be a visual spectacle that will bring the country together in celebration. But with rich imagery so ingrained in the event, over 26,000 blind and visually impaired children and young people living in the UK risk feeling excluded. The charity Living Paintings is working to tackle this with a very special campaign that will bring the coronation to life for them, providing thousands of free sensory coronation gifts to blind children and young people across the nation.

The charity's project, *Coronation: The Sensory Experience for Blind Children*, has taken key elements from the coronation ceremony such as the St Edward's Crown and turned them into tactile, raised images. Each comes with a specially recorded audio description that guides little fingers over the feely pictures and provides entertaining commentary, facts and information so blind and visually impaired youngsters can experience the coronation through touch and sound. The gifts also include the profile portrait of King Charles that will become the iconic image of his reign, bringing blind children 'face to face' with the new king himself.

The charity's CEO, Camilla Oldland, says:

"There will be huge excitement in witnessing all the pageantry and history of the coronation – and it simply breaks our heart to think that so many blind and visually impaired children and young people might feel unable to fully engage in the celebrations. We knew we had to do something incredible to bring it all to life for them in an accessible and inclusive way."

Living Paintings has over 30 years' experience in creating tactile-audio experiences for blind children and young people, and is most famous for their hand-made accessible adaptions of the world's best-loved children's picture books; lent to families and schools from their free postal library. But creating their coronation keepsakes on such a scale so that every blind child in the UK might benefit is a first for the national charity.

"It's a huge project for a small charity like ours, but right now we're busily working behind the scenes to ensure that no blind child has to miss out on the experience of a lifetime. We hope that as youngsters across the country learn about our traditions at school or settle down with their families to watch the event at home, they can feel fully included with our special gift, made with love and designed just for them."

The charity's project has attracted the support of Lambeth Palace, The Royal Collection, the Department for Education, the Department for Digital, Media, Sport and Culture, and Historic Royal Palaces – with audio guides to be read by a range of well-known voices including Dame Joanna Lumley, Roman Kemp, Mel Giedroyc, Omid Djalili, and Sir Derek Jacobi.

Friend of Living Paintings, **Dame Joanna Lumley**, says:

"It was a pleasure and privilege to record the audio description of St Edward's Crown and bring the coronation to life for blind children. Now I know that it weighs as much as four tins of baked beans, my respect for His Majesty - already sky-high - becomes stratospheric. Knowing that children around the country will be able to see the crown through touch and experience the ceremony better because of the wonderful people at Living Paintings fills me with awe.

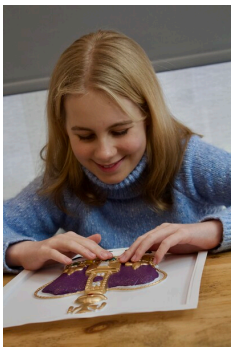
I shall be at the coronation, in humbler headwear, but still bursting with pride that we shall have shown blind children a pivotal part of the fabulous ceremony."

Media:













Living Paintings

Those supporting blind or visually impaired children or young people, whether at home or at school, can register for a free coronation gift for the child at livingpaintings.org/coronation

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Spokespeople available on request

About Living Paintings

Living Paintings is the national charity on a mission to ensure every blind child in the UK has equal access to the visual world of pictures, books and learning. From adapting bestselling picture books into accessible, tactile-audio formats for blind children to developing resources designed to inspire, educate and entertain – their free postal library gives thousands of blind children and young people the world at their fingertips.

For more information, visit livingpaintings.org or check out their Instagram @livingpaintingscharity

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