


Helping children with upper limb differences live life without limits


within Reach

SPRING 2021 | ISSUE 146




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Reach

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Events 2021

- APR** - Limb Loss/Difference Awareness Month
- Raise4Reach Fundraising
- Marathon 2.6 Challenge 2021
- Webinars - Every Saturday at 10am
- MAY** - Tyn Cae - TBC
- JUL** - North West Family Weekend
- RAW - Reach Activity Week
- Run4Reach - Virtual fundraising event
- AUG** - Branch Events - TBC
- OCT** - Virtual Annual Family Weekend
- Virgin London Marathon
- NOV** - Branch Christmas Events
- DEC** - Branch Christmas Events
- The BIG Give Christmas Challenge



Stay up to date

All event news is on our website www.reach.org.uk and facebook page www.facebook.com/reachcharity.

Meet our Wonderful Branch Coordinators

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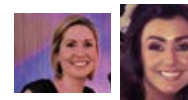
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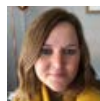
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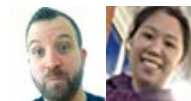
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Support us Donate today



Hello!

2021 seems to be starting on a positive note with the COVID-19 vaccines being rolled out across the country.

We really hope this allows branch events to take place later in the year. If and when they do, we will be sending out advice on how to ensure they're safe for everyone.

We mentioned in our email to members that the Annual Family Day will be virtual this year, on Saturday 23rd October 2021, from 10am to 5pm. The 2020 Family Day was the most inclusive and engaged we've hosted with nearly 1,000 people able to take part throughout the day, and a further 1,450+ viewers watching the videos on YouTube. Feedback we had from the Survey was also strongly in favour of the virtual format, with over 70% taking the time to give individual feedback, including how inclusive the event was and could it be done in this way again.

If you have a particular request for something to be included in the Family Day please get in touch - remember this day is for you so we want it to be relevant and engaging. Would you be happy to get involved? Give a talk? Hold a workshop? Do a demonstration?

Remember if you want a chat, we are always on the end of the phone or email at Head Office.

Thanks for your support

Debs

Debs Bond
National Coordinator
debb@reach.org.uk



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Hi there

By the time this edition hits your inboxes, we will have been affected by COVID-19 restrictions for over a year. Even with gradual signs of opening up beginning to emerge, we are still a way off normality, in our own lives and in the life of the Reach community.

But we're still here. And even though we all long for the day when Reach meet ups can resume, the restrictions of lockdown have also provided us with opportunities to expand in different ways:

- The access figures for the Virtual Family Weekend showed that we had hundreds more people engaging than ever before.
- We have been able to launch the series of Saturday Insights Webinars, which will provide a wonderful lasting resource for members and prospective members.
- We have formed the Reach oRchestRa.
- And we have also found ways of connecting Reach children with each other through the Buddy Scheme, linking children with a similar aged buddy that they can message and chat to over video links. If you're looking for a Reach buddy, get in touch with Head Office to see if they can match you up!

None of this is a substitute for meeting in real life, especially for our younger members. But it is good to have found new ways of doing things, that we might not have discovered otherwise.

Roll on normality - but in the meantime, let's keep finding new ways to live our lives without limits.

Clare

Clare Salters
Chair, Reach Board of Trustees
clares@reach.org.uk



Why Reach needs your support...

We raise awareness of upper limb difference.



We provide help & support to parents & children



We hold annual events to connect our community & raise funds.



'Work for Good'

Reach has signed up to Work for Good – a platform that makes it quick and easy for businesses to donate to charities. Thanks to encouragement from business owner and Reach parent Diane Chappell:

"It's a win-win, Work for Good takes away the legal stress associated with charitable donations and means you're always in control. As a business owner it gives me a reason to talk about a cause that's important to me and you can advertise on your website that your business gives 1% of profits, for example, to Reach - great for Reach and a fantastic marketing tool for your brand. Just share the link with clients and go. Easy!"

▶ Visit workforgood.co.uk/charities/reach-charity-ltd-1



Tribute to the Founders of Reach Ireland

By friend Christopher Creamer

Reach Ireland members were shocked to learn of the tragic deaths of two of our members in a house fire in December 2020. Beatrice and Michael Hurley were founder members of the Ireland branch of Reach in 1990.

After her daughter Abigail was born in 1986 with both arms affected, Beatrice started to search for support for families of children born with limb difference. She wrote to a popular radio show, the Gay Byrne Hour, seeking contact from other parents who had children born with limb conditions. Her phone didn't stop ringing until she had compiled a list of 45 families. She organised a meeting for those families in the National Children's Hospital, Dublin, taking the first steps in setting up a Reach branch in Ireland.

With the help of Beatrice and Maureen O'Keefe (in Arklow), Reach Ireland became very active in organising national events for our families. I can recall Beatrice & Michael booking Portmarnock Leisure Centre for a Summer Picnic for the families and children to meet up, exchange stories, and to support each other going forward. The Hurley children were all very active that day; manning creches, serving food, organising games and doing anything else



that was asked of them - showing just how important the family element of Reach is.

Reach Ireland flourished, becoming an influential branch in the organisation, over the years we've hosted Reach AGM's and Family Weekends, Quiz Nights with our late Patron Jeremy Beadle, and raised a lot of funds for Reach; for this we can give a huge thanks to the initiative of parents like Beatrice, Michael, Maureen and Kevin.

May we extend our sincerest condolences to Joy, Dawn, Grace, Michael Jr. and Abigail Hurley on behalf of all of the Reach family.



A Goodbye from Trustee Lisa Kelly

My time at Reach has been brief and I am leaving due to personal circumstances, which is unfortunate. I have really enjoyed the short time I have been involved in the charity, it has been exciting, heart-warming and challenging. I remember being moved at the first annual meeting by the stories I heard, laughing and shedding a tear at the same time. As an able-bodied person, I had not considered the impact and challenges having a missing upper limb could bring; I now know that, I have been amazed at how people overcome this and the work the charity does to support members and make connections to help families through difficult times. The culture within Reach is strong and supportive with strong values and visions for its members.

The trustees are amazing, dedicated individuals who give a lot of their time to support the charity and I was proud to be a part of that. It was and will continue to be, an exciting journey, and I loved hearing and seeing the passion and joy within the charity and the time that everyone gives, to make a difference. Reach has an exciting future ahead and is going from strength to strength. I would like to thank everyone for making me feel so welcome and allowing me to be a part of the Reach family, I will not forget you.

Reach has touched my heart.

Best wishes, *Lisa*



#RUN4REACH in 2021!

Love to run? Run for Reach! We've teamed up with 'Run for Charity' to make it even easier to find events near you. www.reach.org.uk/fundraise-for-reach/

1. Find an event
2. Register
3. Select 'Reach Charity'
4. Set up fundraising page
5. Email us at: reach@reach.org.uk or share on Facebook

We'll support you along the way by sharing your training photos, videos and blogs and you can use our online marketing ideas to promote your page.

We're also planning a **RUN4REACH Virtual Event** this summer to coincide with Reach Activity Week. You choose any activity no matter whether it's a run, walk, skip, cycle, read or zip wire and we'll add it to our campaign so we can fundraise together as a Reach community!



Alex Brooker Wins £23,751 for Reach

New Year's Eve saw our very own Reach Ambassador Alex Brooker take on the TV show The Wall – Versus Celebrities. Alex played alongside actor Sally Lindsay and together they won an astonishing £47,502. Sally donated her winnings to Demelza Hospice Care for Children, whilst Alex donated his £23,751 to Reach.



Alex was determined to win for Reach: "I'm so relieved we managed to win money for our charities and in my case, for Reach. I played for Reach when I did Tipping Point earlier in the year and thought I'd get some decent money then but ended up being knocked out by Joey Essex! So I definitely wanted to win a substantial amount. To be honest, it was all down to Sally being so intelligent - I was just selecting where to play on The Wall. I can't say how much of a relief it was when Sally said she hadn't taken their offer. I'm so pleased to have been able to win some money for Reach after such a difficult time for charities. It's very close to my heart and I always want to try and help as much as I can."



Images from Remarkable Television

From all of us at Reach, thank you Alex.

'#ProjectLimitless'

Funded through the Douglas Bader Foundation, ProjectLimitless aims to give every child who needs one, access to a prosthetic arm. The Mitt is for Below Elbow and Through Wrist limb differences and the Paww works with Partial Hands and Partial Fingers. Whether it's a tool to make everyday tasks a little easier or one that enables a child to pursue an activity, the possibilities are endless; from writing, cooking, putting on makeup, holding cutlery, playing an instrument, skipping or riding a bike!

Not sure? No problem, you can try a Mitt or Paww and if it's not for you, return it and Koalaa can re-use it.

Find out more or register at: www.yourkoalaa.com/projectlimitless



April is Limb Loss & Limb Difference Awareness Month

www.limblosslimbdifference.co.uk

#LimbLossAwarenessMonth

#LimbDifferenceAwarenessMonth

@littlebirdsluckyfin



@ashleebryannr

After last year's success, we're asking our Reach community to come together once again to take part in Limb Loss and Limb Difference Awareness Month.

Reach has been welcoming parents and children into the Reach family for over 40 years; providing support, information and help when it's needed, as well as raising awareness of upper limb difference. Nowadays, we can shout a bit louder thanks to social media, so we're calling on you all to join us in using the hashtags, telling your stories, and sharing what Reach means to you.

www.reach.org.uk/fundraising-faqs/

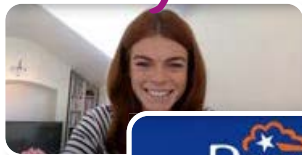


Virtual Annual Family Weekend

Reach's Annual Family Weekend 2020 was our most inclusive to date, with nearly 1,000 people taking part throughout the day so we're doing it again this year!

Speakers, discussion panels, the Reach Orchestra and workshops for everyone, so stay tuned for updates and the official invites later in the year but right now all you need to know is when!

Saturday 23rd October 2021,
from 10am to 5pm

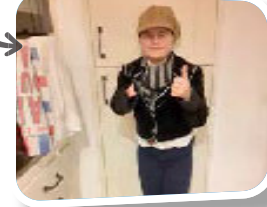


Welcome to Reach

James, Hannah & Baby Amelia Harrington



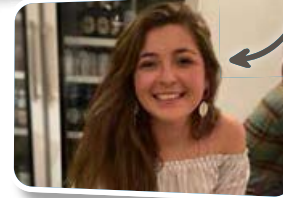
Craigie Gibson-Lovie



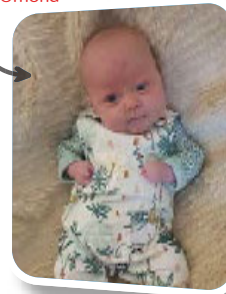
Andy, Stef & Daniel



Carys Rhys-Jones



Mollie Omond



Tom, Stef & Baby Eleanor Stafford



Elliot Christian



Maddison Lillian Wright



Massive Thanks

£100

Ms Elizabeth Latham
She wanted to say "keep up the good work".

Jonathan McGee

£25

£30

Bj Collis
In lieu of Christmas Cards from friends at Church.

Jonathan Alcock & Sons Ltd
In memory of David William Yates.

£110

£500

The TK Maxx and Homesense Foundation
Community Funding applied for by an employee.

Mrs Veronica Wastall
They donate annually to different charities.

£200

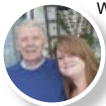
£250

CO-OP
Towards the cost of the Reach Christmas pressies.

Tracey Jackson & Hannah Hillier
In Memory of Desmond Whitcombe 4th Oct 2020.

£305

"As an amputee Desy struggled all his life to accept what had happened to him and would have greatly benefited from a charity such as Reach."



Mr & Mrs Rewaj
Lower Darwen Primary School raised money instead of Christmas Cards.

£150

£10

Mr & Mrs Brooke

Mr & Mrs Yates
In memory of David William Yates.

£20

£1500 Joseph Strong Frazer Trust
Annual Donation.

Geraldine Griffiths Grandparent of 9yr old Freya Griffiths - Geraldine regularly sends in donations collected from collection tins in Newport.

£20

£238

Briony May Williams
First instalment from her camio videos.

The Richard Kirkman Trust

£500

£5000

The Joron Charitable Trust



Did you know it's easy to fundraise on Facebook?

Facebook Birthday fundraisers can be a fantastic way to talk about upper limb difference, spread awareness about Reach and raise money in lieu of birthday cards. In January new Member and Reach parent Danny Wright raised £1297 for Reach - thank you!



£1297

Academy Primary School



Beth (5) and her principal Richard Fegan from Academy Primary School, Saintfield, raised £1425.50 for Reach in December by wearing Christmas jumpers and holding a non-uniform day.

£1425



Virtual Marathon Runners

4th October 2020

Jason Smith



£663

"Running for Reach was incredible; the support was just fantastic. I've seen with my own eyes the difference that this wonderful charity can make and didn't hesitate to step up to the challenge. Thank you again to everyone who sponsored us!"

Melissa Stonard



£1030

Karen Messenger



£790

"I'm delighted to have the opportunity to support Reach!"

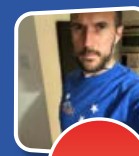
Hannah Smith



£710

"I loved running and raising money for Reach! It's great to push boundaries and see how far you can go which is why I did the marathon and reading stories of children who don't let any limitations affect them and what they want from life really inspired me. It was a fantastic day!"

John Desbois



£1435

Donna Baldwin



£2270

Reach was established the year I was born and provided support to my mum so holds a very special place in my heart. As a reach adult who's always been determined not to let anything hold me back, I admire the work Reach undertakes to positively focus on children's abilities and not disabilities. I'll be running the (actual) London Marathon 2021 and will be proudly wearing a Reach vest.

Matt Ryan's Virtual Swim

£1037

Reach is close to our hearts and I was gutted when the actual event was cancelled due to covid-19, but I didn't see this as an excuse not to take part virtually, so on Wednesday 26th August I completed the swim in a lake local to me - 14.25kms in 4hrs 28mins! I hope to complete the actual race this summer, in the Thames and in one go.



£622

We're All Different

Jo Laing, raised £622 in January, by selling an illustration originally painted for her daughter Bonnie who was born with a different left hand and suffered a confidence crash when she started school last year. Jo painted this to remind Bonnie (a huge dog lover) that we're all different. All profits are donated to Reach.

↳ To buy: www.jolaing.com



We're all different.

Reach Insights - Webinars



- **Dr Dorothy Cowie BOLDkids** | Brain Organisation in Limb Differences & updates in pioneering research
- **Nate Macabuag & Alex Lewis** | Project Limitless, Koalaa Mitts
- **Remap** | Custom made equipment to help people live more independent lives
- **Cornwall Mobility** | Getting on the road, all you need to know about driving
- **Joanna Allen** | Disability Inclusion. For me, its personal
- **Ruth Lester OBE** | Retired Consultant Hand Surgeon - Presentation and Live Q&A's
- **Amy Truesdale** | Para Taekwondo, training and exercise
Andy Brittles | LimbPower - National Sports Development Officer
- **Hollie Arnold MBE** | British parasport athlete competing in category F46 javelin
- **Rupinder Kaur** | A Parent's Perspective
- **Anoushé Husain** | Disability Advocate. Keep believing the impossible is possible.
- **Wayne Williams** | Bionics for Everyone

Athletes, health professionals, parents, engineers, musicians and more - invaluable insights and advice. Catch up if you've missed the webinars at:
www.reachinsights.live/past-shows/
 Or on our YouTube channel: 'Reach Charity Ltd'

All made possible thanks to the CAF Resilience Fund grant.



Just a selection of the webinars that are already available to stream here: <https://www.reachinsights.live/past-shows/>

Reach oRchestRa

The Reach oRchestRa are finalists at the Music & Drama Education Awards 2021.

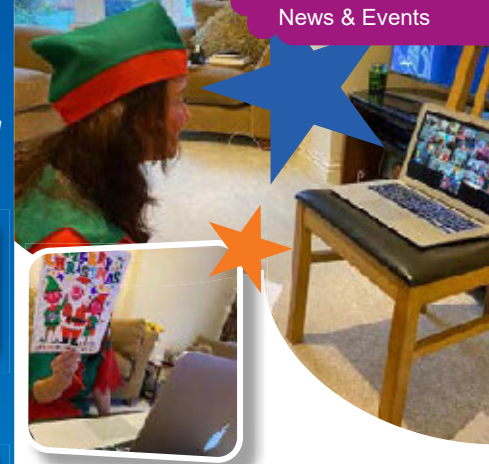
Following the success of last year's Virtual Family Weekend performance, when the Reach oRchestRa came together as a virtual ensemble thanks to Reach's Chair, Clare Salters, the Reach oRchestRa have been shortlisted in the category 'Excellence in SEND (Music & Drama)'.

The winners will be announced at 6pm on Wednesday 24th March on the Music & Drama Education Awards website and Facebook page. But Clare is proud regardless of the result:



“ I'm so delighted to see the Reach oRchestRa shortlisted, and showing the world that there are no limits when it comes to making music. Whether or not we win, our players are wonderful role models for others who may be interested in learning an instrument. ”

Festive smiles when Reach Christmas pressies arrived!

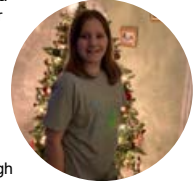


Virtual Christmas Parties 2020!

"The Reach Virtual Christmas was a great success! 25 Reach families joined in with the fun! We had a bake off, colouring competition and lots of singing and dancing and even a visit from Father Christmas!"
Tracey Smith - Branch Coordinator - West Midlands

"We enjoyed winter bingo, a crazy Christmas scavenger hunt, some sock related activities and a children's quiz. We even turned our screens orange, blue and filled them with stars, and the winners on the day were the Willis family. Throughout the week though we also had so much fun writing and receiving Secret Santa letters."
Melissa Beesley - Branch Coordinator - South Wales

Chloe Nash - Bake Off winner



The Big Give Christmas Challenge

In December Reach took part in The Big Give Christmas Challenge which doubled donations made through the Big Give website for one week only.

Thank you to everyone who donated and shared the campaign. We are doing the Big Give again in 2021 so watch out for fundraising ideas.

We made £5000



Post-Lockdown Summer Activities

Staying Safe & Local

Summer's coming and post-lockdown freedom is sweet but, many may be planning to descend on popular tourist spots so thanks to friend of Reach, Suzi, a mum of two and a queen of creativity, we have some top fun-filled activities you can do at home or locally that don't involve queuing for hours or travelling too far!

outdoors

Go camping... in the garden! | Grab the tents, duvets and pillows and camp out. You can even have a camp fire if you have a fire pit, and don't forget the marshmallows!

Wildlife Walks | Find a local walk and look out for wildlife! The RSPB has free downloadable sheets so you can spot everything from insects and flowering plants to birds and mammals. [rspb.org.uk/fun-and-learning/for-teachers/lesson-plans-and-supporting-resources/spot-it/](https://www.rspb.org.uk/fun-and-learning/for-teachers/lesson-plans-and-supporting-resources/spot-it/)

(Find more wildlife-based activities at [wildlifewatch.org.uk/activities](https://www.wildlifewatch.org.uk/activities).)



Geocaching | Fun for all the family with different levels of difficulty, 'geocaching is a real-world, outdoor treasure hunting game'. Download the app from [geocaching.com](https://www.geocaching.com) and get exploring.

Run4Reach | Find an event near you, start training, and run for reach! Find Reach on [www.Runforcharity.com](https://www.runforcharity.com). For local events www.reach.org.uk/take-part-in-a-fundraising-event-run-for-reach/

Hide & Seek Rock Game | Get out, collect rocks, and get painting. Then hide them for others to find... (Find out more at [ilovepaintedrocks.com](https://www.ilovepaintedrocks.com))

Create a fairy house | Collect natural materials and make a fairy house. It can be a great source of story-telling and inspiration for the whole summer. You can even build a fairy garden or house in a plant pot. Pinterest has lots of ideas!

Garden Sports Day | Host your own sports day with classics like an egg and spoon race or sack race or create your own races.

Indoors

Go classic with Lego | There's nothing like getting creative with Lego, building a Lego town, or completing a set. But they're not cheap, so why not build your collection or change things up by trading or finding pre-loved Lego on websites like [bricktraders.co.uk](https://www.bricktraders.co.uk).

Fimo time | All about imagination and creativity, 'by handling different materials, little ones train their fine motor skills and improve their ability to concentrate.' Let them create their own models and figures, jewellery, and games.

Make a movie! | Create a stop frame animation. All you need is a phone or an iPad and toys from their toybox or even their Lego or Fimo clay creations for endless stories. Get started with help from [tinkerlab.com/easy-stop-motion-animation-kids/](https://www.tinkerlab.com/easy-stop-motion-animation-kids/)



Arthur

By Reach mum Emily Chapman

"Please don't say you're sorry
Won't let anything stand in his way
We love him exactly as he is
But know you're trying to be kind

When you meet him for yourself
You'll feel the same way too
And get heart warming giggles
If you play peek a boo

Just like some wear glasses
Or have freckles on a nose
We are all uniquely different
As everybody knows

Don't define based on an arm
Or make assumptions due to looks
You'll find yourself proven wrong
Look beyond the cover of the books

This smiling joyful toddler
Won't let anything stand in his way
He crawls and laughs and chats along
Taking each moment day by day

His little stump is perfect
It's smooth and oh so soft
Much stronger than a hand
You'll know it if he pushes off!

Have a scroll of google
And maybe insta too
'Limb different' skills are incredible,
See for yourself, it's true

From the moment you were born
You've been part of an awesome tribe
Of 'limb different' people
Some of the most inspiring humans alive

You can choose whatever left hand you like
Not restricted born with two
Your options are limitless
We're so excited to see all you do

We don't see a 'difference'
We just see you as you
And every part of us
Loves every single part of you"



Getting Active with Luca

Luca Reese may be just 6 years old but he has the running bug and is already scouting for local running clubs! We spoke to mum Kavita about all things running and how Luca overcomes challenging situations:

"Luca is 5 and a half years old and is such an active little boy who loves lots of sports; football, tennis and swimming and in particular running."

Does he ever face any challenges when it comes to his limb difference?

"Joining new groups can be challenging at first for Luca, but he has learnt to dive right in, let his enthusiasm shine through, and his skills, and get stuck right in with the rest of them."

You mentioned that Luca has learnt how to deal with challenging situations, is there anything in particular that helps?

"Luca sometimes finds joining new groups challenging because of the inevitable questions from children about his limb difference. He is learning to deal with the questions and extra attention in his own time and way.

We talk about potential questions and responses i.e. role play before he attends, in a safe environment such as at home. Afterwards he tells me about questions he's received and how he felt and how he handled them. We talk it all through."

How do you talk about Luca's limb difference with children?

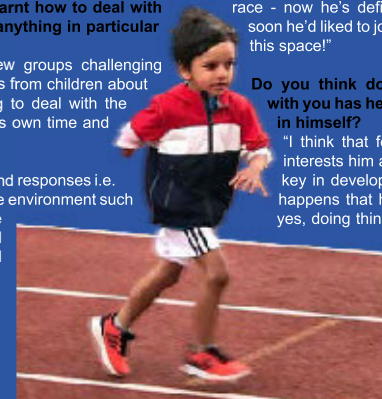
"If I'm allowed to be present and it's appropriate, I help talk to the children, highlighting how we are all wonderful and different, I guess it's my way of educating and introducing a sense of normality. A positive constructive attitude from me with Luca listening helps and strengthens him. Other times Luca astounds me and walks right in with a cheeky smile and barely a backward glance!"

So, how did Luca get into running?

"His older brother and I are also into running and so he has followed in our shoes! Luca does cross-country at school, running in parks and on track fields and in the garden! He came 5th in his year group at his school's cross-country race - now he's definitely got the bug! One day soon he'd like to join a local running club. Watch this space!"

Do you think doing activities like running with you has helped to give him confidence in himself?

"I think that following Luca's lead in what interests him and not holding him back was key in developing his confidence. It just so happens that he really enjoys running! And yes, doing things together that you all enjoy makes it fun and is great for self-confidence."



Sea Swimming in Winter

By Emily Tisshaw

I have taken up a new hobby. I have started sea swimming. In British seas. In a bikini. In the winter. No wetsuit. Just cold water and a swimsuit. Usually, when I tell people this, they think that I'm mad. But, as always, there is method to the madness.

I began sea swimming at the end of summer last year - as soon as it started getting colder - typical! With all the madness happening in the world, I thought why not try something completely new. The idea came to me after watching a documentary about a man named Wim Hoff.

Wim Hof is a Dutch athlete and ice bath enthusiast well known for his ability to withstand freezing temperatures. He's set world records for swimming underneath ice for long periods of time and also holds the world record for a barefoot half marathon on ice and snow.

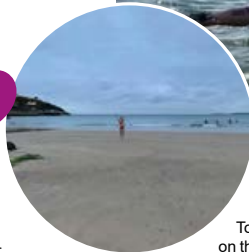
I began to feel guilty for all the time I had wasted living within walking distance from the beach and not ever really utilising it. I've lived here for three years and have mostly avoided the sea until now. I'm not a person who enjoys being cold and wet. However, after hearing Wim Hoff explain that cold water exposure can aid mental health conditions such as anxiety, and with all the anxiety that was surrounding me, I felt it was important to give it a go. Where I live the sea is not as cold as it is in the Netherlands

“ Usually, when I tell people this, they think that I'm mad. But, as always, there is method to the madness. ”

where Wim Hoff practises but I do still feel the sting of coldness whenever I plummet myself into the sea. I usually swim around 8am and try to make it down to the beach at least twice weekly. Even the air in the mornings at this time of year can be quite shockingly cold!

Back in August when I started sea swimming the water temperature was 16°C. It's now (as of January 2021) dropped to 11°C. I can feel that it has become a lot colder but that only makes it more exciting for me. The swims have become addictive - it's an exhilarating way to start the day!

The documentary explains how cold-water exposure causes us to breathe more rapidly mimicking what the body does when it enters a state of anxiety, but regular cold-water exposure means we can become accustomed to the cold and therefore learn to control our breathing and



bring our body back to calm again, which helps us to maintain control over our anxious breathing.

To my surprise I'm not the only person on the beach at 8am mad enough to brave the water. There's a group of women who call themselves The Blue Tits who are all regular sea swimming fanatics. I've made new friends and joined a great community of people.

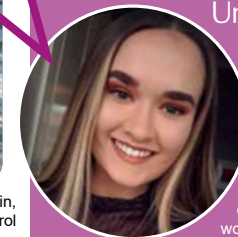
Since I started, I've done over 50 swims and it has really made a difference to my mental attitude; I feel a lot calmer and stronger. As well as the rush, there is something truly magical about being in the open sea.

📷 @amalemonpie



Ella's Column

University Life



Right now, many of you might be looking at Universities or waiting for offers. For me, applying to university was equally exciting and nerve-wracking, but adding nerves about my Little Arm (how I like to refer to my limb difference) to that, made it quite worrying. However, I would stress now that these nerves are completely

normal, and everyone has them!

My top tip would be to research the kind of physical and mental health support your chosen university offers. Sometimes you have to have a few 'awkward' conversations and explain that you might need help. I'm studying for a BSc in Environmental Science which involves a lot of lab and field work so I needed to be confident that I would be able to access support if I needed it. After many conversations with different universities, I created a 'Student Support Plan' with Lancaster University that included all aspects of support. Don't worry if you go to a different university - I'm at York University and my 'Student Support Plan' was transferred over.



Speaking honestly, new settings, such as starting a new job (or university) make me nervous as I don't know what people will think about my arm. However, moving to university is the best thing I've ever done. My friends say I am much more confident in myself, especially regarding my arm. So, I think the best thing you can do is throw yourself into 'university life', join lots of societies and clubs to meet new people with similar interests. I became the Disability Officer for my College and I'm now President of my College because of the confidence and growth I experienced! I know you'll have a fabulous time at University and love every second!

If you want talk about university life or any topics you'd like me to write about please email ellad@reach.org.uk or find me on instagram:

📷 @ella.dickinson



Living Life on the Veg!

By Pete Buchanan



However, since moving back to Somerset because lockdown (I was living in South America until March 2020), farming vegetables was the only option I had back in my home village to earn money. What's more, it got me out of the house.

In the past I have avoided pursuing tasks that are overly manual. Then suddenly I found myself spreading manure, digging up potatoes, winding tomato plants up strings, and driving the world's smallest (real) tractor. My days have involved weeding thousands of leeks, pushing wheelbarrows, and battling against my new arch nemesis - the French bean.

And despite difficulties, I've found all of these tasks, and more, to be definitely, entirely possible. I have been lucky to have two great bosses and colleagues, Adam and Rita, who have always supported me. Their attitude has been perfect - first they show me how they do a task, then they tell me to go and find the way that works best for me.

Despite growing up in the countryside and helping out with the odd bit of farm work in my summers as a student, it was never something I considered doing for a living. Vegetable farming is physically tough work; despite some people viewing it as a romantic past-time, it is still a business, and therefore things need to be done quickly and efficiently to make money. All this means greater challenges for someone with one hand.



This is something I think a lot of Reach members can relate to. My method for planting lettuces or harvesting kale - the same as so many other tasks in life - is different to the method taught to me. At times I have been frustrated, and I confess that although I'm getting better with practice, I'll never be the fastest bean picker in the world. However, vegetable farming isn't all about speed; preparation, the knowledge of how to grow each variety, how to look after them, and being perceptive with your observations - that's what makes the difference between a good crop and a bad crop.

For me, farming has been a rewarding experience. When Adam and Rita took a nine-day holiday in October, I was able to run the veg farm by myself; do the harvests, pack all the veg, and keep the farm shop supplied, which in turn feeds a lot of people in my village. For someone with one hand to be growing the food of a couple hundred people - I thought it was pretty cool!

“ Suddenly I found myself spreading manure, digging up potatoes... and driving the world's smallest tractor. ”

The Journey to Tokyo 2020

Interview with Amy Truesdale
Para Taekwondo Athlete



Amy Truesdale has spent 24 years doing a sport she loves, encouraged by her dad to get into Taekwondo for self-defence, she's now got her sights on gold at Tokyo 2020. We talked about disability sport, what it takes to be a GB Athlete and representing Para Taekwondo for the first time in history at the Paralympic Games.

Firstly, what does it mean to you to be a role model in disability sport?

"It's amazing, I just want others to see what I have achieved so far and know they can do the same in whatever they choose to do."

“ It's given me drive and a focus. It's encouraged me to push myself as I always feel I need to prove others wrong. ”

What would make disability sport more accessible to more people?

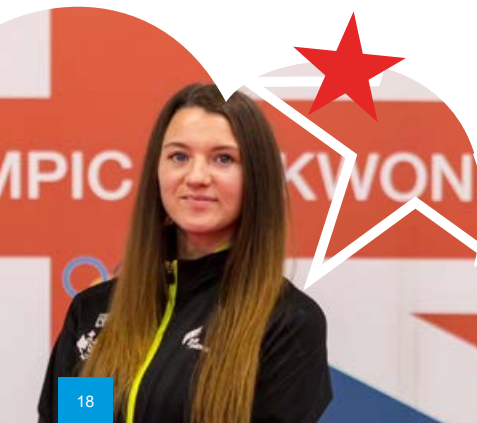
"I feel the narrative around disability needs to change, and society needs to stop putting limitations on others. There needs to be more media representation and education, and society needs to accommodate individuals that may need adaptations to make their everyday life more accessible."

What has Taekwondo done for you?

"It's given me drive and a focus. It's encouraged me to push myself as I always feel I need to prove others wrong."

What do you love about Para Taekwondo?

"Representing individuals with limb difference and seeing other individuals with the same difference as me compete and overcome adversity on the World Stage."



And if you couldn't be an athlete?

"I would love to be a coach. Even if I couldn't coach TKD; my goal is to coach and endorse individuals into any sport they are passionate about."

When did you become a full-time athlete?

"I became World Champion on home soil in London 2017 which secured funding for the World Class Programme so I could become a full time Athlete."

Para Taekwondo is new to the Paralympic Games – what does that mean for the sport?

"I'm delighted Para Taekwondo will be making its debut at Tokyo 2020. This is the representation that's

needed to show the world what parasport is about, and the level individuals with a limb difference can achieve. The Paralympics is the biggest sporting event so I hope that someone will see me on TV and feel inspired to exceed society's limitations and excel in their life."

For our budding Paralympians, what is the training schedule like for a GB athlete?

"Prior to becoming a full-time athlete, I was only training three days a week while working as well. It was my consistent competition successes that enabled me to get funded and placed on the World Class Programme. Now, I no longer have to manage work and training - my full-time occupation is Athlete. I can focus solely on this and I now train every day, Monday-Friday, which is a combination of kicking, and strength and conditioning sessions."

What did it feel like to qualify for Tokyo 2020?

"In order to qualify for the Paralympic Games, you need to be in the top 4 and I have been world number one for the last 2 years so I was confident I would qualify, and I feel so lucky that I'm the first person in the sport's history to qualify for the Para Taekwondo at the Paralympic Games. My aim is to be the first Paralympic champion and qualify for Paris 2024."



What does Reach do?

Provide resources, support & information to parents



Raise awareness of upper limb difference



Connect families through 19 Branches across the UK



Find out more at: www.reach.org.uk



Image from Joolze, Dymond Photography

How's Elsie's cycling going?

"Elsie is a keen cyclist with the help of her prosthetics from the limb centre at Seacroft in Leeds. Her cycling arms (not 3D) are made specifically for her for riding track, cyclocross and mountain biking and she has given talks for the disability badge at her local clubs."

What does she talk about?

"She shares how the arm connects to bikes, how she moves with it and what it feels like... She is very confident talking and answering questions; young kids ask all sorts of things. We've found that the more we encourage her to talk to others, the more confident and positive she becomes in dealing with all aspects of having a missing upper limb."

"We let her be her own little voice."

Overcoming Negativity and Seeing Difference Differently



@Lucky_fin_project

We spoke to Psychosocial Nurse Practitioner Orla Duncan about the effects of the Covid-19 lockdowns on mental health, dealing with negativity towards difference and how to help overcome feelings of isolation.

Why do you think being a part of Reach is important for children and parents, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic?

Family organisations such as Reach are a hugely important source of emotional support and information. Connecting and sharing experiences with others in a similar situation can help with feelings of isolation and can bring a dimension to support that health professionals, simply cannot.

As the end of lockdown approaches, do you think the pandemic will have a lasting effect on people?

The pandemic has stopped us from seeing friends and family and may have increased existing feelings of isolation. And this is for

everyone; adults, children, and young people, not just those with an upper limb difference. Many of us have felt "safe" at home and may now feel unsure about larger gatherings or apprehensive when lockdown does eventually end. In sharing these feelings, we can begin to explore solutions and we can support those who are struggling.

“Remember, your upper limb difference is part of you, but it does not define who you are as a person.”

What advice would you give to parents and children to overcome negativity towards limb difference?

It's important to remember that a child's self-image comes from what they perceive about themselves and how they think others perceive them. When you give your child positive reflections, they learn to think well of themselves.

Positive responses | Responding to a child's questions about their limb difference in a matter of fact and positive manner from an early age will help them to confidently answer questions they may receive from their peers. This will give them a sense of control over social interactions that involve questions about the limb difference and avoid a lingering sense of discomfort that results from not knowing how to answer questions.

Finding a language that works for you | Parents can model good responses to questions by managing reactions from others in a positive way. Part of my role is to help parents to find a language or way to share specific and accurate information that fits their values and purpose. I help parents to understand why strangers might ask questions, and that people, both adults and children, will ask about what they don't understand.

Ask for help | Remember that it's okay to ask for help with something that is new to us. Many parents may need some help finding a language that works for them initially. Most hospital teams have access to psychological and or psychosocial services and reaching out to Reach to speak with another parent might be beneficial.

Focusing on 'can' not 'can't' | Acknowledging the limb difference is important but focussing more on what your child is able to do, rather than what they can't do is vital.

Communication | Encouraging children to tell their parents when they've been asked about their limb difference can help to build a communication channel between parent and child which is safe, calm, honest and developmentally appropriate, this will be beneficial in sharing thoughts and feelings as the child develops.

A great example of this came up recently, a Mum shared with me that her child (5 years old) was being "helped" by a clearly well-meaning classroom assistant. The child was frustrated because they felt that they did not need any help. The Mum asked the child what they wanted to do to address the situation. A meeting was organised between the child, the classroom assistant, and the class teacher, with the child leading the meeting. This gave the child the opportunity to explain clearly how they felt, giving them control over the situation. The child felt pleased with the outcome as they were heard, with the classroom assistant learning that no help was needed.

What would you say to parents or a young person navigating feelings of difference or isolation?

Explore the reasons why | It's important to explore possible reasons behind the feelings of isolation and being different. Was there a situation where you might have felt uncomfortable about being asked? Are you worried about being asked again? Do you have the right help and support to be able to answer questions about your upper limb difference?

Recognise the negative feelings & associate positive feelings | Acknowledging and naming these feelings is important i.e., frustration, sadness, and then thinking about positive characteristics is important too. Placing value and emphasis on positive attributes such as determination and kindness, for example, can help you to focus on positive aspects of your personality.

Remember, your upper limb difference is part of you, but it does not define who you are as a person. Think about what your values and priorities in life are and how you might start to achieve them.

Thank you Orla, is there anything you'd like to leave us with? Yes, something really positive to leave parents and children with was a study I read about from Boston Children's Hospital's Orthopedic and Sports Medicine Center. The study found that children with upper limb differences have better peer relationships and more positive emotional health compared to other kids.

Watch Orla's webinar: reach.org.uk/reach-insights-nolimits-webinar-recordings/

How to Talk about Upper Limb Difference

When it comes to talking about limb difference, it's how you and your child feels that matters; what you call their arm, how you describe it and how you communicate this to others.

Find your language | Finding the language that you're comfortable with, and sharing that with friends and family, can be important for everyone's confidence.

Talk to family and friends | Talking openly about your child's successes and struggles, or things they're working on i.e., tying laces or chopping up ingredients, can be helpful for family members, so they know when your child may need help or simply moral support.

Feel confident talking about difference | Communicating openly as a family and knowing how you like to refer to your child's difference can be empowering for them, and for you. Do you refer to it as an 'upper limb difference' or 'disability'? Your friends and family can mimic your language so everyone feels confident talking about it together.

Does your child's limb have an affectionate name?

'Stumpy', 'Nubbin', 'Little Arm' or 'Baby Arm'; encourage your friends and family members to use the same name. Orla Duncan, Psychosocial Nurse Practitioner says: "It's really important that parents are supported and encouraged to speak openly and confidently about their child's upper limb difference from when they first find out about it."

Read books | Books that talk about difference can be great tools or icebreakers; they give children a reason to open up with friends or peers, and gives their peers the opportunity to ask questions that can dispel any worries or negativity.

Role play | Orla suggests discussing questions that have been asked, as a family, as well as preparing responses to questions to better equip you and your child. Use responses that your child is comfortable with like 'this is how I was born' which can help to empower them to answer questions confidently.

Make meaningful connections | "Lots of young people struggle with the emotions associated with feeling different, for various reasons. Having someone as a mentor figure who has experienced similar feelings can be really helpful", says Orla.

The Reach Buddy Project connects Reach children so they can share letters, stories, enjoy zoom meets and, one of these days, 'real' meets - giving them comfort and confidence that there's someone going through similar life experiences. Email reach@reach.org.uk to find out more about the Reach Buddy Project.

Join the Reach community on Facebook and connect with Reach parents and children. Find out about becoming a member: www.reach.org.uk/page-2/

Prosthesis – It's Personal

Prosthesis. A path that many people with an upper limb difference will navigate at some stage.

For parents it's hard to know what's best for your child and as a child it's tough figuring out whether you're better with or without one.

There are advantages and disadvantages of prosthetics. This differs greatly between ages, types of upper limb differences and where and how you're accessing support. From cosmetic to hi tech bionic arms there are a multitude of options, so we're sharing some insights and experiences from a few within our Reach family. One thing we found in common, is that when it comes to prosthesis, it's personal.

Will my child benefit from a prosthetic at a young age?

"We were recommended prosthetics for physical development."

One Reach Mum said their local prosthetics department recommended them for the early years to aid brain development and help strengthen her daughter's shorter arm, so from 3 months old her daughter used one and she says it helped her daughter physically:

"The early use of a prosthetic really helped, now that she doesn't use one every day I've noticed her shorter arm is weaker and has less muscle. She currently has two prosthetics; one for help with her back alignment whilst riding her bike and the other for basic strengthening exercises."

Should I encourage my child to use their prosthetic?

"She did better without it!"

Some find that function is most important. One Mum realised that her daughter's prosthetic didn't enhance her life at all and seemed to actually "slow her down". She has older children with upper limb differences around her which really helps and enables her to figure things out herself. "As long as my daughter is happy and knows she has help if she needs it, that is fine for me."

How can we introduce our child to prosthetics?

"It's a toy in his toybox!"

One Reach Dad explained that he has been comforted by Koalaa's approach of letting it be part of his son's toy box and not forcing him to use it. "They said it should be about exploration and discovery, there to use or play with if he wants to. And if it's a part of his toybox now, when he's older and maybe looking at other prosthetics, they won't be foreign to him."



Will a prosthetic transform my child's life?

"We realised, it's not just about the prosthetic, it's the support and the community around it."

A prosthetic can be life changing, enhancing ability and confidence, but for some it can be challenging and disappointing. Often heavier than expected and difficult to adjust to, they occasionally need physiotherapy to strengthen shoulders or arms. They require patience, time and effort and expectations should be managed in advance. They are not a quick fix but given the opportunity, help and support, children decide on their own if it's for them or not.

We do know however, that prosthetics can have a hugely positive effect on social interactions for younger children.

Are prosthetics good for social interactions?

"She gives talks about her prosthetics!"

For younger children prosthetics can be a brilliant way to start conversations with peers or friends. The attention is positive and there's even the 'FOMO' (Fear of Missing Out) element from the other children which can be a real boost for the child's confidence.

Some children however, like the idea of a prosthetic but realise they prefer life without it, choosing to show-off their upper limb difference instead. One Reach child said: "I didn't really use my prosthetic arm and I realised it's OK to be different!"

This is the message that threads its way through every story - that it is always personal when it comes to prosthetics. No matter which kind you choose, as long as a child knows they're loved and supported, with or without one - that is all that matters, and that children and parents know that there is always help and advice if and when they need it, role models to look up to, professionals to speak with and a community behind them.

Will my child be ok without a prosthetic?

"I was told he wouldn't crawl without one."

Another Mum's experience emphasised just how important the Reach community can be to help navigate early development stages like crawling. Becoming a parent for the first time and being told that your baby has been born with an upper limb difference can be an overwhelming experience:

"I felt overwhelming sadness for him, combined with guilt that I must have caused it and shock... We were referred to a consultant who said that our 3-month-old son wouldn't be able to crawl without the use of a prosthetic." She didn't think twice and spent over £2000 on an Ottobock prosthetic.

"I took what the consultant had said as gospel... I just thought it would be simple - get the prosthetic and all will be fine. It didn't occur to me that my son would need to be encouraged to wear it."

Now, her son is 9 months old, and she says: "it's taking time for him to get used to it but to be honest he seems to be trying to crawl far better when he isn't wearing it".

Medical professionals often have very practical and helpful advice and prosthetics can have a life changing affect. Unfortunately, parents are sometimes faced with claims of what their children won't be able to do in life. Being part of the Reach community is beneficial in many ways. Knowing you're not alone and can draw on the experiences of other people with similar challenges is invaluable and things you thought your child could never do become normal. With the support of like-minded people, you soon realise that 'they will find their way.'

One Reach adult told of a prosthetic being thrown in the bin after years of unsuccessful efforts. "Life improved no end. I decided to do what was right for me and not take advice from someone who hadn't considered what I can, can't or want to do!"



Hollie Arnold on I'm a Celebrity Get Me out of Here!

Being the first disabled person/Paralympian to go on I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here, was a huge honour.

I felt incredibly lucky, the fact that I was getting the chance to show millions of people around the world who Hollie Arnold is. Not the Paralympian, not the girl who throws the Javelin, not the girl with one arm. Just ME!

I hope that by appearing on I'm A Celeb, one of the most viewed TV programmes in the country, it opened many people's eyes to the disabled community. I do not let my disability hold me back, and I didn't want to ever be medically excused from any of the challenges on the show, and I made sure that did not happen.

I've had challenges in my life growing up with a disability, but I have always used it to my advantage.

For me it is all about mindset and attitude towards whatever the challenge may be. Although I was very nervous and really out of my comfort zone to appear on a primetime show it proved to be the most amazing experience which gave me so much confidence in myself, and I'm so happy I did it.

I know I proved to myself I could do it and make any challenge possible, and I really hope I made my fellow Reach members proud.

Watch Hollie's webinar: reach.org.uk/reach-insights-nolimits-webinar-recordings/



#RepresentationMatters

Books

Alf's Power

'This book helps children to express their feelings and understand their thoughts by developing their self-awareness.'

👉 Search for: **Alf's Power**



My Body Your Body: Hands

'People come in all sorts of shapes and sizes. This series talks about all the ways in which our bodies are different and wonderful. Each book features an inclusive selection of people from all walks of life.'

👉 Search for: **Hands My Body Your Body Book**



Splash

Claire Cashmore, MBE and Paralympic gold medallist, was born without a left forearm – but she never let being different stand in the way of her big dreams. Splash is based on Claire's real-life experience: 'this gold-medal-winning swimmer really was scared of water ... until one day, everything changed!'

👉 Now available from Reach: www.reach.org.uk/shop/



The Roller-Coaster Ride

'Vincent and Grandma are on their way to the beach... Will the day out meet his expectations? With thanks to Reach Charity and their members for helping us to ensure authentic representation of a child with an upper limb difference.'

👉 Now available from Reach with an exclusive discount: www.reach.org.uk/product/the-roller-coaster/



Harry on Disney & Florence & Fred

“Harry loved the experience. He was very excited to see his pictures on the Disney UK website and to share the pictures with his friends!”



Have you heard of our partners REMAP?

The charity Remap covers the whole of the UK helping young and older disabled people to become more independent by creating custom-made equipment, gadgets or products that aren't commercially available. Every project has the support of REMAP's team of expert engineers, carpenters, technicians, volunteers and occupational therapists and their service is free of charge.

The possibilities are endless and bespoke to the individual so if there's something that you or your child needs to help live more independently or to pursue an activity and you can't find the solution, talk to REMAP.

👉 Find out more on www.remap.org.uk



James Allen on Steph's Packed Lunch

As part of #ProjectLimitless, James showcased his Koalaa Mitt alongside Alex Lewis.

“I felt kind of nervous and kind of happy because I got to see myself on TV.”



Helpful Tools & Tips

Tools recommended by Reach members

The Homecraft Knork Knife
👉 Search for 'The Homecraft Knork Knife' on Amazon.co.uk



Click Lock Tip & Sip Flexi-Straw Cup
👉 Search for 'Munchkin Click Lock Tip & Sip Flexi-Straw Cup'



Get practical with puberty

For anyone finding traditional sanitary products difficult to manage, there are alternatives like Wuka Pants, 'underwear that fully absorbs your period and doesn't let it leak, so you can wave goodbye to disposable pads and tampons'.



👉 Use discount code 'REACH15' to get 15% off at [Wuka.co.uk](https://www.wuka.co.uk)

Active Hands

Active Hands works 'to help more people with hand function disabilities to enable them to take part in numerous activities as independently as possible', with everything from kitchen equipment to gym aids.

👉 Find them at www.activehands.com



What Reach Does

RAW (Reach Activity Week) 'Incredible Delivery' Pack

For Reach Children aged 10 – 18 years, it's all about fun together and plenty of action; from climbing, abseiling, and canoeing to problem solving, archery and coasteering.



An extra special care pack for new parents with information about what to expect, the support available to them, and how Reach can help along the way.



Find out more by visiting: www.reach.org.uk

Annual Family Weekend

Our annual conference is all about sharing experiences, inspiring stories, invaluable resources, and reconnecting the Reach family.



We see the potential in all our children and celebrate their ability, never focusing on disability. The most important thing is that Reach children know there's a community of support behind them and help if and when they need it.



How you can Fundraise for Reach...

Run for Reach!



Go to runforcharity.com, find a run, register, choose Reach Charity and start fundraising! #Run4Reach
👉 www.runforcharity.com

Work for Good



The platform that makes it quick and easy for small businesses to donate to charities.
👉 www.workforgood.co.uk

easyfundraising



Fundraise while you shop on the UK's biggest charity shopping site with thousands of retailers signed up to donate for free.
👉 www.easyfundraising.org.uk

Birthday Fundraisers



Birthday coming up? Start a two-week birthday fundraiser – 100% raised goes to Reach.
👉 www.reach.org.uk/celebrate-your-birthday-with-reach-charity/

Stamp Appeal



Order a freepost envelope from Xchange Master Ltd and start saving your stamps! Reach receives £20 for every kilogram of stamps.
👉 www.reach.org.uk/stamp-appeal-raise-money-for-reach-with-your-mail/

Reach charity are funded 100% by donations and membership subscription. To enable us to carry on our work supporting families we are very fortunate to benefit from fabulous fundraisers. Whether you collect stamps, hold a cake sale, run a marathon, or climb a mountain your help is always hugely appreciated.

For more ideas or to fundraise for Reach visit: 👉 www.reach.org.uk/fundraising/



Helping children with
upper limb differences
live life without limits

