

Helping children with upper limb differences live life without limits

within Reach[★]

WINTER 2021 | ISSUE 148

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Our front cover stars - Lillie and Francesca



Reach

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Events 2021

- NOV**
- 27th - Kent Branch Met Up
 - 28th - East Midlands Branch Met Up

- DEC**
- Christmas Branch Events**
- 5th - South London, West Midlands & Northern
 - 12th - North London, Wessex & Northern Ireland
 - 12th - Berks & Wilts

- FEB**
- 5th - North London Branch Met Up
 - 13th - Bath Half Marathon

- APR**
- Limb Loss/Difference Awareness Month

- JUN**
- 2nd - 5th - Tyne Cae

- JUL**
- 15th - 17th - Northwest Family Weekend
 - 24th to 31st - RAW

- AUG**
- R5ach Fundraising Campaign

- OCT**
- 2nd - London Marathon
 - 21st to 23rd - Annual Family Weekend

For details contact reach@reach.org.uk or the branch coordinator.



Views expressed in withinReach are not necessarily those of Reach and are not intended to reflect or constitute Reach policy, or in any way portray an official view.

Hello!

From the Editor & Designer of withinReach
We're Max & Tom Swinhoe. We welcome comments, articles, requests, or suggestions for future editions of withinReach. **Email us at withinreach@reach.org.uk**



Reach Membership

Membership is open to parents of children with upper limb difference, and individuals of 18 years and over who are interested in furthering the work of the association. The UK and Ireland subscription is from £36 (£35 via direct debit) and the International subscription is £40.

Reach Insurance

This covers any member aged between 2 and 85 years of age, resident in the UK, with a congenital difference of one upper or lower limb or both upper limbs or who have had one upper or lower limb or both upper limbs or one hand amputated. There is a slight difference in cover for under 16s and those not in paid employment at the time of their accident. Please call Head Office for more details about the schedule of insurance.

Meet our Wonderful Branch Coordinators

3 Counties Herts, Beds & Bucks



Jennifer Davies
3counties@reach.org.uk

Berks, Oxford and Wilts



Joanne Taylor & Tash Pocock
berksandwilts@reach.org.uk

East Anglia & Essex



Chan Do Jung (Jay)
eastanglia@reach.org.uk

East Midlands



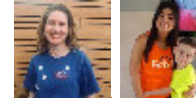
Andy & Becky Forshaw
eastmidland@reach.org.uk

Gloucestershire and Avon



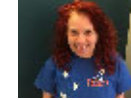
Lee Harvey
gloucestershire@reach.org.uk

Ireland



Lorraine O'Farrell Mackey & Donna Flynn
ireland@reach.org.uk

Northern England



Suzanne Parker
northernengland@reach.org.uk

Northern Ireland



Ruth Hompstead
northernireland@reach.org.uk

North London



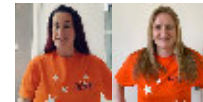
Kavita Reese
northlondon@reach.org.uk

North West



Cheryl Danson & Jane Crook
northwest@reach.org.uk

Scotland



Mags Millar & Stephanie Tennant
scotland@reach.org.uk

South London



Jessica Schmidt
southlondon@reach.org.uk

South Wales



Melissa Beesley
southwales@reach.org.uk

South West



Branch Coordinator Needed
southwest@reach.org.uk

Wessex



Craig & Mei Luke
wessex@reach.org.uk

West Midlands



Tracey Smith & Jason Smith
midlands@reach.org.uk

Yorkshire



Alexis & Richard Tibble
yorkshire@reach.org.uk



Stay up to date

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

Branch Coordinators Needed!

Are you in the South West or Kent and keen to get involved?

Contact Reach Head Office for more info email Reach@reach.org.uk.



We Need You

I am writing this in the afterglow of the Annual Family Day.

The day went really well and the delivery to camera was brilliant, but what I loved the most was being in the 'Green Room' chatting and getting to know members Lola, Grace, Manisha, Luca, Anna, Isabella, Beth, Benny, Ella, and their families. I saw for myself how quickly the younger children became entranced by the older Reach members and held onto their every word. I saw a unique friendship that was born out of the Buddy System; that was a joy to experience and see how the girls' confidence grew the longer they were together. I chatted to mums and dads, and it was strange to think we had never met before as the Reach family spirit is always prevalent even in phone calls and emails, and it was like we already knew each other.

It was a real privilege to have Melissa Johns presenting the arts section and being able to talk from a personal point of view, she could ask the probing questions that can only come from someone who shares the same experience. I was bursting with pride for Ella Dickinson emerging as a butterfly from a shy young girl, she did such an excellent job co-presenting with Alastair, we really want to explore some more of our teen+ members co-presenting for future years as that is who Reach is all about.

As most of you know it was a hybrid event this year, filmed and broadcast from a studio in Surrey. It was all a learning experience for Kate and me; we didn't realise we would have to do a run through the night before and how flexible the running schedule has to be on the day because of bad internet connections or interviews over-running because they were so good, we couldn't stop them! We desperately missed Briony, but she has promised to be an integral part of the Annual Family Weekend 2022.

A huge and massive thank you to everyone who took part, including Alastair Greener who is the nicest man ever and, as always, gave his time free of charge to Reach. Also, a super massive thank you to Reach member, James Jones (joint owner of Virtual Studios) and his crew, what an amazing job they do, without them we wouldn't have been able to reach out to our members over the last 18 months. (James et al also filmed and broadcast the Reach Insights webinar series we did January to May 2021).

I am so pleased that we are going to be able to all come together again next year and make memories as a Reach family, but as requested by so many of you, we will have a virtual element of the day so that it is more inclusive than it has ever been.

The weekend is October 21st to 23rd 2022, at **Woodland Grange**, Leamington Spa. Details of the event and conference are yet to be announced, but rooms are available to book now, please quote 'Reach' when you email or ring on enquires@makevenues.co.uk 01926 336621

Also, we look forward to such an exciting time ahead with all the Christmas parties that are in the diary. Fingers crossed COVID doesn't raise its ugly head again.

See you all in 2022!

Debs

Debs Bond
National Coordinator
debb@reach.org.uk



Reaches Board of Trustees

Chair: Clare Salters
clares@reach.org.uk

Vice-chair: Lee Gwilliam
leeg@reach.org.uk

Treasurer: Jo Dixon
jd@reach.org.uk

Julie Detheridge
julied@reach.org.uk

Ruth Lester OBE
ruthl@reach.org.uk

Lorraine Mackey
lorraineo@reach.org.uk

Alice Gair
aliceg@reach.org.uk

Flavia Serrano
flavias@reach.org.uk

Sam Young
samy@reach.org.uk

It's beginning to look a lot like...

Well, in these strange times that's probably a pretty risky way to start something that won't be published for several weeks after it's written. Who knows how quickly things can change in this uncertain world?

But, at the time of writing at least, it's beginning to look a lot like a number of Reach branch Christmas parties happening in the near future - great opportunities for people to get together, which is one of the things Reach does best. Meeting other people with similar limb differences is such a great way to feel No Longer Alone, and to be inspired to take on new challenges because we've seen someone a bit like us doing whatever it is and we now have the confidence to try it ourselves.

These branch meet ups only happen because of the energy and dedication of our Branch Coordinators - all of whom are volunteers. We are lucky to have such a great network of people who are willing to give up their time, energy, and creativity for free to support children with upper limb differences and their families. It makes such a difference to so many people's lives.

Volunteers are the life-blood of a small charity like Reach - although we have a couple of great staff in Head Office, we're not big enough to employ a vast network of staff across the country, and we are lucky that Reach inspires so much goodwill and public-spiritedness from the wider limb-different community to help us provide the supportive environment for children and young people with upper limb differences. It's often easy to assume that other people are better equipped than we are to volunteer - we might think they're more skilled, more knowledgeable, have more time on their hands, better connected, etc. But the reality is, most of our volunteers have a lot of stuff going on in their work and personal lives and manage to fit their Reach commitments in around that, in a feat of complex juggling.

If you are up for a spot of juggling and think you could offer any of your time or skills to help support our charity, please get in touch with Head Office (reach@reach.org.uk) or feel free to write to me personally (clares@reach.org.uk) to see how you might be able to get involved. We'd love to hear from you.

In other news, the trustee board (also all volunteers) have been working behind the scenes to review the Reach Bursary Scheme (overseen by an independent panel of volunteers), to think about plans for the Reach Activity Week for 10-17 year olds next year (led by mentors who are - yes, you guessed it - all volunteers) and to establish the new Reach Ireland charity, so that we can continue to provide support to children and families there. Watch out for exciting news on all of these early in the new year.

In the meantime, festive greetings from the Reach Board and good wishes for a peaceful and Reachful 2022.

Clare

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



Contact Reach

Address: Reach, Tavistock Enterprise Hub, Pearl Assurance House, Brook Street, Tavistock, PL19 0BN
Tel: 0845 130 6225
From a Mobile: 020 3478 0100
Email: reach@reach.org.uk

Office hours: Monday-Friday 9am-4pm
Website: www.reach.org.uk
Twitter: @reachcharity
Instagram: @reachcharity1
Facebook: facebook.com/reachcharity
LinkedIn: Reach Charity Limited
Registered charity in England and Wales no.1134544
Registered charity in Scotland no.SC049805

Hollie Arnold Wins £3000 for Reach!

Back in September we watched Paralympian Hollie Arnold on Celebrity Catchphrase where she won a whopping £3000 for Reach.

“ These experiences are still really new for me; I'm not used to being on TV. I knew what the show was about, but I had no idea what questions we were going to get so it was nerve-wracking, but definitely not as scary as the Paralympics. I just I loved it. It was a great experience and I so wanted to get the questions right and to win money for Reach. And the fact that Jenny Ryan did incredibly and doubled the money for us made it even better being able to come away with three thousand pounds! ”



Reach updates

Reach HQ has updated its database system to Salesforce which means more efficient... everything! As with all new systems it takes a little time to get to grips with it all and a lot of juggling, but if you're having any issues with emails or paying your membership, please do get in touch with Head Office by emailing Reach@reach.org.uk. And a huge thank you for your patience!



RAW 2021

“ I can't wait to be with my own kind again. ”
- Summer Paxton

These words sum up just what Reach Activity Week (RAW) is all about.

A non-stop week of fun for Reach's 10 – 17-year-olds, to try new activities in a kind and safe environment with people who get it, and the chance to connect and share experiences and make life-long friendships.

Let the smiling faces be proof of RAW 2021's success!



Reach Bursary Successes!

The Reach Bursary is there for children and young people up to the age of 25, to support them in the arts, sport, music, mobility, or adventure by helping them tackle barriers associated with their upper limb difference. All bursary applications are considered and decided individually by an independent panel of experts with lived and professional experience of upper limb difference.

Toby Granted £1,500

Toby passed his driving test first time in December last year, after having lessons in an adapted car at SE Driveability near Maidstone. Despite delays in finding a suitable car due to Covid, Toby and mum Helen applied for the Reach Bursary and were delighted when he was awarded £1,500 towards the cost of "supplying and installing the adaptations he needs to give him independence and allow Toby to drive himself to meet friends without calling on Mum's taxi!"

Toby will be having the 'Lodgesons R213 + Hazards Lollipop' installed to the left side of the steering wheel in November, allowing him to operate the indicators, lights (dip/main & flash), horn, all wipers, and the hazard lights.



Sarah Granted £2000

Sarah is still waiting to receive her provisional license but when it arrives she'll be more than ready!

Ffion Granted £100

"I went to the North Wales Mobility and Driving Assessment Service in Bodelwyddan. They were very helpful and let me drive an adapted car to see how the equipment worked and to figure out which adaptations I needed. The centre sent me a personalised report to show to the team who then fitted my adaptations. It was a very easy and fast process and now I can use the indicators and headlights with confidence. I can reach the handbrake and my steering ball relieves the stress on my right arm - I'm now comfortable and confident in my car."



Calling small businesses!

Christmas is the time to give but not only does Work for Good make it easy, now your business can give even more with through the Small Business Star campaign that will "help businesses to raise more funds for charity" and this year they have a match funding pot of £50,000 to help make an even bigger impact!

"Simply pay in your raised funds, from 9am on Monday 6th December, and we will match donations* up to £250 per business, until the match funding pot runs out. *T&C's apply"

Find out more here.

<https://workforgood.co.uk/small-business-star/businesses/>



WORK for GOOD



#ReachFamily21

*Uplifting, heart-warming
and doing it our way.*



This year's AFD was best planned on the side of caution, but that didn't mean it was any less of a virtual sensation! Not only did the Head Office team alongside James and the VirtualStudio team organise a professional all-encompassing day, but they also created a Reach TV show with a host of interviews and guests, which brought an exciting new dynamic to the day - one that was filled with inspiration and community spirit.

The 'show', hosted by the ever-wonderful presenter and friend of Reach, Alistair Greener, who volunteers his time freely, kicked off the day with the usual warm Reach welcome and shared the day's hashtag #reachfamily21, encouraging everyone to take part.

“ Reach members are a force to be reckoned with.”

Events began with a chat with Paralympians Ellen Keene, Amy Truesdale and Reach Ambassador Claire Cashmore, and a pre-recorded interview with Toni Shaw. They shared how they stayed motivated during lockdown, which for Amy was knowing she's "inspiring others"; as well as their lockdown training hacks, which for Claire involved a "padding pool and a bungee cord!". Ellen found "reaching out to others for support and setting goals" helped her through harder times. And Toni, who chatted from her Uni room, said that when it comes to sport she encourages Reach children to "try everything", and that if they are nervous "after 10 minutes your nerves will go away" and "if you're struggling, just ask questions".

The power Paralympians have to inspire Reach children should never be underestimated; they represent upper limb difference through their sports, showing every child born with a difference that there's nothing stopping them reaching their dreams.

The Reach AGM with National Coordinator Deb Bond, Chair Clare Salters and Treasurer Jo Dixon was wonderfully engaging and insightful. As a charity Reach must legally hold an AGM each year. It was short but sweet; we heard of the anticipated difficulties of Covid but the positive news that despite not being able to bring people together, "which is what we do best", that actually Covid had a "minimum effect on the finances", that Head Office "capitalised on all available opportunities", and members did a fantastic job of fundraising which means Reach can "head into the new financial year in a stronger position".

“ 2022 is looking positive and is destined to be a year for more! More bursaries, more marketing, more awareness and most importantly, more meet ups! ”

Story Corner was a wonderful section for the younger audience throughout the day, which included a recorded reading by Danny Jordan, of his book, 'Ray's First Day' which he read most beautifully, and then studio guest and author of the 'Chops' books, Matt Jenkins and his daughter Isabella, talking about how Isabella had been the inspiration for his popular children's book centred around upper limb difference.

Studio guests were a fantastic highlight to the day's events. Alistair chatted with Reach Ambassador Ella Dickinson about university life, whilst Ella then went on to co-host the show for some time, chatting to founder of Koalaa, Nate Macabug alongside Reach mum Cathryn Baker and daughter Grace who just that day had been presented with her new Koalaa Mitt. It was heart-warming for all to see the confident Grace talk about her Mitt as well as her experience being part of the Buddy System which paired her up with Lola - now best buds! We heard about their post-show excursions and the much-anticipated ride on the London Eye. It was wonderful to see that a connection and friendship has been formed through their letters, one that will hopefully support them throughout their limb difference journey.



We also met Joel from Open Bionics later in the day, who brought in a Hero Arm and demonstrated its functionality, whilst their ambassador, Bev Gormley, also known as @BionicBev' chatted about her experiences with a Hero Arm and the funding opportunities that are available from the Open Bionics Foundation.

As well as having studio guests, the day followed the 'virtual' format with several video calls allowing a whole host of guests to get involved. From Reach Adult Colm Creamer, now a guitar-playing Software Development Engineer, who spoke to the studio from his home in Hungary to Hand Surgeon Ruth Lester, who filled us in on how the Health Care Professionals Sub-Committee's questionnaire was going. She explained in more detail about the survey's role in helping new parents to get the support they need; to "enable change" and "get the right information to the right people".

The arts section was a new and exciting part of the AFD with many highlights. From an introductory chat with actor Melissa Johns, who then took over as interviewer. We heard from Actor and musician Milton Lopez in a recorded interview about his life growing up with a limb difference, had a video call with the wonderful Beth Hinton Lever, Evening Standard's Future Theatre Fund for Musical Theatre recipient, and Melissa was also joined in the studio by Reach member and dance-lover Manisha Green and mum Namrita. Anna Dixon, and her mum Stephanie also popped in to talk about Anna's experience so far with the Royal College of Dance and finding her way and self-confidence.

**“ The power Paralympians have to inspire
Reach children should never be underestimated.”**



It was then the chance of the older Reach members Ella Dickinson, Benny Romberg and Tony Addison to touch us all with their prepared monologues 'written to their younger selves' in which they humbly reflected on past struggles and shared the lessons they'd learned along the way.

Benny addressed his childhood battle with questions about his arm with profound sensitivity, telling himself that "it gets better and easier" and to "use others' ignorance as a drive to show them who you are and what you can achieve." Reminding himself that he is "talented, strong and able".

**“ The monologues revealed the power of the Reach
community, demonstrating that all Reach members are
role models.”**

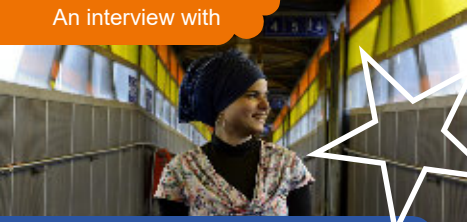
We were delighted to welcome the return of the award-winning Reach oRchestRa, put together last year by Chair, Clare Salters, their performances of 'Danny Boy' and 'King of the Road' showed again that distance will never halt creativity and community!

This Annual Family Day was extra special, seeing the last Sue Stokes Award being given to joint winners Jake Carswell & Luca Reese - congratulations! The Sue Stokes Award has commended our incredible Reach members for overcoming challenges and celebrating personal achievements since 2012, created in memory of former National Coordinator Sue Stokes. In 2022 there's something new coming for your AFD, so watch this space.

I couldn't possibly have mentioned every wonderful detail of the day, you'd be reading for days, but if there was one recurring message it has to be that Reach members are a force to be reckoned with. That Reach children won't just find a way, they'll find their way. Despite some of society's limiting beliefs we continue to hear time and time again of challenges being overcome, worries and fears being dispelled, and dreams not just being reached but surpassed.

Thank you Reach for creating this wonderful community.





A Paraclimbing 'Champion for Change'

Anoushé Husain was born missing her right arm below the elbow, is a cancer survivor and lives with multiple health conditions, yet her intrepid attitude to life and her resilience is tangible. Even when Anoushé talks about the challenges she's faced, there's only a willingness to fight back her way, and she'll be sure to harness that power to make waves for change too.

The day before speaking with Anoushé, I was surprised to see her 'in' Superdrug; head held high in her climbing gear above the shelf of Sure deodorants. I later discovered that this is all part of Sure's 'Watch Me Move' campaign, which she filmed for back in May, post-surgery: "I went from being unfit to travel to climbing at a level that I had not done in over a year and a half!"

It's normal for Anoushé to throw herself into things, although sometimes "over-ambitiously."

This year saw her start her 'Adaptive Adventures'. Indoor challenges to raise money for four charities, including Reach, which will see her indoor-climb Everest, cycle from Land's End to John O'Groats, row the English Channel and walk/wheel Hadrian's wall. Four activities she says she'll "probably never manage physically", and she's undertaking them all whilst balancing work, health, and family life.

Anoushe has struggled with walking for over a year, forcing her to use a wheelchair, so the walking challenge has been particularly tough, but despite obstacles and injuries, Anoushé's resolve is a reoccurring theme, having grown up hearing "it's not disability but ability that counts"; a slogan her parents picked up from Reach, and one that stuck.

Anoushé found confidence, strength, and an escape in Paraclimbing and now encourages anyone to try: "You don't need really strong arms. If you can climb a flight of stairs, you can get on a wall. Be prepared to push from your legs, you never pull yourself up on a ladder do you?"

If someone likes climbing everything else can be figured out. From belaying and harnesses to climbing shoes and using your little hand: "There are no barriers to a child belaying, you just need to work out the best device for them." (Find a Paraclimbing club near you, or to get in touch her or the team at Paraclimbing London.) <https://paraclimbinlondon.co.uk>

When it comes to Anoushé's upper limb difference though, her parents were told she'd probably never attend mainstream school or drive, let alone do sports. They obviously didn't know Anoushé, who's done it all, including a masters and recently started another degree alongside full time work.

"Parents should be told that anything is possible, that their child will play, do sports, do anything they want, like any other child."

But when Anoushé was born in Luxembourg, she was "the only child with an upper limb difference in the country". She had no role models, but her parents were keen for her to be independent and instilled a 'nothing is impossible' attitude, but in spite of this she still experiences discrimination: "I wanted to do some archery at a fun fair once and they literally said no." Six years after that fun fair Anoushé did get to try archery; she hit the target and she did it without a prosthetic.

Anoushé's difference has given her a determination to prove people wrong but recognises that sometimes you end up doing things just to prove you can, not because you want to.

"It's a constant battle between your own expectations, society's expectations of you and your own internalised expectations of what society expects of you."

"Sometimes you just don't want to be the different one that day because you know you're going to be different doing it."

Anoushé has worked in Parliament and is now a civil servant which she says, "couldn't be a better career" for her in terms of "supporting the creation of change". She likes change but doesn't like injustice, which motivates her to put herself out there.

"If I see somebody being treated unfairly because of what they are rather than who they choose to be; the colour of their skin, sexual orientation, gender, disability. This is not okay in my books."

It's no wonder people are inspired by her tenacity and courage because Anoushé has had to deal with more than her fair share of health concerns. Being diagnosed with cancer at age 24 hit her hard. She had life mapped out and then altered before her, and even now she doesn't go a year without a scan threatening the return of cancer, something she calls "scan-ziezy" - a worry that will never leave her.

Post-cancer though Anoushé began therapy which she still uses today as a "preventative measure" to keep track of her mental health, giving her a "safe space, free of society's expectations" to work on her.

Anoushé is now driven by happiness, not external expectations, "checking in" with herself every three months to ask, "Am I happy in my work, personal life, climbing..." She also asks, "In six months will I still be happy if things continue as they are?" If she's not sure, she'll make adjustments, and if it's a no, she makes a change.

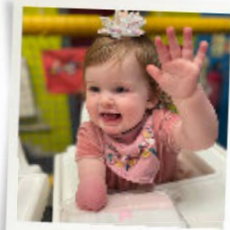


Welcome to Reach

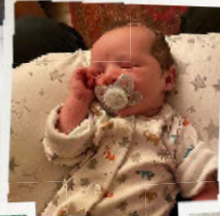
Elliot



Daisy Mae



Finley



Graeme



Aurora



Ffion



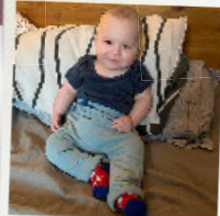
Isobel



Violet



Zak



Wilfred



Massive Thanks

£365

Alice Gair
Organised an online raffle for the Northern Branch.

£220

Richard and Judith Bailey
For their annual donation.

Sonam Assomull

In memory of my beautiful mother Nita, who was to be a grandmother to a gorgeous baby girl whom was born with a limb difference. "We want to help other children shine as brightly as she will."

£100

Valarie Bastian

Donations made in memory of Valerie.

£525

£200

Joe Marion & his organisation DRD Communications
"To support the great work Reach does for existing but especially new members. When we joined limb difference was new to us and the positivity of Reach and the community was a massive help."

£102

Emma Downie

"Papa wanted donations for his birthday as Reach has been so important in his granddaughter, India's life."

The Long Family

Southern Counties Hornets

They ran a raffle to win the new book by Troy Deeney: Redemption.

£100

Siobhan McCrory

Donations from their wedding day!

£122

£50

Reach's London Marathon Runners!

Donna Baldwin and Daniele Spinosa were both due to run last year but because of Covid wasn't able to so they kept her fundraising going for this year.

£3867



Teresa Harper came on board last minute to replace Oliver Hartass who had to pull out through injury.



£2390

Unfortunately, due to a fall whilst training Ross Homestead badly injured his knee and couldn't run for Reach this year. We wish him well and a speedy recovery!

Dominic Rayner is running in honour of his Step Mother Ruth Lester, inspired by her dedication to helping Reach children and families.

£1942



Fundraisers

Bobby Robinson and

Ricky Jakovlev both raised funds because their cousin Erin (age 5) has an upper limb difference. Ricky cycled and Bobby ran 26 miles every day for 5 days.

£892



£1472



Jason Smith

Jason completed his '3 Marathons in a Month' challenge with the Reach banner on his back! He ran them in Liverpool, Manchester & London.

£1523



John Hall

N.E.R.T car club breakfast get together.

£184



Friends from The

Velo Club Flintham Took part in a charity ride in memory of Iain Nicholson a former Reach member.

£440



£1995



Chris Perrior Completed the epic 3 Peaks challenge.

Tom Stafford

Dad to 1 year old Reach baby Eleanor, only started running late last year, set out to run the Robin Hood Half Marathon, which he completed in September 2021.

£1120

Lorraine O' Farrell Mackey

Dublin Virtual Mini Marathon done for Reach - €225. Lorraine ran 13km instead of the 10km to push herself, in honour of son, Darragh who's 'limb difference has never ever held him back!'

£255



R5ach Without limits

Charity Challenge

2021

The R5ach Campaign raised nearly £11K! A massive thank you to everyone who took part!

£636



Keira Bloomfield

14 year old Keira swam a total of 75 lengths of various strokes in a total of 37 minutes 39 seconds.

£303



The Wyness Family

They bounced on their trampoline for 25 hours throughout August.

£1596

The Adam Family
They participated in a 5 km walk with their family and friends at Fewston Reservoir.



£2337

The Jackson Family

Member Bertie was pushed 105 miles in his pushchair throughout August.

£422



Lorraine O' Farrell Mackey

She ran 105 km throughout August.

£608



Nicole Curran

Nicole cycled 500 km throughout August!

Jennifer Jamieson

Ran 50 km during the month of August.

£25



Jacob Whelan

Jacob smashed his goal of 5 km, cycling a total of 7.34 km (mainly due to the fact that mum Charlotte 'never changed the tracker from miles to km'.)

£981



Samantha Spurgin

Ran 50 miles during August.

£820



The Prendergast Family

The family walked 5 miles and once they reached their target of £150 they walked 5 additional miles for every extra £50 they received.

£435



Liz Riddell

Liz set out to do a 5 km run in August.

£92

Julie Detheridge
Julie's goal for the month was to run at least 10 times, covering a total of 30km

£1427



Run for Reach

Discover obstacle courses, walks, monthly step challenges and more, to help us support children and their families affected by upper limb difference.

We'll give you help and support right up to race day and if you pledge to raise at least £50 and you'll get a Reach t-shirt or running vest.

Replace with: you:
<https://runforcharity.com/charity/reach-charity-ld>



Why Meet Ups Mean More...

There's something extra special about a Reach meet, where face-to-face catch ups and play dates are more than just about play and fun. Reach meets provide a platform to create real, life-long connections; they build confidence in parent and child, encourage the sharing of life experiences, and they comfort and support new parents. They are an integral part of Reach and a big reason why the wonderful Reach community only continues to thrive.



North West Meet Up

What is so special about a Reach meet up?

It's clear that Reach ups aren't just about play; they're for parents to meet and share with each other and for children to connect and to see they're not alone in living with a limb difference. I chatted with Suzanne Parker, Reach's Northern Branch Coordinator, about the importance of branch meet ups and why they're for everyone.

"We recently had a meet up at Hall Hill Farm where we met Aurora who is just two months old. Her parents were able to talk to a variety of Reach parents and see for themselves how children with a limb difference have an amazing ability of finding their way of doing things."

It can be a great relief to discover Reach as a new parent. Questions can be answered by other parents, support is there from branch coordinators and doubts are dispelled about their child's ability to live a life without limits.

"The parents can meet over lunch, over a relaxed cuppa or at different activities, it's a lovely time to chat. Phone numbers are exchanged between families and new friendships are made."

As a Reach adult Suzanne says she likes that those parents can see her doing things her way too. "Reach parents get to see a Reach adult with their kids; highlighting that it's going to be ok, we grow up and may do things differently at times, but this is the 'normal' for us."

Suzanne didn't have any limb different role models growing up and now as a branch coordinator knows just how important Reach can be in a child's life. She stresses that "parents are still not being told about Reach when their amazing kids are born."

Part of Reach's mission is to build and maintain connections with hospitals, so new parents can find the support they need in Reach.

But what do the children get from meet ups?

Reach mum and Trustee Alice Gair says her son Reuben "loves socialising and exploring", whilst for her it's about "meeting awesome parents that just get it."

Cheryl Danson is Branch Coordinator of North West Branch alongside Jane Crook, and she says meeting face to face is "invaluable" for the children because "they get to be the majority for a change".

In October they had a meet up at Adventure Medlock where old friends were reunited, and new friends were made.

"The children were buzzing! We even had a member from our North East branch join us so her daughter could catch up with old friends - they've been friends since they were babies!"

Meeting up with other Reach children builds confidence and self-assurance; they may be too young to know just how powerful this is, but it's obvious to parents when they see how at ease their children can become at the meet ups.

Cheryl says it's about "being one of many with the same difference, rather than feeling like the odd one out."

New member Sarah joined Reach when her daughter Aurora was born.

"We found out about her limb difference after an extremely traumatic birth. Our friend Rach became our knight in shining armour - she found Reach and arranged our membership."

The Reach community can be an instant comfort for parents who feel alone in what can be a difficult and overwhelming time. Sarah says that without the face to face meets and Reach's support her family wouldn't have managed.

"We no longer felt alone; getting to meet and chat to other families really helped us realise that the future for Aurora is as bright as ever. And she will be just like any other child, and she has her big sister Ruby by her side."

Meeting families who have been through a similar experience has been "invaluable" to Sarah and her family, who says others' words have "enveloped" them in a "blanket of comfort and love". Grateful to Reach because they're "no longer afraid of the future" but instead are "ready to see what it holds" for Aurora.

Back to school!

When it comes to school parental nerves are understandable, there might be worries about their first day, their jump up to the big school or about bullying, but the truth is, your Reach superstars may face some challenges, but they are going to be more than OK because their willingness to figure out life their way is more powerful than you know, and with your support and love, as well as effective communication as a family, and with their school along the way, everything will be just fine.

Reach Mum Bernadette Guy says her son Elijah is loving year 1 but that she was a little nervous last year about the older children who "hadn't all seen his differences before" and about how the older children would react, but she realised that she needn't have been.

"Elijah's teachers have been aware of his differences from the beginning. He has other things alongside Poland Syndrome, so they help with his medicines and creams, and his seating, plus any exercises needed."

Bernadette says Elijah has been asked about his hand though, and that older children have "grabbed at him to look" and that some haven't wanted to hold his hand which she thinks made him self-conscious because he went through a phase of hiding his hand, but that the time away during the summer holidays "gave him chance to forget" and for them to "reset".

Despite challenges along the way, Reach children continue to prove that they will find their way, whether that's meeting new children or talking about their difference.

"Elijah used to tell [other children] that a baby shark bit his fingers, but now all he says is 'this is how I was born, it is my difference, like yours is brown hair, eyes, glasses or hair colour.'"

Sometimes challenging situations can turn into positive experiences. Bernadette says Elijah made a new friend outside of school once, when another child wouldn't leave Elijah alone and his mum was horrified, but once Bernadette and Elijah explained that it was just how he was born and that it's ok to ask questions, they were able to openly discuss Poland Syndrome with the boy and his mum and Elijah gained a friend.

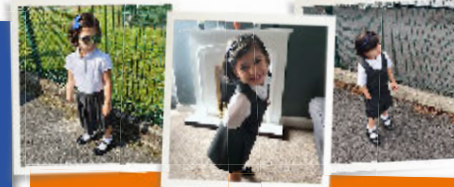


Reach Mum Clare Harper chatted about her son Jacob's transition to year 6, which she admits she was a bit worried about when it came to Jacob tying his tie and shoe laces and having to do it quickly after PE etc., but after some practice over the summer "he's really good at doing both" so it's not been a problem.

For Jacob, there were no nerves about returning to school, only excitement about being in year 6 and being the oldest.

"We are lucky, he attends our small village school. Most of the class have grown up alongside each other. They're a tight knit bunch who all look out for each other."

"The teachers are supportive but won't try to help him unless he asks - he's very independent and hates being helped when he doesn't need it!"



Reach Mum Alina was nervous about her daughter Ara's first day at Nursery.

"I was feeling nauseous and super wary about how other children would see her once they realised her hand was missing. But Ara was so excited to start!"

Understandably parents want to protect their child from any hurt. Alina said her nerves were more about Ara's reaction.

"I was more concerned around how Ara would take it as opposed to how children were with her. Ara had never left my side, I've always been there to answer people's questions, so this was a big deal for me."

Wonderfully though, Alina's nerves, and valid concerns, were dispelled because Ara had a "fabulous" first day and made lots of friends. Alina also found comfort in her pre-nursery discussion with the school's safe guarding team, knowing they were looking out for Ara.

"Honestly, it was a thousand times better than I ever have dreamed of."

After several weeks at nursery, Alina says the feedback from teachers has been "overwhelming" because Ara has grown from being a "quiet little girl" into a "strong and proud go-getter". She's enjoying all outdoor activities and won't stop talking about her "sisters" in school.

In fact, Ara's biggest challenge of being around a large number of children she's not used to, has been Ara's "greatest achievement". Despite being a little reserved at first, she confidant in who she is, and "one hand doesn't hold her back at all!".



Surgery | Your Concerns and Questions Addressed

We sought the advice of Consultant Plastic and Hand Surgeon, Wee Lam, Specialist Physiotherapist, Anne Jerman, and Psychosocial Nurse Practitioner, Orla Duncan who've got helpful general surgery advice to address some of your parental concerns.

My child's having surgery, how can we prepare them for it?

Understanding the process is important in helping to manage any anxiety about surgery. "For children aged 2 or 2½ onwards, they'll have some form of understanding about coming into hospital and having surgery. For an older child, above 5, it's best to have a family discussion with the consultant because any decision has to be in the child's best interest; to improve the hand function or the way it looks."

Run through the entire process, from coming into hospital, to what's expected afterwards in terms of dressing changes and time off school.

"In our experience, these general discussions are more helpful than going into details about surgery."

"Some hospitals have 'hospital passports' which are very helpful for children who are feeling anxious."

What happens after surgery?

A dressing change will happen around "2 weeks after surgery" some cases the child may need to wear a splint for a couple of months. This will usually be followed up with an outpatient appointment until they are "skeletonally mature."

I'm nervous about my child's hand surgery, should I be?

This is completely normal, and the important thing is to break this anxiety down into different components and to get "as much support as possible".

• Nervous about the anaesthetic?

Discuss this with the consultant and ask to have a discussion with the anaesthetists on the day of surgery. Surgery will usually take place in a tertiary paediatric hospital with "an experienced consultant and anaesthetist used to treating children at very young ages".

• Concerned about the hospital admission?

Organise a preadmission visit to see the wards, theatres etc.

• Worried about the surgery?

Make a list of questions to go through with the surgeon. If you have more before surgery "arrange a telephone call or to see them before the surgery".

"A list of questions is usually helpful for the surgeon on the day of surgery. Parents vary in how much technical details they want to know so every list will be different."



Is surgery the right decision?

A common concern for parents is "whether they have made the right decision for the child to undergo surgery".

There's no way to completely overcome this anxiety, but remember, "the decision will always be made in the best interests of the child." And the final decision is based on whether the "benefits outweigh the risks".

Will my child be in pain after surgery?

"Pain is not really an issue in the immediate post-operative period" and usually "a local or regional anaesthetic block would be given so the child is completely pain free for a number of hours. After that, pain can be controlled by oral painkillers".

"There may be some degree of discomfort during the dressing change at 2 weeks." But parents can rest assured that this is "usually undertaken by experienced nurses who are accustomed to changing the dressings for very young children".

Should I wait until my child is older?

The surgeon will have a good reason for when the surgery should take place. Usually "for the purpose of maximising hand function", whilst also considering the "mental age for hand development" and "how scarring would naturally progress over time."

Most surgeries are performed over the age of one, considered the "minimum safe anaesthetic age for tertiary paediatric hospitals". Occasionally, surgery may be performed at an earlier age if there are concerns about deteriorating hand function.

What questions should we be asking my child's surgeon?

There are no right or no wrong questions, but the key ones may be around:

- The risks and "solutions to managing these risks." should be explained to you, because there's always an element of risk with surgery, as well as complications and unexpected results.
- The timing of the surgery and the reasons to do it now versus later.
- The entire process, from who you'll meet on the day and where you'll be staying, to surgery specifics and post-operative care.

Remember, lists are extremely helpful. "Take one to the first consultation and make another for new questions afterwards."



What do I need to know about my child's recovery after surgery?

Recovery depends on the type of hand surgery but generally patients will have a 2-week period when the hand is bandaged. Then the wound is inspected and changed for a "lighter dressing" and most "will heal without further surgery". Occasionally, wounds may take a bit longer to heal, in which case "the child may need to attend the plastics dressing clinic more regularly".

Will I need to change my child's dressings?

You'll be given post-operative support and aftercare advice before your child is discharged i.e., how to waterproof the bandage and what to do if the bandages fall off.

Whilst your child's hand is in a bandage so "you won't need to do anything other than keep the bandage dry during bathing or showering".

How long will my child be in hospital?

Usually hand surgery is a "day case." This means you'll arrive in the morning and will be able to take your child home in the late afternoon.

"Sometimes, the child may need to stay overnight depending on recovery from the anaesthetic."

Will my child need physiotherapy after surgery?

This depends on the type of surgery your child has. "simple surgeries often do not require physio or occupational therapy, whereas more complex surgeries often require some physiotherapy."

"Therapies may use splinting and exercises post-operatively; typically making exercises as play-based and fun for the child so they can easily be completed at home."

Will my child miss school or nursery?

Generally, it's advised for a child to be off school or nursery at least for the first 2 weeks while their hand is in a bandage.

Manging procedural anxiety

"Relaxation and mindfulness can help with managing strong emotions like anxiety or worry. Some helpful apps:



A huge thank you to Wee, Anne and Orla for their help and advice in answering these surgery questions.



Finding Your No

To put an end to an uncomfortable experience or conversation is not easy. We grow up learning that being polite and minding our manners are of the upmost importance, so closing down a conversation abruptly does not come naturally, nor does it ease. But there may come a time when you want to say no, and I want you to know that it is OK.



I don't mind people asking me about my arm if they are respectful, but in that moment, his abruptness and intrusiveness halted me, and made me realise I had a decision. This wasn't about getting through the awkwardness by doing whatever it took, no matter how embarrassed it made me. I had a choice, and I chose to say no.

Growing up I wanted to blend in. I developed ways of easing other peoples' discomfort by sacrificing my own. I would reassure those who asked if my arm hurt. I'd tell them enthusiastically that it was "totally fine", and that this was just how I was born. For additional proof I would list off the things I could do and have done, and even show them my arm; turning it over, touching it, proving beyond any reasonable doubt that, despite it looking different, it is just a 'normal' hand.

However, whilst away this summer I experienced a situation that changed things for me but more importantly, it helped me to find my no.

I was perusing a takeaway menu in a restaurant when the waiter beckoned us over. Expecting it to be about our order we obliged, but I quickly realised that it wasn't when he asked me if I was okay as he stared down at my arm. I smiled and tried to brush it off but then he asked me, "what happened", nodding his head towards my arm as he waited for an explanation. I smiled awkwardly and repeated the usual response of being born this way, as I had many times before, but instead of reading the situation and dropping it, he proceeded to ask me if I could "do this", raising his arm up and expecting me to mirror him and show him that I was in fact capable of lifting my arm up too.

We immediately left and although I don't think the waiter grasped that his behaviour might have caused offence,

I was proud of myself for not simply conforming to avoid making a fuss.

I will talk about my arm with anyone who really cares to know or to spread awareness about upper limb difference and the wonderful work Reach does, but not at the expense of my own wellbeing.

It was empowering to realise it is OK to say no and to acknowledge that I felt uncomfortable. To put my feelings first and decide that I don't have to perform or over-share to make anyone else feel more at ease with my disability. And neither do you.

We're all different in how we feel in these situations or how we answer questions, and I think we can usually sense if it's coming from a place of genuine interest or sheer nosiness. But whether you're a parent, child or Reach adult, you also have a choice and if you ever feel uncomfortable because of someone else, it is OK to say no and walk away.

I will excuse ignorance, to a point, but I found my no and I hope you can find yours should you ever need it.



Paralympics Special

We're talking all things Paralympics; the strangeness of a post-pandemic Games, personal highlights, post-Tokyo blues and dancing at the Opening Ceremony.



Claire Cashmore, MBE | Paratriathlete | Category PTS5 Paratriathlon

How did it feel to be back at the Paralympics?

It was incredible! For it to actually go ahead, I felt incredibly grateful!

It was completely different, but every Paralympics is unique. We didn't stay in the village to avoid any risk of getting Covid which meant not having that village or team atmosphere, but we did live a very luxurious life for five days in a really nice hotel, so mixed emotions on that.

Do you still get nervous?

I think the moment you stop getting nervous is the moment that it doesn't mean anything to you. This time I was the most relaxed I've ever been, I was nervous, but it was an excited energy, knowing I was ready. I just felt confident, and I knew I could stand on that start line knowing that I had done everything to be the best athlete that I could be.

How do you prepare mentally?

I do visualisation and meditation to bring me back into the moment. It's easy to get caught up in thoughts and emotions or get carried away with negativity. Being able to bring yourself back to the present can channel that negativity and get you where you need to be to compete at the pinnacle of your sporting career. But it's also useful for anybody who is feeling under pressure, experiencing imposter syndrome, or having negative thoughts.

How did you feel after the Games?

I really struggled, and I definitely felt it more this time than ever. I think it's mainly because just 48 hours after the race we were shipped out of the country and at home it felt like nothing had happened. I didn't really have time to soak it all up in Tokyo, before you knew it you were home. I felt very flat, but it is about understanding that those emotions will go and that they're normal when you've put so much pressure on yourself and focused on that Paralympic Games for five years. You are going to feel lost because that big goal is gone. But it's about riding that emotion and when the time is right, setting new goals. I think often people jump straight into the next thing, but it's an important time for reflection.

How do you wind down after such a build-up?

I completely decompress, do all the things that I haven't done and really step away for a good amount of time, so I come back mentally and physically re-energised.

What's one thing the pandemic has taught you?

How adaptable I am. There were so many spanners thrown in the works, even on the way out on the bus to Loughborough, my coach got 'pinged' to say that she'd been in contact with somebody with Covid and had to get off the bus which meant she wasn't going to be there. In the past that would have completely thrown me, but I know I'm independent, and I know my body better than anybody else and that I'm the only one that's got to do the work. So, I think I dealt with that in a positive way. Also, on race day, being given penalties left, right and centre I kept my head, I dealt with it, and that's something I am incredibly proud of.

How have people responded to your book, Splash?

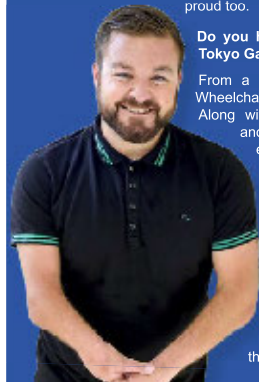
It's been incredible, I've had so much support. People have loved seeing a courageous little girl believing in herself and dreaming big. An important thing for me was trying to normalise disability and not drawing attention to the fact that Claire has one arm, it's just something that exists in the book. Hopefully, kids will read it, notice, and realise it's not a big thing.



Alex Brooker - Journalist, Presenter, Comedian & Co-Host of The Last Leg

How was it covering Tokyo from London's Olympic Village?

We were so disappointed not to be able to go to Tokyo ourselves and for the athletes because they couldn't have friends, family and crowds to cheer them on. But it was still another incredible Games! Another superb performance from Paralympics GB and for us it was amazing to be back in the Olympic Park where we started Last Leg nine years ago! It brought back a lot of memories being there and made me think about how amazing it is that this job I only thought I'd do for 10 days, has become something I never could've imagined. I'm very lucky and proud too.



Do you have a highlight from the Tokyo Games?

From a medals point of view, the Wheelchair Rugby gold was amazing. Along with Alex Zanardi in 2012 and 2016, that's my favourite ever gold medal. I wish I'd been there in the crowd. I reported on the Wheelchair Rugby test event in 2011 and to see how far GB had come in 10 years and to become the first European team to medal, let alone win gold, was amazing. The wheelchair rugby boys are also always great value when they come on the show!

I think shows like The Last Leg play a huge role in breaking barriers and starting conversations about difference. Can you relate to that?

I'd never talked about my disability much before Last Leg. It's been like therapy. A very weird, messed up kind of therapy live every week [hahaha]. But I cannot put into words how much my own perception of being disabled and how I feel about myself has changed in the last nine years. I think that has come from a confidence in who I am that has been born out of doing the show. And the fact we've been able to broadcast these conversations you don't really see on TV, is something I'm very proud of. It's a privilege to be able to represent people like me on TV and it means the world when parents or disabled people tell me I've helped them feel better about themselves. I will never achieve anything more important in my job than that.

Have you seen a change in perceptions about disability?

I think things are so much better. From a TV point of view, there's more of us on screen now. Having said that we are still hugely underrepresented. It's been slow progress, but progress nonetheless. I think we've still got a long way to go in the industry and in society in general. It still baffles me how I can read stories of disabled people being left in trains or stuck places because of insufficient access. It's the very least we should expect. I also often speak to parents of disabled children who are having a hard time at school, and I think we still need to be educating children that limb difference isn't something to be viewed negatively.

Will you be dancing in the Paris opening ceremony in 2024?

I very much hope we will be. I have stopped thinking about when Last Leg will finish, we just keep going! So hopefully we will end up at Paris and if we do, I hope me and Josh are part of that opening ceremony!

Amy Truesdale | Paraspport Athlete | Para Taekwondo

How did it feel to stand on that podium for Para taekwondo's Paralympic debut?

It was a very bittersweet moment. I was so disappointed that I did not achieve gold. But at the same time, I was delighted as I had just achieved a bronze medal at the biggest sporting event in the world and at Para Taekwondo's debut.

How was your Tokyo experience?

It was amazing to be in Tokyo even though we were in a close bubble, and we couldn't go outside.

My preparation camp prior to the games was at a university in Japan which was really good. Hopefully, I will qualify for Paris, and I will be able to experience the Paralympic Games properly!

What is one thing you've taken from the pandemic?

I learned that time is the most precious gift of all. Use it wisely as you will never get it back!

Did you suffer from post-Paralympic blues?

In all honesty it has been very difficult. I was ranked number one in the world, and I have been world and an European champion so becoming Paralympic champion was the only thing I needed to achieve.

I took a couple of weeks off from training, but I'm looking forward to getting back to doing what I do best.

What's next?

I'll be training for the European Championships in Manchester in May 2022. This will be great preparation for hopefully qualifying for Paris 2024.

Describe your Paralympic experience in just three words?

History-making. Unforgettable. Inspirational.



Hollie Arnold MBE | Paraspport Athlete | Category F46 Javelin

How was the Paralympics for you?

It was bittersweet. I wanted to come away with the gold, so at the time I was broken, I cried every day. It's taken months to realise I'm proud of my bronze. I know people are proud of me, I've had so many lovely messages, but as an athlete I am my own worst critic, and I knew I was better on the day.

And I never expected it to be tipping it down in Tokyo! As a javelin thrower in the UK, we train outside in horrible weather, but the pressure was on, I hadn't done particularly well in competition and we'd made lots of changes technically, and it just wasn't coming together. I slipped because everything was wet, so I've learned to take time to dry my hands and javelin before I compete.

The pandemic had a massive impact too. I isolated completely, my mum didn't even hug me because we were so afraid of Covid, it was overwhelming. It was a very strange Paralympics, I did and didn't enjoy it at the same time!

How do you mentally psych yourself up?

It's taken me a long time to accept that in life and in sport you can't win everything. There's the expectation of the entire world and yourself, your funding, titles and ambitions are all at risk.

So, sometimes I have to talk to myself in the mirror, and say 'stop being negative about yourself, let's go back out there and show them who Hollie Arnold is'.

I forget that I've been winning for nine consecutive years, so I'll take that bronze medal because maybe in 10 years I'll look back and see it was the best thing that could have happened. I lost myself but I got myself back and winning bronze made me realise how much I still love the sport that I started when I was eleven!



How was I'm a Celebrity?

It was a tough 18 months prior to Tokyo, I struggled mentally with the Paralympics being cancelled, and took time off. Then I had the opportunity to go on I'm a Celebrity and although I was so worried about what people would think of me, I thought I might never get the opportunity again. And actually, it gave me the motivation I needed to come out ready for Tokyo.

What have you taken from the pandemic?

That you should enjoy life, you only have one, and family and friends are very important! My life is my job, but there's a world outside of sport. Unfortunately, Tokyo was a bit of a down, but I've never given up. I have a new found respect for myself having been through the ups and downs and now I know who I am and where I need to get to.

How's training going?

I knew it was going to be hard, but I've loved being back with the javelin girls. We've got a great group, I've missed being with them for over a year, so pushing myself and being part of the team really spurs me on. I want to be a 50-metre thrower in Paris, it's going to be tough but that's my aim.

How does it feel to be a role model for upper limb difference?

People say I'm a lovely confident person but inside my insecurities are very high. But I'm positive about the things I love, like javelin and being a role model. Hopefully, they see me on TV they'll think: 'I look like that, that could be me one day', I don't see myself as an inspiration, but as long as I can make a difference for one person or make one person think, 'I want that confidence, I want to be able to be myself and not care what other people think', then that makes me really happy.

Toni Shaw | Para Swimmer | Category S9, SB9, SM9 Swimming

How was the Paralympics for you?

It was a great experience! I was very nervous on the day but once I actually started my race the nerves went away!

How did it feel to stand on that podium and get that bronze medal?

It was so special! Knowing everything I'd done for the last 5 years, and I feel so grateful for everything my family, friends and coaches have done for me.

How do you mentally prepare before a race?

I usually just try to relax the night before and speak to friends and family.

Would you ever try Triathlon?

I used to do a bit of running but I am awful at riding a bike so I would definitely need to practice that!

How does it feel to be a role model for Reach children?

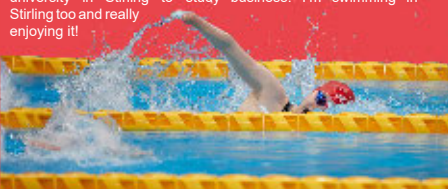
I don't know if I'd class myself as a role model, but I hope other people just see that everyone can get involved in sports!

What is one thing you've taken from the pandemic?

The biggest thing I learned is to not take anything for granted and take every opportunity that comes your way.

Congratulations on passing your driving test! What's next for you?

Thank you! Being able to drive anywhere is great! I've just started university in Stirling to study business. I'm swimming in Stirling too and really enjoying it!



Bake with Briony

Expect mess and give in to the inevitable disarray that comes with powdered ingredients and you'll appreciate the experience so much more.

Take your time and don't rush; take little breaks to keep boredom at bay, pre-weigh the ingredients to avoid inaccuracy and to keep them interested, and try sealable food bags - great for mixing which the kids love and they can help to minimise some of the mess!



A delicious all-in-one bowl bake that kids love to decorate and eat!
(Vegan if you use vegan white chocolate)

- Equipment:**
- Mixing bowls
 - Mixing spoon
 - Brownie tin
 - Parchment paper
- Ingredients:**
- 2 ripe bananas
 - 200g rolled oats
 - 180g peanut butter, I prefer chunky (swap - Biscoff Spread)
 - 5 tbsp golden syrup (swap - Agave)
 - 3 tbsp coconut oil
 - 150g raspberries, chopped

- Method:**
1. Oven on to 180°C fan. Line baking tin with parchment paper.
 2. Put peanut butter, golden syrup and coconut oil in a pan. Heat until melted.
 3. Peel and mash bananas in a mixing bowl. Add the peanut butter mixture and oats. Mix well. Add the raspberries. Mix to combine. Add to tin. Bake for 20 minutes until golden brown.
 4. Remove flapjack from the oven and leave to cool in tin before cutting.
 5. Drizzle with melted white chocolate, raisins or extra raspberries.



A recipe from my great-grandmother that's over 100 years old. I've given it a modern twist, but it is still an age-old classic! I've swapped cooking apples for eating apples so there's no extra sugar needed for the filling.

Mix things up by adding raisins to the filling, cinnamon to the pastry or fresh blueberries to the lids.

- Equipment:**
- Mixing bowls
 - Sealable/Zip-lock food bag
 - Saucepan
 - Measuring jug
 - Circle cutters
 - 12-hole tart/mince pie tin
 - Rolling pin
- Ingredients:**
- Pastry:**
- 340g self-raising flour
 - 85g vegetable shortening, chilled
 - 90g unsalted butter, chilled
 - 2 large eggs, beaten
- Filling:**
- 6 large red apples
 - 250ml apple juice
- To finish:**
- 1 large egg, beaten

- Method:**
1. Oven on to 200°C/180°C fan.
 2. (Prep before depending on the age of the kids) Peel and core apples, slice and place in a pan. Pour in apple juice. Cook gently for 10 minutes until soft. Drain excess juice. Set aside to cool.
 3. Pour the flour into the food bag. Cut the vegetable shortening and butter into small pieces and add to the flour. Seal the bag then let your child rub in the fats to the flour until it resembles fine breadcrumb crumbs (alternatively use a food processor if you prefer).
 4. Tip the flour mixture into a bowl, add the eggs and mix into a ball using a blunt knife. If the mixture is too dry, add 1 tsp cold water. Wrap in cling film and chill in the fridge for 20 minutes.
 5. Divide the dough in half, place one half back in the fridge. On a floured surface, roll out the first half to 5mm thick and cut out 12 circles to fit the bases of the tart tin and use the end of a rolling pin to press them in. Add the apples using a teaspoon then pop in the fridge while you make the lids/decorations.
 6. Roll out the other half of the pastry to 5mm thick. Retrieve the tarts and brush the edges with the beaten egg and a pastry brush, and apply stars or lids, as below:
 - Stars - cut out 12 stars to fit the top of the tarts, press the points of the stars into the edges of the tart casing
 - Circles - cut out 12 circles to fit the top of the tarts, press the edges into the tops of the tart casing
 - Stripes/weaved - cut out 8 x 5mm strips per tart, place across the top of the tarts
 7. Egg wash the tops. Bake for 20-25 minutes until golden and crisp on top.
 8. Serve with custard, cream or ice-cream.

“They’re just like me!”

Representing upper limb difference on TV, in sport, the arts or in everyday life, isn't just about inspiring children to do more, it's about Reach children seeing "themselves" in those who are out there doing all sorts of amazing things, across a range of industries and knowing that they have a world of opportunities before them. It's about showing them and the rest of the world that there are no limits when it comes to their difference - if they want something, they can have it. And if we ever doubted the power of representation, Reach member Elijah reminds us. His mum Bernadette says "he loves seeing or meeting people just like him" whether it's at a Reach meet up, or on TV. She says he still talks about a family day they went to a couple of years ago despite him being just 2 or 3 years old at the time. When he sees photos and videos of people with limb differences he's amazed and eager to have a go himself. He's currently got his sights set on becoming a Paralympian after watching the Olympics and Paralympics, has recently joined a football club, and loves climbing and jumping. Bernadette says, "he's a ninja warrior! We think he'd make a brilliant stunt man."



Elijah 4y9m

It's only when we think about life *without* Reach meets, or *without* the Paralympics or inclusive TV shows that we can appreciate how different Elijah's aspirations could be. And that's *why* representation matters.

A NEW book!

Author Jessica Parham tells us what representation means to her and about her latest book *Baking Up a Storm*.

"Kids who have disabilities or visible differences will spend a large portion of their childhood, (into adulthood) explaining their disability or difference. And there are countless incredible books out there that explain these things very well. However, the goal with my books is to show and celebrate what makes us different instead of offering an explanation - To me this is representation. This type of representation matters because it bridges the gap between kids of every ability. It breaks down barriers for kids. It SHOWS kids that someone else may look differently or have a different range of abilities but that doesn't make them unable."

“ You should be celebrated simply because You are YOU! ”



New Parent Survey Update

Thank you to the 189 parents who have filled 'The National Study of Parental Experience of Unexpected News of Upper Limb Differences', hopefully by doing this we will be able to make sure that new parents of a child with an upper limb difference are able to access all the support they need.

If you haven't had a chance to fill in the survey yet – please do, it only takes a few moments of your time but will make a massive impact on the knowledge of health professionals on how to support new parents.

The survey

Are you a parent of a child with an upper limb difference that is 10 years or younger?

Reach Charity with @LothianChildHealth are conducting research into the first moments that you found out your baby had a limb difference. Were the health professionals knowledgeable and able to support you? Or were you left feeling alone with no answers? What information would be of benefit to you? Click the link below to fill in the survey".

▶ <https://forms.gle/7Y4NdY5VSFUz7vr8>



Watch Oakley on Number 1 Newton Avenue on (Beebies!)

Oakley plays the character of Freddie and in the first episode he makes a bug hotel! You can catch up on BBC 1player <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m00022n4/number-1-newton-avenue-series-1-1-slug-as-a-bug> Oakley says:

“ It feels normal now to see myself on TV. My friends think it's so cool. My teacher played it in school, but my friends can't understand why I get called Freddie and not Oakley. And they can't understand how I can be on the TV and sitting next to them at the same time! I think they'd like to be on TV too, but they don't realise how much hard work it is. The filming was a lot of fun but very tiring. ”



Matthew Phillips, Paraclimber

Reach member since birth, Matthew Phillips is just 20 years old and is already a three times World Champion Paraclimber.

“ I started climbing when I was 14 after giving up competitive swimming and wanting a new challenge. I attended a Paraclimbing competition just to give it a go and came third with no formal training but enjoyed it so much I decided to keep climbing.

I found a coach and started regular training. I became the youngest person to join the GB Paraclimbing Team in 2016 and won my first World Championship in 2018 in Innsbruck, I retained my title in 2019 in France and again in 2021 in Moscow.

I didn't really come across any difficulties as the climbing community is such a supportive family that nothing is a problem. The only thing I do is tape my little arm to protect it from damage and abrasions. My highlight so far is climbing in the Rocky Mountains in Colorado, USA and winning my first World Championship.

I currently work for our local climbing wall as a Duty Manager and Instructor. My aim is to be a role model and show that whatever your difference you can give climbing a go. I would love to see more people take up Paraclimbing and see it become a Paralympic sport in Los Angeles in 2028. ”

Find out more at www.matthewphillips.me.uk



Matthew Phillips



Need some help?

Thinking about prosthetics, an adaption for your child's bike or is there something your child is struggling with and you just can't find a solution? Reach is always happy to offer help and advice, and to point you in the right direction. Or why not speak to our partners who innovate and create to ensure everyone can live a life without limits.

Koalaa

 ▶ <https://www.yourkoalaa.com/>

Innovators of comfortable, easy-to-fit, affordable soft prosthetic arms for kids and adults.

Open Bionics

 ▶ <https://openbionics.com/>

Creator of the Hero Arm - Open Bionics is a UK-based company that develops low-cost bionic hands.

Remap

 ▶ <https://www.remap.org.uk/>

Remap custom-makes equipment to help disabled people live more independent lives.

reVAMP by LimbPower

Fitness and Nutrition programmes

Digital, 'Joe Wicks style' workout videos specifically designed to support amputees and people with limb differences, with programmes running throughout the year with new training materials released approximately every 12 weeks. The next programme is due to start again in January along with an upper limb programme.

For more information on the reVAMP programme email rebecca@limbpower.com.



Team Unlimbited

'Empowering and inspiring people with limb difference through the design and build of innovative 3D printed arm devices.' Reach member Isabella Jenkins was the first recipient of a Team UNlimbited designed arm!

<https://www.teamunlimbited.org/>



What Reach Does



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

RAW (Reach Activity Week) 'Incredible Delivery' Pack

For Reach Children aged 10 – 17 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.

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.



How to Fundraise for Reach...

Run for Reach!



Find a run. Register. Select Reach Charity. Start fundraising!

👉 www.runforcharity.com

Work for Good



Making it quick and easy for small businesses to donate to charity.

👉 www.workforgood.co.uk

easyfundraising



Fundraise while you shop on the UK's biggest charity shopping site.

👉 www.easyfundraising.org.uk

Birthday Fundraisers



Birthday coming up? Start your fundraiser – 100% goes to Reach.

👉 www.reach.org.uk/celebrate-your-birthday-with-reach-charity/

Reach charity are funded 100% by donations and membership subscription. Help us to continue supporting Reach families with more ideas and how to fundraise for Reach at:

👉 www.reach.org.uk/fundraising/

#givingtuesday

GIVING TUESDAY

Were taking part in Giving Tuesday on the 30th November! It's also the start of our Community Fundraising Campaign for December... Support Reach by taking on a challenge, from biking and burpees, bake sales or buggy pushes, to swimming lengths, acts of kindness and so much more! You can create the challenge, simply start your JustGivingFundraising page and go!

👉 <https://reach.org.uk/givingtuesday-help-reach-charity-make-a-difference/>



Helping children with upper limb differences live life without limits

