



PRESS RELEASE

Date: 12 September 2017

Memories of Disabled Living – were you involved with one of Manchester’s oldest charities?

Disabled Living, one of Manchester’s oldest charities, is calling for people to get in touch who have memories, materials and/or photographs about their links with the charity. Hundreds of thousands of people across the North West have been involved with the organisation in its 120 year history as service users, volunteers, staff and trustees.

For example, Alan Norton, one of Disabled Living’s current Trustees, went on a three week holiday as a child to Disabled Living’s White Heather holiday accommodation in North Wales and received one of the Christmas hampers that were donated to disabled children across Manchester and Salford.

‘At the age of 7 I vaguely remember my mum sending me to a holiday home run by the ‘Cripples Help Society’ now known as Disabled Living Manchester, it was the first time I had been away from home and I had to dress myself which I had never done before. I remembered I had a fantastic time going on walks, playing various games especially enjoyed the swings at the local park. It was my first taste of independence and gave me the inspiration to do more for myself, which has led to me having a full and complete life,’ states Alan.

Since losing the majority of its records in a recent fire, the charity has been working towards rebuilding its heritage. As part of its birthday celebrations Disabled Living is delivering a project, *From Donkeys to Innovators*, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, that recognises the many services the charity provided and the people involved with the organisation.

Most importantly, the voices of disabled people will be recognised, preserved and celebrated, documenting unique stories about disability heritage. People’s contributions to the history of Disabled Living may be included in a permanent exhibition in the charity’s Redbank House in Cheetham Hill that launches in 2018, and all will be preserved in its new archive that will be safely maintained in Manchester Central Library’s Archives+.

Many people remain unaware that the activities they were involved with were part of the present day charity. These activities included the first wheelchair loans service in Greater Manchester; the establishment of the Children’s Orthopaedic Hospital in Marple; the provision of holidays for thousands of disabled children and adults to Blackpool, North Wales and overseas; a residential provision for disabled adults at Tan Y Bryn in Abergele, North Wales; advice and support about the use of innovative equipment to enable disabled people to live more independently; and a Style Centre providing advice and training for disabled teenagers and adults.

Over the years, a myriad of organisations have also been involved with the charity from The Guardian and Manchester Evening News, the Disabled Drivers’ Association, Manchester Art Gallery, the Jewish Ex-Servicemen, Derbyshire Miners, Manchester United Football Club, the British Red

Cross Society, and Greater Manchester Police, indicating the charity's important place in the social history of Greater Manchester.

Debra Evans, Disabled Living's Chief Executive said, *"The history of Disabled Living are the stories of the people who were involved with the charity from the disabled people who used its services to the volunteers who packed the Christmas hampers and the nurses who worked at the Marple hospital. People's memories are what bring the charity to life and we want to have a chance to celebrate and thank the individuals who helped to create the charity that we have today."*

People who are prepared to share their stories, or any photographs or materials they might have about Disabled Living's heritage, are asked to contact Natasha Bolger at Disabled Living on 0161 214 5959 or email Natasha.bolger@disabledliving.co.uk. No stories or images will be included in any of the public materials without the express permission of the individual involved.

-ENDS-

NOTES TO THE EDITOR

1. Disabled Living is a charity that provides impartial information about innovative equipment and services for disabled adults, children, older people and the professionals who work with them, in the aim of ensuring that disabled people can live as independently as possible. DL can offer solutions to what may seem unmanageable problems.

2. *From Donkeys to Innovators*, the Heritage Lottery Fund supported project, will include a permanent exhibition at DL's Red Bank House in Cheetham Hill; a short film made by young disabled people comparing the experiences of disabled children today with those of the young people in DL's archive; a short documentary film about the charity's histories; the collection of stories through oral histories; and the placing of the remaining archive in Manchester Central Library's Archives+.

3. The Heritage Lottery, thanks to National Lottery players, invests money to help people across the UK explore, enjoy and protect the heritage they care about. www.hlf.org.uk

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information, images and interviews please contact Claire Turner, the project's Creative Producer on 07879 426491 or email claire@claireturner.net