



variety
the children's charity

a case for hope

VARIETY - THE CHILDREN'S CHARITY:
CASE FOR SUPPORT

As my husband and I sat down to consider how much all of this was going to cost us, our hearts sank because we realized we couldn't possibly afford it. There's no way. My husband works incredibly hard for us, but the cost of living in Vancouver is very high and we had no idea how we could ever afford to give our special guys all the help that they need. Emotionally, psychologically and physically it's been a huge struggle for all of us. It was horrible to think that as parents we couldn't help our kids.

Jenn

Ask any parent of a child who has special needs and they will tell you what they've learned from their child about life, love and commitment. What they may not share is the fear and sense of helplessness.

Families often become single income households in order to provide care for their child. Add the increasing costs of living and the result is a situation that can be utterly overwhelming for families with children with special needs.

- *B.C. has the highest cost of living in all of Canada - spending 30.8% of household income on shelter. (Statistics Canada, 2014)*
- *Four in five British Columbians are aware that child care in the province can cost as much as rent or mortgage. (Insights West, 2015)*

In reality, support is needed throughout a child's life often for equipment and services not covered by the public health system.

Parents of children with special needs require support. Variety - The Children's Charity is where they turn.

Oliver and Elliott were born with a form of muscular dystrophy and require leg braces that need to be replaced yearly as the boys grow.

\$3,500/year for a pair of leg braces so Oliver and Elliott are able to jump and run.

Natasha contracted encephalitis at age seven and is unable to walk.

\$5,000 on average for funding to supply a power wheelchair; \$7,500 towards a van conversion to accommodate a wheelchair so Natasha can travel in her community in safety and comfort.

Nolan was born five weeks premature.

\$62,000 for an incubator for a premature baby, one of many that Variety has provided to hospitals across the province.

Max has cerebral palsy and takes 35 pills a day.

Close to \$3,000 in one year for medication to manage Max's seizures.

Cody is blind and requires support to function in his environment.

\$600 a month to see a specialized therapist and respite worker so that Cody can go on outings into nature, crucial for his learning experience.

the need for hope



When Olivia was three months old, she was rushed to the hospital and diagnosed with Central Core Myopathy, a neuromuscular disease causing core muscle weakness that affects gross motor skills such as standing, walking, and running. Her mother Alyson was heartbroken to learn that her young child would need a wheelchair and worried for her future, wondering if Olivia would ever be strong enough to walk. Variety helped purchase a lift system for Olivia's chair and a special valet seat to help Alyson safely transition her daughter into the family van.

Looking forward, Variety will focus on increasing direct support to children.

Our mission is to inspire donors to help all children in B.C. who have special needs.

Our vision is for every child who has special needs to fulfill their unique potential.

how we help

Variety - The Children's Charity steps in where health care ends, supporting children with special needs to fulfill their unique potential.

Funding from Variety helps to cover costs for medical care and services, mobility and communication equipment, therapies and developmental programs not covered by private or public health plans.

Often a child's condition is complex, which means care and support is needed for various aspects of their development throughout their childhood. It is a journey that children and their families face with perseverance, and with the support of donors, Variety is by their side.

In addition to providing funding directly to children and their families, Variety also

works with local grassroots organizations that deliver care and services to children with special needs. This form of teamwork exponentially increases the impact Variety has throughout British Columbia, and builds capacity for support within the community.



our everyday impact



Even though doctors believed he would need a wheelchair his whole life, Nate took his first assisted steps at the age of three and a half!

Variety's history in British Columbia is rooted in our ability to make the world an easier place for children with special needs. Over the years, Variety has spearheaded campaigns to build BC Children's Hospital, Canuck Place, Child Development Centres, and Neonatal Intensive Care Units in many of the hospitals that exist today. There are more than 550 specially equipped vans called Sunshine Coaches that have been placed on the roads in B.C. to transport children in comfort and safety to places of education, recreation and therapy.

We see each child as a champion for their courage and perseverance facing challenges in their daily lives. A single victory for a child with special needs is a celebration of what is possible.

Cody uses a Braille keyboard to make greeting cards as gifts to others creating awareness about the abilities of children who live with blindness.

Since receiving a tuition grant to attend Discovery School, **Nathan's** reading and comprehension skills are improving and is maintaining friendships with classmates.

Thaddeus is able to explore his neighbourhood thanks to his new specialized trike.

Olivia could not be more proud of her new 'wheels'. She stops strangers on the street and says 'look at my new wheelchair!' I could not be more proud of her, she is an amazing little girl.

Thanks to the family's wheelchair accessible van, **Emma** can join her family on outings in safety and comfort.



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**Together we can
create more victories**

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to find out how

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