



Report about “My adventures in the Innowalk” story book

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Illustrator Alison Howard, Cardiff based.

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Acknowledgements

Ms Josie McCallister, Deputy Head teacher Ysgol y Deri who gave permission to access the school’s premises where the 2 Innowalks were used; Mrs Ann Mahenthalingam, Senior Physiotherapist at Ysgol Y Deri acted as the gatekeeper to recruit families to the study; Mrs Emma Cusack was also involved in recruitment, consent and engagement. They were supported by the wider physiotherapy team at Ysgol y Deri. The families who took part and Mr Ted Shiress, adult living with cerebral palsy.

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Summary

This research award, from the Baily Thomas Charitable trust, enabled a storybook to be created, about disabled children's adventures in the Innowalk, a robotic device. This was based upon data from a case study series study funded by the Association of Paediatric Chartered Physiotherapists (2022-23). This study observed ten disabled children and young people, when they participated in the Innowalk, for evidence indicating their well-being. Where possible, the children were able to tell their own stories, but for some who had learning disabilities or were non-verbal, the observations and diaries enabled insight to be gained about their well-being. These indicators included improved sleep, less stiffness and regular bowel movements. This book is a unique and novel contribution to knowledge.

Participants in the study

The ten disabled children and young people in the study ranged from aged 4 -19 years of age. Some attended the special school where the Innowalk was based, others attended as outpatients. Their disabilities included Rett's syndrome, Cerebral Palsy and Spina Bifida. Seven were able to speak and talk about their experiences of the Innowalk, three were non-verbal and were observed, supported by their parents keeping a diary and carrying out an interview. Five of the children had a learning disability. They, sometimes supported by others, chose a pseudonym. These pseudonyms were Barney, Black Panther, Charlie, Everly, Joey, Katie, Melanie, Star, Zac and Zelia. They are represented in the book from the youngest to the eldest.

Implementation of award

The award was granted from 1st November 2023 – 30th April 2024. The initial illustration company Tiny Wizard Studios went into Administration on 21st December 2023 without completing the work. A three month no cost extension (until 31st July 2024) was granted, by the Baily Thomas Charitable Trust, to enable a new illustrator to be commissioned. Alison Howard was employed by Cardiff University to complete this task in March 2024. Mr Ted Shiress, an adult living with Cerebral Palsy was part of the consultation group and commented on the book's design and layout. Parents provided photographs of their child for the illustrator. Alison never met the children until the book launch on 30th July 2024. The book is the intellectual property of Cardiff University and may not be reproduced without permission.

Book launch 30th July 2024

The physiotherapy staff at the special school hosted a coffee morning where parents and children were invited to come and receive their own copy of the book. This celebration event was attended by 7 /10 families who had not seen the book before this day. All who attended were thrilled with their representation and the school staff asked for a poster of the illustrations. Below are some photographs from this event.



Photograph 1 Zac with her book copy



Photograph 2 Black panther with his book copy

Dr Dawn Pickering (left in photo 1) and Alison Howard

A paper copy was sent to this postal address on 30th July 2024:

MF Global Services (UK) Ltd
Administrators for The Baily Thomas Charitable Fund
13th Floor
One Angel Court
London
EC2R 7HJ

The link to the pdf of the book can be accessed here:

<https://orca.cardiff.ac.uk/id/eprint/170633/>

If you wish to receive further printed copies, please email dawnpickering@live.co.uk.

The book was also created as an audio version for those children who could not see or read the book themselves- this can be found via the link here:

<https://cardiff.cloud.panopto.eu/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=a9d2a8a9-5d1a-4599-86ab-b1b500861ea1>

Research outputs

Co-Production event at Cardiff University 23rd July 2024.

Elements of this study and book will be presented as a poster at the 3rd European Paediatric Physical Therapy Congress in Zurich in October 2024.