

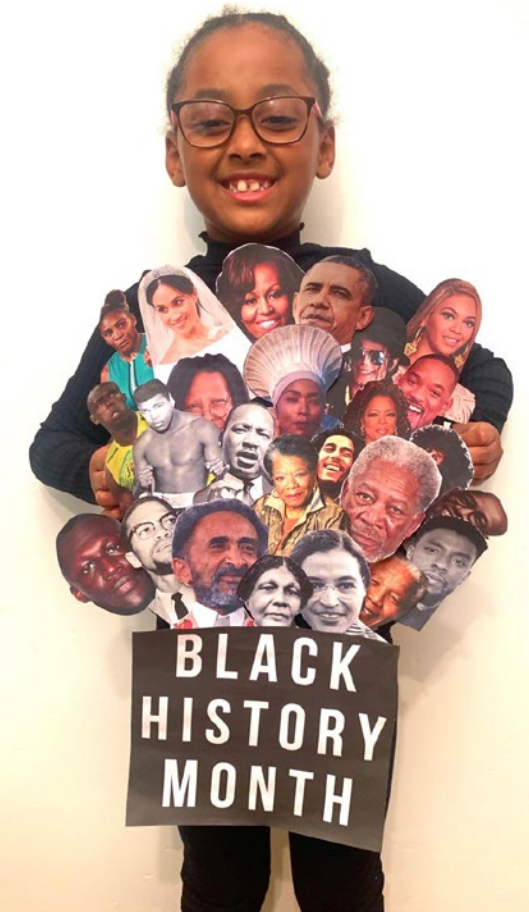


THE POWELL FAMILY
FOUNDATION

Impact Report

2023

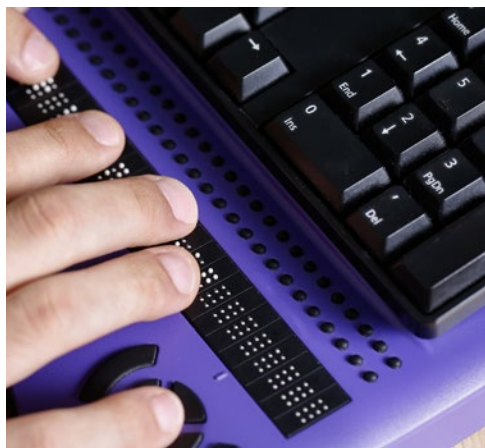
Supporting
children and
young people
with a vision
impairment to
reach their full
potential



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Front cover photos courtesy of:
Club Wilber, The Wilberforce Trust, Croydon Vision,
MACS, North East Sensory Services, VICTA, Vista



Review of 2023



By Executive Director, Colin Whitbourn and Chair, Simon Curtis.

Welcome to The Powell Family Foundation

Our vision at The Powell Family Foundation is a world in which children and young people with a vision impairment are able to reach their full potential.

A vision impairment can make it harder for children to learn from family members and peers and interact fully with the world around them.

Furthermore, the availability of habilitation services and the right educational support from nursery through to higher education varies across the country and is often difficult to access. The specialist equipment, training and adaptations needed can also be prohibitively expensive for families.

The Powell Family Foundation (TPFF) has been created to help children with a vision impairment in their journey from birth to adulthood. We award grants to individuals as well as to charities and other not-for-profit organisations. Our grants help improve emotional and physical well-being, increase knowledge and skills, and support independence through to the age of 25.

It is really pleasing to report on a successful first year and to witness the positive effect our funding is making.

“ The amount we have been able to award has exceeded our expectations and we are delighted with the diverse range of young people and organisations funded.

Simon Curtis, Chair

Our passion is enabling children with a vision impairment to become confident, independent young people. There are so many areas where, with the help of dedicated volunteers and professionals, it is possible to make a difference. In addition to making direct grants to children and young people, we support the whole family through the not-for-profit organisations we fund. As well as offering services such as habilitation, these organisations help families navigate the often complex educational, health and welfare systems. Relieved of some of this stress, families can focus more on the wellbeing of their children.

Experiences are also so important in helping children and young people with a vision impairment build skills and confidence. It is a joy for us at the Foundation to be able to fund programmes for young people, run by not-for-profit organisations, to engage in exciting new activities. These include creative arts, cookery, climbing, sailing, football and other outdoor adventures, all in a safe and supportive environment.

With our individual grants programme, our approach is to be as flexible as possible and we are happy to consider grants for a wide range of different items, services or activities as long as they clearly benefit a child or young person with a vision impairment. In the past year we have helped to fund a wide range of needs, from travel costs for a weekend event to harp lessons, from accessible reading to sailing days, and from storytelling to specialist magnification devices.

Looking to the future, we will further develop our relationships with not-for-profit organisations to support their important work in the longer term. We will of course continue to award grants to individual children and young people to support their development and help them achieve their ambitions.

We hope you enjoy reading about some of the inspirational children and young people we have met in the past year and hearing from some of the amazing not-for-profit organisations who are working tirelessly to deliver valuable information, advice and support.



Our impact in 2023

Our key statistics

– Charities and social enterprises –



27 Grants



£528,832 awarded

– Children and young people –



70 Grants



£107,724 awarded



Estimated 4,500 children and young people supported.

– Organisations supported –



- ♥ Berkshire Vision
- ♥ Blind in Business
- ♥ ClearVision
- ♥ Croydon Vision
- ♥ Henshaws
- ♥ MACS
- ♥ Merton Vision
- ♥ MoorVision
- ♥ Music for Life
- ♥ MySight York
- ♥ MyVision Oxfordshire
- ♥ North East Sensory Services
- ♥ North East Sight Matters
- ♥ Nystagmus Network
- ♥ Open Sight
- ♥ RNIB
- ♥ Royal Society for Blind Children
- ♥ Sight for Surrey
- ♥ Sight Life Cardiff
- ♥ Sight Loss Shropshire
- ♥ Usher Kids
- ♥ VICTA
- ♥ Vision Ability
- ♥ Vision Foundation
- ♥ Vista
- ♥ Wilberforce Trust
- ♥ Wirral Society for the Blind & Partially Sighted

Grants to organisations

TPFF funds not-for-profit organisations of all shapes and sizes across the UK who are helping children and young people with a vision impairment to reach their full potential.

Making an impact across the UK

Local charities for people who are vision impaired are increasing their services for children, young people and families (CYPF) with the help of TPFF funding. These CYPF services provide invaluable support for families, helping to build active local communities. We funded 19 such charities in 2023 and showcase four here.

Vista – There when you need us



Vista was founded 166 years ago and has significant experience supporting those affected by vision impairment in Leicestershire and Rutland.

TPFF part funds Paula, Vista's Eye Clinic Liaison Officer (ECLO) and Family Support Officer. These two roles are crucial to the journey of a child or young person affected by vision impairment.

Support at diagnosis is critical for the whole family and this year Paula's work at the local hospital has helped 150 families, providing support when they are at their most vulnerable.

Vista is now also running a children and young people's forum and activities that enhance the skills learned from the Habilitation Team.

Moreover, these activities give the children and young people who take part the opportunity to educate the wider community about vision impairment and what communities can do to support them.

Paula said, ***"TPFF funding has made such a difference. It has enabled us to be there***

for families with vision impairment when they most need us. Best of all, it has helped us give our children and young people the best start in life."

"The funding from TPFF has been so welcome. Watching our children joining in the activities we are able to provide, supporting each other and learning new skills is truly humbling and rewarding.

Jean Voller
Chair of Trustees

North East Sight Matters – Creating opportunities to thrive



North East Sight Matters (NESM) was created in 2020 by a vision rehabilitation specialist to help children, young people and their families with a vision impairment in North East England.

NESM provides activities and experiences to help

children and young people develop their confidence and independence. With TPFf funding, NESM is currently helping 100 families, a number which keeps on growing as word spreads of their excellent work!

One of NESM's families has six children with three registered as sight impaired with Oculocutaneous Albinism. The family regularly attends NESM activities and has become friends with other families. They have enjoyed cookery, crafts, drama and accessible outdoor activities, one highlight being a ride in a speedboat!

Eldest son Jay (pictured) said **“I love NESM because it gives me confidence in myself, knowing there are things**

I can do like everyone else.” Mum Stacey is delighted. **“NESM gives us strength and we are never judged. We are with people we trust and really do feel that it is somewhere we can call family.”**

“ It is a pleasure to see our families enjoying, learning and socialising and the children developing skills that will help them in the future. To watch children grow in confidence, make new friends, and have a desire to be independent is just amazing
Penny Dane
Founder and Director

Sensory Services by Sight for Surrey – Living without barriers



Sensory Services by Sight for Surrey supports 8,000 people who are Deaf, hard of hearing, blind, partially sighted and deafblind. Offering expert support, services and advice, Sight for Surrey delivers services

in homes, communities and from their main office hub.

The grant from TPFf is helping Sight for Surrey to support 45 children and young people with a range of exciting recreational activities. This has included Top Golf, cycling, a chocolate making workshop, ice skating, horse riding, willow weaving, dingy sailing and even a barge trip! The grant is also enabling Sight for Surrey to deliver two residentials, one for families and one for the 16+ cohort who are leaving mum and dad at home!

Ella (pictured) said, **“Sight for Surrey gives me opportunities to develop new friendships - it's awesome!”**

By trying activities taken for granted by their sighted peers, Sight for Surrey are helping children and young people develop valuable self-confidence and emotional resilience while also having a great time.

“ TPFf funding has enabled us to run so many more activities for blind and partially sighted children and young people and is really making a difference
Clare Burgess
CEO

North East Sensory Services

Building confidence, self-esteem and life skills



North East Sensory Services (NESS) delivers joint sensory services in North East Scotland to support the independence of people with sight and/or hearing loss.

Their Young People's Sensory Service supports children and young people to develop their confidence, independence and social skills.

TPFF funding supports regular youth clubs, activities, and a baby and toddler group. This offers vital professional and peer support as well as a safe and stimulating space for babies and toddlers to play, explore and learn to socialise.

Tom* (pictured) who is vision impaired, started coming to the baby and toddler group at 14 months old. His mum wanted to meet parents in a similar position and for Tom to be with other vision impaired babies. He was initially unsettled, but soon felt comfortable enough to start to interact, particularly enjoying the stimulation of the musical toys and bright lights.

Tom is now a happy and confident four-year-old who joins in with group activities – which have included horse

riding, sandboarding, football and meeting owls! He enjoys being around the others in the group and has made real friendships.

“TPFF’s support enables us to help our children and young people progress towards leading more independent and happy lives.

Graham Findlay,
Chief Executive

*Name changed to maintain privacy



Supporting children from birth to adulthood

Research demonstrates that proper support from the point of diagnosis through to early adulthood gives children and young people with a vision impairment the best chance of reaching their full potential and leading full lives. The three following case studies illustrate some of the excellent work we are funding to enable this.

ClearVision Project – Sharing a world of books



ClearVision is the UK's premier postal lending library of children's books adapted to include Braille and handmade tactile picture books. The library has over 14,000 books in its collection including 800 handmade beautiful tactile picture books, in which all the illustrations are designed to be explored by touch.

With TPF's funding, ClearVision has supported over 380 children with a vision impairment across the UK and Ireland in the past six months. Young Brailleists have been able to share books both at home with their family and in the classroom with their teachers

and sighted peers, enjoying the many benefits reading together brings.

TPFF's support has also added new books to the library, ensuring that borrowers can access the same titles as their sighted friends. It has also helped the library reach out to 55 new families.

Tatiana (pictured sharing the tactile picture books with her son), says, "***Khamani loves being able to share his special books with his older brother; in fact Cai still opens Khamani's 'special book pouch' and reads the books to him even if they've been read 50,000 times already!***"

TPFF's support for our library has given families the joy of sharing books together, whether learning to read, supporting schoolwork or enjoying the comfort of a bedtime story.

Alex Britton
Director



VICTA – Helping pre-teens develop and grow



Aware that feelings of isolation and loneliness can be dominant within the world of vision impairment, national charity VICTA focusses on activity-based learning as a positive setting for social interaction and personal growth.

A multi-year funding commitment from TPF has

allowed VICTA to build a bespoke pre-teen programme for children and their families. This has been designed to encourage children with vision impairment to engage in learning and outdoor activities helping them to grow in confidence, independence and resilience.

An extensive calendar of in-person challenges, competitions and national award schemes is in progress helping vision impaired children to challenge limiting presumptions they and others have about their abilities. In year one, VICTA will create over 400 opportunities for vision impaired children across the UK.

VICTA's Braille Art Family Day introduced children to sensory

and Braille art. One parent commented, **“The best thing about VICTA is its inclusivity - everyone’s effort to make the whole event accessible really shines. Educated and fun people made my whole family feel welcome. An inspirational event, thank you.”**

“ We are grateful to the Powell Family Foundation – this meaningful partnership allows us to plan with confidence, curating opportunities and maximising the impact we can have together with the young people we support.

Nick Schofield
CEO

Blind in Business – Building aspiration, changing lives



Blind in Business (BiB) helps young people with a vision impairment into work.

TPFF funds BiB's Training and Employment Services which to date has helped 280 young people with a vision impairment through training, interview practice and organising meetings with vision impaired adult role models.

Gledi (pictured) is a fantastic example of a BiB success story. Gledi had originally engaged with BiB during his final years at school. After finding university wasn't working out, Gledi turned to BiB for help with work experience and training to make the transition into employment.

BiB helped Gledi with assistive technology training before providing him with a variety of work experience placements, which helped him build up his confidence again. A career in project management was identified and BiB helped Gledi with job applications until he finally was offered an interview. After rehearsing his handshake and practising interview questions with every member of the BiB team, Gledi

was ready! Everyone at BiB was over the moon to learn that he had received an offer for his dream job.

Gledi commented, **“The support from Blind in Business, which has been constant since I was a teenager, has allowed me to work out my own career path and progress to employment – it’s been invaluable!”**

“ The TPF grant gives BiB the security to offer life changing support to young people in their transition from education to employment.

Dan Mitchell
Director of Finance & Fundraising

Providing transformative funding

At TPF we are also interested in projects that are truly transformational. Whether that is funding the first ever member of paid staff, funding a comprehensive service review, or developing a pilot into a full service, we are proud to support the outstanding work of the vision impairment sector.

Usher Kids UK – Empowering young people



Founded and led by volunteers with lived experience since 2017, Usher Kids UK is the only UK charity dedicated to the 1,000 children and young people and their families living with Usher syndrome.

Usher syndrome causes progressive deafblindness and is increasingly diagnosed from infancy. The positive impact for families of accessing condition-specific information and support from diagnosis onwards is incalculable.

One parent commented recently after a summer camp, organised by Usher Kids, **“Our daughter made brilliant friendships with**

people who really understand what it means to have Usher syndrome. Just priceless.”

Increasing demand for its services led Usher Kids to seek funding from TPF for their first paid CEO. The new CEO’s leadership is transforming capacity across the four established service areas: information, support, connections and advocacy. Having a two-year funding commitment has allowed Usher Kids to develop and build on its services, and to create a sustainable longer-term strategy. This will transform outcomes for the next generation living with Usher syndrome.

“ Appointing our first CEO represents a significant step change in our capacity to deliver and expand services to address the unmet needs of families living with Usher syndrome.

Chloe Joyner
Founder and
Chair of Trustees



MACS – Sustaining and growing our services



MACS is the UK's only charity specifically supporting people born with Microphthalmia (small, underdeveloped eyes), Anophthalmia (no eyes) or Coloboma (cleft of the eye).

Support from TPFf has played a crucial role in sustaining MACS's essential services and

raising the profile of these rare conditions. In 2023 in-person meetups, confidence building experiential trips and regular newsletters helped 921 MACS children and families share information, learn and have fun!

Through MACS Awareness Week and Rare Disease Day, MACS reached almost 9,000 individuals and organisations. The TPFf grant has also empowered MACS to conduct a comprehensive service review, leading to new tailored and age-appropriate activities that directly engage children and young people, marking a significant stride toward fostering independent involvement rather than proxy involvement via their parents.

Laura (pictured on nursery graduation day) is one of the many children in the MACS

family. Mum, Lauriana said, *“It is so amazing to see our little fighter, Laura, inspiring and representing VI children and their families. Representing how great they are. She is doing amazingly at school, with the Braille, with the cane, with everything. There are daily challenges as we all know, but she is giving her very best and we are so proud of her. We love this picture and everything it represents.”*

“ Working with TPFf, we've made significant progress this year, fostering confidence and hope for a bright future.

Teresa Gordon
Chair of Trustees



MoorVision – Providing a valuable MOT for life



service. The MOT provides a thorough assessment, resource guide and personalised follow-up covering all areas of the child or young person's life.

Seb (pictured), age 9, has a vision impairment along with learning and physical disabilities and is one of many children who has been helped by the MOT.

MoorVision was set up by volunteer families in 2007 and now supports over 250 families of children and young people with vision impairment across the far South-West.

MoorVision received a TPFf grant in 2023 to transform its Children and Young People's Sight Loss MOT pilot into a full

His parents commented, *"MoorVision linked us with the habilitation team and we also used the MOT with Seb's school. The MOT helps them understand his support needs and how his vision impairment impacts him emotionally and in relationships with his peers. With this support in place, Seb is a happy and active*

child who can access all activities like his friends. The MOT is a fantastic idea and valuable process. Every child with a vision impairment should have a MOT."

“ TPFf has enabled MoorVision to greatly expand our Sight Loss MOT provision, enabling us to deliver the highest level of support in all areas of these children's lives, as well as delivering over £75,000 of added value to the families involved.

Laura Hughes
Founder and Chief Executive Director



Children and Young People's Sight Loss MOT

A Resource Guide and Checklist for Children and Young People Living with Vision Impairment

Version 2, Oct 2023

Produced by Moorvision and Devon in Sight
 

 Visionary
October 2023



Grants to Individuals

Our small grants programme to individual children and young people with a vision impairment helps families to support their child's hobbies and passions, as well as providing essential equipment for everyday living. The following stories from some of our grantees illustrate the talent, determination and resilience of the young people we hear from every day.



Samuel's story



Samuel is 10 years old and loves getting stuck into his many hobbies. He said, *“Even though I’m vision impaired and need some extra help this doesn’t stop me from doing the things I love, like jumping in at the deep end!”*

Samuel also loves playing football, learning the piano and drawing. He’s also a budding author, including writing the *‘The Super Samuel Series!’* His dream is to be a famous writer one day.

“ We are incredibly grateful for the TPFf grant which has made a significant difference to Samuel’s life, providing him with access to opportunities to explore the world he loves. As a visually impaired child, he faces unique challenges, but thanks to the work of The Powell Family Foundation, his dreams are becoming possible.

Charmaine, Samuel’s mum

Eliza's story

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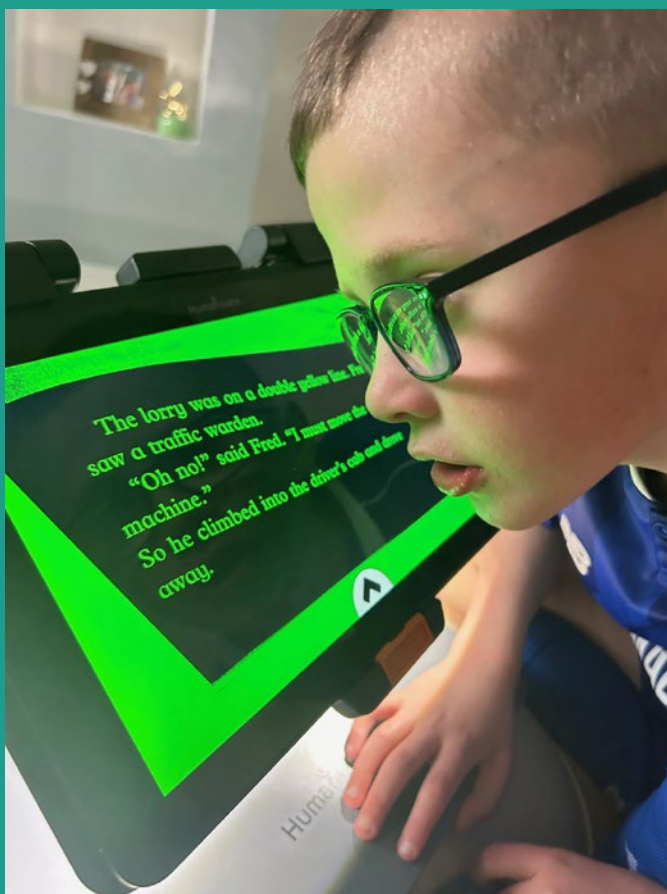


Eliza is eight years old and loves playing music! It has always been her ambition to play a beautiful instrument in an orchestra. When she heard her music teacher announce an opportunity for one student to learn the harp, Eliza said, ***"I knew this needed to be me!"***

Her parents contacted TPF and we were delighted to be able to make Eliza's dream come true, by giving funding to purchase a harp and music lessons. Eliza has now performed on the harp in her first live music concert with an orchestra! She also loves entertaining visitors and is continuing to grow as a musician and harpist.

"I knew if I was just given the chance, I could thrive and show the world how a vision impaired child can be a fabulous harpist. A glissando of thanks to The Powell Family!"
Eliza

Ryder's story



Ryder is eight years old and loves reading. His parents asked TPF for help in supplying some IT equipment to help with his schoolwork as he was falling behind due to his vision impairment. The IT equipment has been transformational.

Ryder said, ***"I love my Humanware equipment! I can now read books like my friends. I am now going up through the reading groups. I was on Stage 4. Now I'm on guided reading - this makes me so proud!"***

"Thank you so much for your funding! It has made a huge difference to Ryder and our family. This equipment enables me to support Ryder at home with his reading and makes our lives day-to-day a lot easier."
Ryder's mum Kirsty

Sam's story



Sam, 17, is a visually impaired skier with the paraGB team. It has always been his dream to represent the UK in skiing ever since he started racing at the age of 8 on a dry slope in Norfolk, where he lives.

His training with Team GB is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and TPF's funding has helped Sam win bronze in his first international race! Sam's goal is to get to the next Paralympics in Italy in 2026 and in future represent Great Britain and win more medals!

“ Sam has always had a passion to compete in skiing from a very early age. However the cost of the equipment, travel and training is massive. TPF's funding has made a considerable impact on what Sam has been able to accomplish this season.

Beki, Sam's mum

Emma's story



A digital magnifier has made a huge difference to Emma, who is 15 years old.

The magnifier has reignited Emma's passion for reading and helped her pursue her hobbies. And, most importantly for a teenager, the magnifier helps her to do this by herself!

Emma said, 'I love my magnifier and use it every single day. At the moment I'm using it to read one of my favourite books and I have just started to use it to sew. Thank you for making it possible to read my favourite books again!'

Emma is now also able to do her homework with greater ease and independence, a task that used to be a significant challenge.

“ We cannot thank you enough for the wonderful work your Foundation does. You have given Emma the opportunity to engage with the world in a way she couldn't before and has truly made a significant difference in Emma's life.

Charlotte, Emma's mum

Remy & Ben's story


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Remy, aged 5 and his brother Ben, aged 10, are both visually impaired, but that doesn't stop them from aiming high!

Thanks to a grant from TPF, Remy attends classes every week to learn the art of Jeet Kune Do. He loves running, learning to jab, cross and kick, and has just gained his first tag!

Ben is incredibly bright and loves learning, school, and is full of questions. He's currently in Year 5 and will have to take a test in Year 6 that will help him secure a place at an excellent secondary school close to home. TPF covered the cost of tuition to prepare for the test. The tuition has helped build Ben's confidence and he is aiming to ace it!

 **We can't thank The Powell Family Foundation enough for their support. It means so much to us to watch our sons thrive and excel.**
Saima, Remy and Ben's mum



The history of The Powell Family Foundation



The Powell Family Foundation is an independent foundation run by trustees and staff who are passionate about making a difference to the lives of children and young people with a vision impairment.

The Powell Family Foundation was set up by Rodney Powell, and is funded by the generous legacies of **Rodney and his mother, Pat.**

The Powell family has had a long connection with the world of vision impairment, going back nearly a century.

Rodney had a successful career as a chartered surveyor in London and Madrid and he was a property expert. He also served for 37 years as a Trustee of Thomas Pocklington Trust, 26 of which as Chairman of Trustees. Rodney was a great nephew of Thomas Pocklington. In 2020, Rodney was awarded an MBE for his services to charity.

Pat Powell was also a Trustee and later a patron of the charity. However towards the end of her long life it became Pat's wish to try and do something direct for vision impaired children and young people.

The Powell Family Foundation, based in London, was thus formed in June 2020. Rodney died shortly afterwards at the age of 71. His mother Pat died early in 2021, at the age of 101.

Frances Powell, widow of Rodney, and family friends Simon Curtis, John Renshaw and David Genders took the role of founder trustees to establish the Foundation and put it on a solid footing for the future.

The founder Trustees had a clear vision of what they wanted to achieve. Thanks to the dedication and hard work of the Trustees, including newly appointed trustees Alison Oliver and Alex Pepper and staff members, Colin Whitbourn and Cathy Hurst, TPF was able to launch its grant making activities at the end of January 2023.

The substantial property portfolios generously bequeathed to the Foundation by Rodney and Pat provide the resources that fund the Foundation's activities today and in perpetuity.

Dexter's story

The Powell Family Foundation does not endorse services or products. However, one of our individual grantees, Dexter, writes and publishes such excellent books, we have this once made an exception. This is his story.

Dexter's toy Scruffy (pictured) has been with him since birth, wearing glasses like him and helping him to come to terms with his vision impairment.

At two years old, Dexter had his fourteenth surgery where he lost vision in his right eye, registering him as severely vision impaired. After this diagnosis, he started to use a cane, so Scruffy got one too!

When Dexter was five years old, he asked his parents to help him create a book about space that featured him and his friends.

And so, Scruffy the Uffy Books were born – a collection of stories for vision impaired children and adults who like to read. And Scruffy is the star of the show!



Dexter in his space suit

On Dexter's 7th birthday his parents self-published Dexter's book in giant print, tactile and Braille. The book, **Dexter and Gracie go to Space**, is the first of eight published adventures for Dexter, Scruffy and friends!



Scruffy

Dexter has been the key figure in making these books, creating the character names, activities and adventures, along with doing some of the drawings.

TPFF was delighted to help Dexter by funding an iPad Pro with a drawing pencil, so Dexter could do the drawings for his books digitally.

Dexter says, **“My drawing iPad is epic! I like all the different features and the funky pens I can use as they give epic effects.”**

The iPad has also helped Dexter to do his school work including difficult maths sums and has provided him with a fun way to improve his handwriting.

“ This has made a huge difference to Dexter. We are hugely thankful to TPFF.

Julie-Ann, Dexter's mum.



Scruffy and his friends enjoying a hot chocolate!



THE POWELL FAMILY

FOUNDATION

**The Powell Family Foundation is a Charitable Incorporated
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