

# Be part of the Action



## Actionnaires: Unique clubs for unique children...

### **Inspiring**

13-year-old Kate has been visually impaired since birth. Last month, she represented Britain in the German Open Judo Championship organised by the National Paralympic Committee. She won a bronze medal.

### **Achieving**

Diarmuid has little sight in his right eye and none in his left, due to an accident when he was just four. He recently took part in a national schools competition where he swam in the 25 metre breast stroke and the 25 metre front crawl. He achieved first place in both races.

**Find out more about what you could do to support Britain's sports stars of the future inside...**

## Did you know that there are over 20,000 blind and partially sighted children and young people in the UK?\*

Many of these children are socially isolated as a result of their visual impairment, because they are not allowed the same opportunities as sighted children. Many cannot access leisure centres and are restricted at school due to their PE teachers' lack of understanding and experience of visual impairment.

### Unique clubs for unique children

Action for Blind People is an expert national organisation, ensuring visually impaired people get practical support in all aspects of their lives. This includes Actionnaires.

Actionnaires is the largest sports project for visually impaired children and young people in the UK. Our unique clubs allow them to take part in sport, make friends, keep fit and have fun. In a safe and supportive environment, the children are able to develop their social skills and confidence; they can learn to believe in their own abilities.

Currently we have 28 Actionnaires clubs in the UK and aim to have 56 clubs by 2010, but we need your help to achieve this.

### Changing children's lives

The success of the Actionnaires clubs is due to the partnerships that have been formed with organisations determined to increase opportunities for blind and partially sighted children and young people.

We currently receive support from a range of organisations including:

- BBC Children in Need
- British Blind Sport
- Local authority leisure services
- Sports development teams
- Local blind societies
- National sports governing bodies
- Social services
- Specialist visual impairment teachers and teams.



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\*Mann, D. 'Where's My Book?', RNIB, 2006

## How can you help?

There are lots of different ways that you can support our Actionnaires clubs. For example:

- Do you have a sporting venue? Could we use it for our clubs?
- Are you in the know? Could you help to promote Actionnaires to local people, including parents, schools and teachers?
- Do you have any sports coaching qualifications? Could you coach or volunteer at a club?
- Do you want a charity partner? Could you fund a club? Are you influential? Could you enlist celebrities to support and promote us?

“I think it’s fantastic to see blind and partially sighted children and young people being given the same sporting opportunities as their sighted friends. It is so important to enable these children to build self-confidence and realise their own potential. There should be nothing stopping Actionnaires kids potentially becoming sports heroes of our future. I’m glad to play a part helping Action for Blind People achieve this.”

John McGovern, Former European Cup winner and Nottingham Forest Captain.

### **Fitness, fun and friendship for free**

Actionnaires enables children and young people aged eight to 16 to try lots of different sports and activities, using adapted equipment. Under eights are very welcome to come with a parent and over 16s are encouraged to attend and take on a leadership role.

**Archery, athletics, basketball, cricket, football, goalball, judo, tag rugby, parachute games, swimming and much more!**

As well as regular club sessions in locations across the UK, children and young people can take part in sports festivals, competitions and events throughout the year.





## More than just a club...

Actionnaires clubs are usually based at local leisure centres which offer a large sports hall, swimming pool and other suitable facilities.

Each club has two qualified Club Co-ordinators. We also have coaches who are professionally trained to deliver specific sports sessions, allowing children to develop a range of skills across many sports.

Actionnaires clubs cater for all levels of sporting ability, including children with secondary disabilities.

Risk assessments of each activity are undertaken at each venue and trained first aiders are on site at all times. We have set procedures in place to ensure that the highest standards of health and safety are observed at all of our clubs. All staff working at Actionnaires are subject to an enhanced CRB check.

## How can we help you?

These are just some of the potential benefits of working with us:

**Accommodating:** We could enable you to broaden your client base and reach your disability targets, if you are able to provide affordable or free facilities for us. We are always looking for new venues for our clubs, particularly local leisure centres.

**Promoting:** As a national charity, Action for Blind People may be able to enhance the service that you offer and promote your services to parents of visually impaired children. You would have an opportunity to raise your profile through the excellent media coverage that we regularly receive about the clubs.

**Relating:** We can help you to build relationships with potential clients and sports stars of the future – many of our Actionnaires will be of an age to take part in the 2012 Paralympics.

**Learning:** We can provide your staff with Visual Awareness Training, to enable them to understand how to provide support to visually impaired colleagues and customers.

## Getting into the Action

If you are interested in working with Action for Blind People to get visually impaired children and young people off the sidelines, call our National Freephone Helpline on 0800 915 4666 or visit our website at [www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk/children](http://www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk/children)

## Meet the sports stars of the future...



### Kate

13-year-old Kate was born visually impaired. Last month she travelled to Germany to represent Britain in the German Open Judo Championship organised by the National Paralympic Committee.

It was the first overseas trip Kate had made without her parents. She was nervous on the day, knowing that everyone was watching and that the competition was being filmed. This didn't stop her giving her all in three fights however, and her courage paid off when she was awarded a bronze medal!

Kate has attended her local Actionnaires club from the age of eight. This was the first time she had met other visually impaired children, as she is the only visually impaired child at her school.

Kate says: "Actionnaires was where I got started. We went on a day trip to a judo club and at the end the coach asked if we had any questions. I put my hand up and said 'Yes, when can I come back?' That was five years ago. I now attend a mainstream judo club and train five times a week. I just need one more grade on my orange belt to move up to a green.

Actionnaires gives you the chance to try new things. If you feel you can't do something they always encourage you, but they don't push you too much. I also made loads of friends."

Kate's proud Mum says: "When Kate was very young, I saw another family who wrapped their visually impaired daughter up in cotton wool; it made me realise I didn't want that for Kate. I want her to have as many opportunities as possible. She now wants a career in judo and I want to fully support her with this. Actionnaires has opened a lot of doors for Kate. She wouldn't be doing what she's doing now if it wasn't for them."



## Diarmuid

Diarmuid has little sight in his right eye and nothing in his left due to an accident when he was aged just four.

He attends a mainstream school where opportunities for taking part in sports are limited for him due to the supervision he would need. His specialist teacher put him in touch with the Actionnaires team two years ago, and he has been attending his local club ever since.

Actionnaires allows Diarmuid to take part in sports that he doesn't normally get to do, such as archery and rugby. As he's playing with children like himself, the pace is just right and he has the confidence to take part – in school the pace is just too fast.

Diarmuid says: "Actionnaires is done in a way that makes it easy for blind people. Not all the activities are at the Sports Centre, we often do other things like going away to a climbing wall. It's good fun and you get to meet up with your friends. We went swimming with Actionnaires last month, it was brilliant; I especially loved the slide! Sometimes we have to push ourselves and it can be a bit of a challenge but it's not too hard, it's just enough."

Recently Diarmuid took part in a national schools competition in Tornby organised by British Blind Sport, where he swam in the 25m breast stroke and the 25m front crawl. He managed to get first place in both races – a fantastic achievement. Fingers crossed we will see him in the 2012 Paralympics!



## Action for blind people

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Website: [www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk](http://www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk)



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