



Ghaalib's very own fun machine!

Poorly youngster from Caterham has his wish granted by Starlight Children's Foundation

Like most boys his age, five year old Ghaalib Meyles from Caterham loves cars and robots. However, unlike his friends brave Ghaalib has had to spend much of the past two years in hospital battling a serious illness.

In 2009 Ghaalib was diagnosed with optic pathway glioma, which is a form of brain tumour. He underwent treatment but sadly relapsed and he is still receiving chemotherapy to fight the disease.

Although he has been very brave, Ghaalib finds hospital really boring and he is always looking for ways to keep entertained. He is treated at Royal Marsden Hospital and he loves the play staff at the hospital, who help to keep him cheerful and relaxed.

In addition to its wish granting programme, Starlight Children's Foundation also provides entertainment in hospitals and hospices across the UK. It recently launched its new Starlight Fun Centres, which are robot-shaped mobile entertainment units, and these were such a hit with Ghaalib that he wanted one of his very own!

The new units, which have been provided in children's wards across the country, contain a Nintendo Wii console, four Nintendo DSi's, DVD/ Blu-ray player, internet access and a flat screen TV. They were designed by world renowned furniture designer Tim Gosling and a study by Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust has found that they significantly reduce the amount of pain and anxiety experienced by poorly children as they undergo treatment.

As a result of his illness, Ghaalib has suffered some loss of sight. The bright yellow and blue Starlight Fun Centre is great for him because he can watch television and make use of the many games when he is in hospital and feeling unwell. He has enjoyed many hours playing on the Starlight Fun Centre and, now that he is able to spend more time at home, he really wanted one to take home with him!

A family friend referred Ghaalib to Starlight for a wish and he knew immediately what his wish would be! He told the charity that his greatest wish would be to have a Starlight Fun Centre, exactly like the ones that he has grown so fond of in hospital, at home with him.

His mother Laura said, "To have his wish for a Starlight Fun Centre granted would make such a difference to his life. He would be able to enjoy television whilst being tucked up in bed when poorly and it will make him much more comfortable."

Starlight arranged for Ghaalib's Fun Centre to be delivered to their home and his mum Laura kept its arrival a surprise from Ghaalib. When he came in to the family's living room to find the Starlight Fun Centre, he was completely overwhelmed! Since its appearance, Ghaalib has had lots of fun playing with his new robot, which he has named 'Thomas' – he has even given it a few hugs he loves it so much!

His mum Laura said, "Ghaalib loves his Starlight Fun Centre and he was so happy to come home and find it! Thank you so much Starlight for granting his wish – Ghaalib is going to have many happy years of fun and enjoyment!"

Information

To refer a child for a wish or to make a donation, please go online at www.starlight.org.uk. For every £1 you donate, 93p goes towards helping Starlight's very ill children.

For more information, please contact Henny Vere Nicoll at henny@starlight.org.uk / 020 7262 2881 # 231.

Starlight grants once-in-a-lifetime wishes for seriously and terminally ill children, restoring the magic and fun of childhood and giving the whole family happy memories to share, whatever the future holds.

Starlight also creates entertainment in every hospital and hospice throughout the UK. Sick children go to Starlight parties, laugh their way through pantomimes, go out on Starlight Escapes, play games and watch films on the Starlight Fun Centre, and enjoy the toys and puzzles of the Starlight Distraction Box. Happy children respond better to treatment and Starlight helps children to forget about their illness and simply have a bit of fun.