

Inspirational teenager with rare medical condition fulfils dream to have his book published

National children's charity Starlight grants Joseph's unique wish

Like most of his friends and classmates, twelve year old Joseph Wills from St. Neots in Cambridgeshire loves books and computer games. Yet, despite his young age, this summer Joseph will have the chance to fulfill his greatest ambition! With the help of Starlight Children's Foundation, Joseph will have his book, *The World*, published – a particularly remarkable feat given that Joseph has spent his whole life fighting a serious and extremely rare heart condition.

Soon after Joseph was born, his parents Caterina and Chris began to detect that something was not quite right with their little boy. He suffered from recurrent colds and infections and also felt 'floppy' and unable to support himself as he should. It was clear that his motor skills were not developing as they should. It was during a hospital stay at 10 months old that a heart murmur was discovered by doctors and Joseph was sent immediately to Gt Ormond St hospital for MRI scans. After these scans it was noticed that although his heart was working normally, his arteries throughout his body were tortuous, ie twisted and that he had hypermobile joints. The genetics team in Cambridge tested Joseph for various 'syndromes' that could possibly fit with his symptoms but drew a blank until 2006 when he was finally diagnosed with Arterial Tortuosity Syndrome (ATS), a newly discovered genetic syndrome.

The rare condition is a connective tissue disorder that affects the major arteries throughout the body and it means there is a high risk of infection, stroke and heart failure. There are only 100 cases of ATS reported worldwide and Joseph is the only child with the condition in the UK. As a result of the illness, Joseph has to spend a great deal of time in hospital and away from school, which is very challenging for him.

Ever since he was a little boy, Joseph has loved reading and making up stories. From a young age, his teachers have highlighted his talent for writing and he has said for years that his dream would be to have one of his stories published. Joseph finds that writing is an excellent way for him to express himself and he uses his stories and his blog (<http://josephwillsblog.blogspot.co.uk/>) to communicate with his peer group. Particularly, Joseph hopes to encourage young people to get writing. He also uses his blog to raise awareness of the effects of bullying as he has suffered himself at the hands of bullies.

Joseph started writing *The World*, which is a fast-paced sci-fi novel set in a sinister world, when he was eleven years old. Shortly after he completed the book, he was referred to Starlight for a wish by one of his doctors at Hinchingbrooke Hospital. Joseph decided to ask Starlight, which is the UK's leading wish granting charity for children with serious and terminal illnesses, to grant his wish to have *The World* published.

Starlight has been granting wishes for nearly three decades but never before has the charity received a wish for a book to be published! Starlight has never declined a child who is eligible for a wish and the team of Starlight wish granters was determined to make his dream come true! They contacted a number of publishers about Joseph's book and it was Live It Publishing, a partnership publishing company, which said it would love to publish *The World*!

Joseph and his family couldn't believe it when Starlight broke the exciting news that Joseph's book was going to be published! The family was so delighted that they generously decided to offer 10% of author royalties from the sales of *The World* to Starlight.

Joseph said, "Having dreamt of it for many years I couldn't believe it when I was told that Starlight was going to be able to grant my wish! I still can't believe that *The World* is going to be published and I am really grateful to Starlight and Live It Publishing for making my greatest wish come true. I am delighted that 10% of author royalties will be donated to Starlight, which I hope will enable the charity to grant the wishes of other children battling serious illness."

Joseph's mum Caterina said, "Joseph has always been enormously brave about his condition and he has never let it stand in his way. We are so proud of him and are absolutely thrilled that his dream is going to come true. It's testament to his determination and strength and we can't thank Starlight enough for enabling him to realise his greatest ambition."

Information

The World by Joseph Wills (ISBN: 978-1-906954-76-5) will be available for purchase on Monday 17th June 2013 from all good bookshops and online retailers including Amazon. 10% of Joseph Wills' author royalties from sales of *The World* will be donated to Starlight Children's Foundation.

For more information or to purchase *The World*, visit:

Joseph's blog <http://josephwillblog.blogspot.co.uk/>

The book can be purchased from Live It Publishing's online shop:

http://liveitshop.com/index.php?route=product/product&path=68&product_id=105

It can also be purchased on Amazon:

http://www.amazon.co.uk/The-World-Joseph-Wills/dp/1906954763/ref=sr_1_2?ie=UTF8&qid=1369129022&sr=8-2&keywords=the+world+joseph+wills

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For more information on Live It Publishing, contact 0845 388 1128/ info@liveitpublishing.com

Starlight Children's Foundation (www.starlight.org.uk)

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 provides entertainment in hospitals and hospices across the UK.

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.

Live It Publishing (www.liveitpublishing.com)

Live It Publishing is an independent and inspirational partnership publisher that are passionate about discovering and supporting new Authors whose ground-breaking books have the potential to change people, their lives and the world around them.