



Disney is a dream come true for Joseph!

Nine-year-old Joseph Breslin from Royton near Oldham recently had his dearest wish to visit Disneyland Paris granted by Starlight Children's Foundation, the UK's leading wish granting charity for children with serious and terminal illnesses.

In January 2008, Joseph was diagnosed with the rare complex condition, MECP2 duplication syndrome, which is a congenital genetic disorder that causes severe developmental delay, seizures which don't always respond to medication, feeding difficulties, limited mobility and recurrent respiratory infections that require many hospital visits.

The genetic disorder has meant that Joseph, who is described by his parents as a "happy little boy", experiences lots of difficulties and has to use a wheelchair. Rebecca, his mother, says that Joseph loves being outside with all the family and he shows his happiness through smiling and waving his arms. He especially enjoys sensory atmospheres and loves flashing lights and music.

Joseph's Starlight wish was to go to Disneyland Paris with his family. Joseph loves Disney's Toy Story and whenever he watches it at home he signs 'more', wanting to watch it again! Joseph enjoys spending time with the whole family and it was important that Joseph's wish was something special that he could share with his parents Neal and Rebecca and his brother Patrick, aged 12.

To make his wish come true, Starlight planned a wonderful trip to Disneyland Paris for Joseph and his family in July. To get to the world-famous Disney resort, the family flew from their nearest airport, Manchester, to Paris. Starlight had arranged for Joseph to have a special travel chair, which would be more supportive for him during the flight without his wheelchair. The flight attendants were very helpful and even let Joseph's brother Patrick meet the pilot!

Joseph and his family had been booked into the luxury Sequoia Lodge, which has stunning views of Lake Disney and is a beautifully-themed forest lodge just minutes from the park. Its proximity to all the excitements of the park meant that they could make the most of their Disneyland experience and they had a wonderful time, soaking up the atmosphere and enjoying all the activities and entertainment on offer.

One of the highlights of the holiday for all the family was meeting all the Disney characters, particularly Mickey and Minnie Mouse, at the special character breakfast in 'Café Mickey'. Joseph loved staying up late to watch the show, with all its bright lights and fireworks; according to his mum, he was so excited he didn't stop flapping his arms throughout in happiness!

On their return from Disneyland Paris, Rebecca said, "Joseph had a wonderful and magical time. Everything you arranged went to plan and was very well organised... it was magical! We cannot thank Starlight enough for arranging all this for our family. We all had a fantastic time and will never forget it."

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.