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Press Release

for immediate release

What's **NEXT** for these two?

Down's Heart Group hopes that including two children with Down's Syndrome in the Next Generation Children's Competition final will put a positive face on disability.

Woburn Abbey Safari Park, 21st December 2009, 10am until 6pm. The 100 finalists from the Next Generation Children's Competition include 2 children with Down's Syndrome, both of whom have been through open heart surgery.



5 year old Harvey from Derbyshire was diagnosed with a congenital heart defect aged 4 and underwent open heart surgery in July 2008.

He is now doing well and attends the same mainstream school as his older brothers Louis and Joshua, where they will be joined next year by sister Millie.

Harvey's mum Lisa says she entered Harvey "To try and get across to people that you don't have to be afraid. I really hope prospective parents faced with a high risk of Down's Syndrome will completely disregard termination when they see how beautiful our kids are. If I thought that a handful of babies had been saved through doing this, then I would be happy!"

7 year old Hannah from West Midlands was only 8 weeks old when she had open heart surgery, having been briefly home for a week for her christening.

She is big sister to Rebecca and Rachel and they all attend the same mainstream school.

Hannah recently made her Brownie Promise using Makaton signing and her mum Jo says "I'm very proud of this achievement and the fact that the Brownie Pack welcome her with open arms and without support. She really is loved there."



Penny Green, Director of national charity Down's Heart Group will be joining the finalists at Woburn at the invitation of one of the families. She said "I am absolutely delighted that 2 children with Down's Syndrome are in the finalists and the fact that they have both been through open heart surgery makes this even more amazing. All too often a diagnosis of Down's Syndrome is presented in a very negative way and if the

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child has additional complications such as a heart defect, the news is often delivered almost like a death sentence. This competition has provided the opportunity to show just how wonderful children with Down's Syndrome are. Despite all the health issues they have been through, I think you'll agree that both Harvey and Hannah are fitting models for the Next brand. I am thoroughly looking forward to meeting both the children and their families and spending the day with them. This is a wonderful launch to the awareness campaign that I am undertaking next year in memory of my son."

Further Details

- The Final is a Winter Party and will include a fitting for a party outfit to be worn that day, a photograph taken by a professional photographer, a dance workshop with Flawless and party tea.
- Next Generation Children's Competition is being held to find two children aged between 4 and 7 years who can represent the spirit and essence of Next's childrenswear.
- The 100 finalists will be judged by a panel of judges comprised of Next's Childrenswear Director, Next's Art Director, an Editor from Express Newspapers and the Director of Urban Angels Children's Modelling Agency.
- The judges will select as the winners the two Finalists who they feel best represent the Next brand.
- The winners will be announced at the event on 21 December 2009.
- The two winners will each win a year's contract with Urban Angel's Modelling Agency and will take part in a Next Directory fashion shoot.
- The prize also includes a shopping spree in a Next store, where each winner can choose outfits to a value of £200 for their spring wardrobe.
- All finalists will take home the professional photograph taken of them at the Final.
- The Promoter is Next Group Plc, registered office Desford Road, Enderby, Leicester, LE19 4AT registered in England 35161.
- Woburn Abbey is approximately one hour's drive from London, Oxford, Cambridge and Birmingham and has been the home of the Dukes of Bedford for nearly 400 years. Set in 3,000 acres of beautiful deer park which include 22 acres of informal gardens, the house is full of unique history including antique furniture and art. The Safari Park opened in 1970 and today it is an award winning attraction which makes a valuable contribution to conservation.

Facts

- Approximately 1 in every 700 babies born in the UK will have Down's Syndrome.
- About 47% of these babies will have congenital heart disease.
- Most heart conditions are now operable with extremely good success rates.
- Down's Heart Group provides information and support specifically tailored to the needs of these families.
- Currently over 90% of all pregnancies with a pre-natal diagnosis of Down's Syndrome will be terminated.
- Down's Heart Group is registered charity 1011413

Contacts

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