

# Edinburgh youngster leaves everyone speechless with on-stage dance performance



Evan Glass from Edinburgh who was expected never to walk, talk or eat after battling through the first two hours of his life, is leaving everyone speechless with his on-stage dance performances.

Officially, Evan has been diagnosed with mild cerebral palsy, mild ataxia, ADHD and autism, but there is seemingly no medically recorded set of symptoms that describe his condition so doctors have named it Evan Glass Syndrome.

The 11-year-old has been fascinating and defying medical experts with his physical resilience after numerous bleak diagnoses from birth now with the help of the Arts Programme of a well-established children's charity, Evan has transformed the way he moves through dance.

Edinburgh Children's Hospital Charity (ECHC) has teamed up with Dance Base as part of their Arts Programme to offer lessons to children and young people receiving treatment at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children that support their physiotherapy treatment.



Danni Glass, Evan's mother, said: "I was hit with the news that every mother fears after giving birth – I was told that my baby wouldn't make it.

"It was an incredibly stressful time, but he's proved us all wrong.

"Evan has come on leaps and bounds – quite literally – since then. He just lives for sport; he surfs, horse rides, swims, and does judo, parkour, football and dancing. It's so moving to see how far he's come."

Last month, on 26<sup>th</sup> April, Evan performed in front of 360 people at the ECHC's Annual Sports Quiz and gave an impromptu speech to the crowd.

In the crowd were Celtic Captain Scott Brown and boxing pro Alex Arthur and who befriended Evan on the night.

Danni added: "It's dancing that has helped him most. His movement could be quite stiff and robotic, but since attending lessons we've noticed a huge difference in his everyday movement – it's a lot more fluid and natural-looking.

“His balance has really improved, too, and he’s even doing shimmies now – that was just unthinkable before.”

Evan’s lessons with Dance Base focus on safely preparing the body to move, working with rhythm, expression and fun.

Fiona O’Sullivan, Arts Programme Manager at EHC, said: “Evan is testimony the fact that our Arts Programme doesn’t just provide a great distraction for children and young people in hospital – it creates tangible results which actually help with treatments and ultimately improve health.”

Fiona added: “We were all so proud to see how far Evan has come with the amazing help of Dance Base.

“There is so much thought and care for the individual that goes into the dance lessons and it’s truly remarkable to see how well they work.”

Christina Liddell, Evan’s teacher at Dance Base, said: “Dance is about opening up new horizons and possibilities and working with Evan just reaffirms how true this is.

“It’s simply a delight teaching Evan and I look forward to it every week. It’s so rewarding how he takes on board all my advice and to see how much it benefits him in lessons and in everyday life.”

EHC’s Arts Programme is growing rapidly, from 100 activities in 2016, to 400 in 2017, and a projected 700 in 2018. Its rapid growth is seeing it compete with the equivalent programme at Great Ormond Street Hospital and has ambitions to become the biggest and best in the UK.

Danni added: “Dance base is great for Evan’s social life, too. The sessions create a relaxing environment that make it easy for him to build friendships.

“He just forgets everything when he dances and loses his anxieties.

“Evan’s my miracle boy. He wants to be prime minister one day and he’s proved us all wrong so far in life that I wouldn’t rule it out.”

ECHC’s Arts Programme will play a key role in the new children’s hospital when it opens in Little France later this year.