

PEBBLES PROJECT

Donor Impact Report A Story of Hearing and Hope

Dear Beat,

Thank you for your generous support in providing a child with the gift of hearing through new equipment apparatus for his cochlear implant. Your contribution has changed more than one life — it has opened doors to learning, connection, and joy.

Meet Charlton Brink

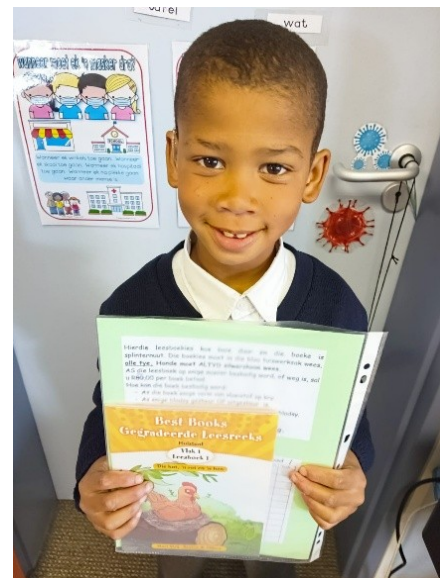
Age: 9 years 11 months

Location: Stellenbosch, Cape Town

Charlton's mother had a healthy pregnancy and delivered Charlton at 39 weeks. He was born 2.91kg and reported healthy. There were no feeding difficulties or developmental delays noted in his development as he reached all his milestones at adequate stages within typical time periods. Charlton lives with his mother, Nadine Brink, as well as some of his extended family members. They are a total of 9 people living in the same household. Charlton has a strong emotional bond with his grandmother and views her as his 'favourite person in the world'.

Life before the implant

Before receiving a cochlear implant in 2023, Charlton faced daily challenges in mainstream school, at the Pebbles Project After-School Club, and at home. He had severe challenges in the classroom where he would act out in aggression towards his peers and educator. He did not respond to all instructions that were given to him and often needed to be reprimanded for doing the wrong thing during activities. His academic progress reports were poor as he achieved low marks and showed no interest in learning and participating.



Charlton attends the School Enrichment Programme (SEP) at Pebbles Project and the special educational needs team queried whether Charlton's behaviour and poor progress was due to possible deficits in hearing. In 2023, it was confirmed that Charlton had hearing loss and was scheduled to receive a cochlear implant.

Charlton's early hearing loss likely had a significant impact on several aspects of his cognitive and scholastic development. From a developmental perspective, adequate auditory language exposure during the first five years of life is crucial for the development of phonological awareness, language processing, and the building of a complex linguistic network. In Charlton's case, the lack of adequate access to sound during this sensory-sensitive period likely had a limiting effect on the development of key skills such as auditory memory, phonemic discrimination, vocabulary acquisition, and abstract language comprehension.

Life after the implant

Since receiving his cochlear implant at the age of 7, Charlton has gone from strength to strength. He was transferred to a mainstream public school where staff are specifically trained to facilitate learning to children with hearing impairments. He receives support from his family members as well as from the staff at Pebbles Project. His attitude towards schooling is very positive and he looks forward to attending school. He is not receiving any assessment concessions and functioning alongside his peers in the classroom. His behaviour at school is described as well-mannered and adaptable. His academic progress reports now reveal codes of 6's and 7's (highest achievements). He also does not present with any indications of anxiety, fear or emotional disturbances and he is currently thriving in his environments.

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The bilateral placement of a cochlear implant played a key role in restoring auditory access and may have a stabilizing effect on his later learning development. His language processing, verbally and in written language currently indicate functional progress. These improvements suggest that the implant has had a positive impact, although some difficulties still persist due to the delayed onset of auditory stimulation.

Impact of your donation

His current school, Carel du Toit Primary School, only provides teaching to foundation levels; therefore, Grade R-Grade 3. Charlton therefore needs to transition to a new school in 2026 and it was identified that his cochlear equipment pieces needed replacement before the transition could be applied.

Thanks to your donation, Charlton's equipment pieces are brand new, allowing for extended positive growth in his developmental process. His application for school has been submitted and the family, including Charlton, is awaiting news on his successful application to attend as Grade 4 learner in 2026.



The Transformation:

- Improved Communication: Charlton can now hear his teacher clearly and participate in classroom discussions.
- Increased Confidence: Friends and family report that he is more talkative, cooperative with peers and engaged in play.
- Better Learning Opportunities: Teachers have noted improvement in Charlton's attention, eagerness to learn and progress in reading and writing.
- Emotional Well-Being: For the first time, Charlton feels fully included and has not experienced bullying since before his confirmed hearing loss.

Why This Matters

Your generosity did not just provide new equipment pieces to Charlton's cochlear implant — it gives children like Charlton a chance to thrive, learn, and dream big.

Thank you for being part of Charlton's journey. Your kindness and support makes a lasting difference.

Please share this story with friends and colleagues who might also want to help transform a child's life.

Best wishes,
Leanne Fleischmann
Inclusive and Specialised Education Manager
The Pebbles Project Trust

