



Press Release: 1st February 2019

The Bingo Association donates Variety Sunshine Coach to Zoë's Place Hospice, Middlesbrough

A Variety Sunshine Coach, was presented by The Bingo Association Chief Executive, Miles Baron, and Anna Turley, Member of Parliament (MP) for Redcar, to staff at Zoë's Place Baby Hospice in Middlesbrough. This Sunshine Coach is the 25th donated by The Bingo Association since 2014.

Zoë's Place Baby Hospice is a charity providing palliative, respite and end of life care to babies and infants aged from birth to five years suffering from life-limiting or life-threatening conditions. The charity opened the first Hospice in Liverpool in 1995. In 2004 a second Zoë's Place was opened in Middlesbrough and in 2011 the third opened in Coventry. The hospice in Middlesbrough provides respite care for 35 babies and children, many of whom have highly complex genetic conditions and illnesses and require different levels of 24-hour support on a one to one basis.

The new specially adapted Sunshine Coach will be regularly used by the nursing team to take the children out for special days away from the hospice without the worry and cost of hiring buses. There are 7 children whom must always travel in their wheelchairs. Also, their volunteer drivers can help the parents travel to and from the hospice and attend hospital visits with their children.

Thanks to the fundraising efforts by staff and customers of Bingo clubs like Beacon Bingo in Redcar, The Bingo Association have raised over £1.3 million in support of Variety, the Children's Charity and have agreed to extend their fundraising efforts for an additional year into 2019.

Miles Baron, Chief Executive of The Bingo Association said:

"More than 350 bingo clubs across the UK including the local Bingo club here in Redcar, helped make this very worthy donation of a Sunshine Coach possible. I am especially pleased to be here with Anna Turley in her Redcar constituency, who has been such a great supporter of the bingo industry in her role as Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Bingo since October 2016. We are delighted to have now raised over £1.3 million for Variety which has exceeded our expectations!

Being able to enhance the lives of very young children at a hospice such as Zoe's place has been so rewarding."

Frances Lang, Chief Executive at Variety, the Children's Charity said:

"The generosity of The Bingo Association, and the clubs across the country have directly touched the lives of many disadvantaged and disabled children around the UK. We are truly grateful for the Association's continued support and delighted that the organisation has agreed to donate this Sunshine Coach to Zoe's Place Hospice in Middlesbrough, in this our 70th year."

Anna Turley, MP for Redcar and Chair of the APPG for Bingo said:

"Zoe's Place is an amazing local charity who provide the most special gift of love, compassion, and excellent care for families in really heart-breaking circumstances. I know they work extremely hard to raise funds to continue their work and the bus will be a fantastic addition to the service they can offer the children and their families.

"I would like to say a massive thank you to The Bingo Association, Variety and bingo players across the country whose generosity has delivered this gift. As Chair of the All Party Group for Bingo in Parliament and a friend of Beacon Bingo in Redcar, I have seen first-hand how bingo halls thrive on a brilliant community spirit. Their charity work with Variety is a shining example of that and I am so grateful to them for helping out children in our area facing the shortest of lives."

- Ends -

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Notes to editors:

About Variety, the Children's Charity

Variety, the Children's Charity, believes that neither disability nor disadvantage should prevent a child from realising their full potential. Since setting up its UK division in 1949, the charity has raised over £200 million and supported over 800,000 children affected by ill health, disadvantage and disability.

With a focus on helping children make the most of their childhood, Variety the Children's Charity, provides support through four core programmes:

Mobility - providing specialist equipment including customised electric wheelchairs and bespoke Sunshine Coaches for schools ensuring children develop a greater sense of freedom and adventure

Health - equipping children's hospitals with the latest medical technology and life changing aids

Education - equipping Youth Clubs and young people's organisations – facilitating new skills and developing greater self-worth

Great Days Out - providing new experiences through educational programmes and exciting outings

Variety, the Children's Charity, launched in the United States in 1928 and is the oldest international children's charity. It has divisions across 13 countries (United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Jersey, Republic of Ireland, France, Israel, Japan, Hong Kong, New Zealand, Australia, Barbados and Eastern Caribbean) helping children at the local community level.

Since its beginning, Variety has designated as "Chief Barker" the person elected by the Trustees of the Charity to act as Chairman of the Board. It is in honorary position. "Chief Barker" reflects the charity's Showbusiness roots; these included circus, from which the term emanates.

Since 2009, Variety has partnered with SportsAid to support young sporting talent from different Paralympic disciplines, by providing essential items such as sport kits and equipment, to support with travel costs and accommodation. Of the 55 disabled athletes Variety has supported, 17 were chosen as part of Team GB for the 2012 London Paralympics and included Gold Medal winners and MBE honourees Ollie Hynd and Johnnie Peacock.

Variety is a registered charity in England and Wales (209259) and Scotland (SC038505)

For more information or to donate to Variety, please visit www.variety.org.uk

Follow Variety, the Children's Charity on twitter @VarietyGB or www.facebook.com/VarietyGB

About The Bingo Association

The Bingo Association is the trade association of the licensed bingo industry in Great Britain, representing the proprietors licensed under The Gambling Act 2005. www.bingoassociation.co.uk.

There are 51 proprietors in membership. Membership profile ranges from the large operators, including Buzz (124 clubs) and Mecca (82 clubs), to smaller operators such as Majestic Bingo (16) Beacon Bingo (6 clubs) and many single unit businesses.

The bingo sector directly employs over 13,000 people in the UK. Over 3 million customers made over 40m visits to bingo clubs last year.

About Zoë's Place Baby Hospice

Zoë's Place Baby Hospice is a charity providing palliative, respite and end of life care to babies and infants aged from birth to 5 years suffering from life-limiting or life-threatening conditions. The charity opened the first Hospice in Liverpool in 1995. In 2004 a second Zoë's Place was opened in Middlesbrough and in 2011 the third opened in Coventry. The hospice in Middlesbrough provides respite care for 35 babies and children, many of whom have highly complex genetic conditions and illnesses and require different levels of 24-hour support on a one to one basis.