



Press Release: Wednesday 22nd May 2019:

The Bingo Association donates Variety Sunshine Coach to Sir Charles Parsons School in Newcastle Upon Tyne

A Variety Sunshine Coach has been presented by The Bingo Association's Chief Executive Miles Baron to pupils at Sir Charles Parsons School in Newcastle Upon Tyne. The Sunshine Coach is the 26th to be donated by The Bingo Association in the last four years. Also in attendance at the presentation were Mike Smith, Operations Support Director from Buzz Bingo alongside representatives from Buzz Bingo Newcastle and Wallsend.

Sir Charles Parsons School is a special school that caters for 182 students aged 11-19 years with profound and complex learning difficulties. A significant number of its students have mobility issues and 26 are wheelchair users. The new specially adapted Sunshine Coach will replace their 16-year-old minibus, which has finally reached the end of its useful life. The new minibus will be used extensively every school day, as well as during the holidays and for after-school clubs.

Variety's Sunshine Coaches have helped improve the lives of thousands of disabled or disadvantaged children across the UK. The coaches enable schools to take children on education and recreational days out allowing children to explore places they would otherwise never have visited. Earlier this month, Variety donated their 5,600th Sunshine Coach in the UK.

Karen Hamilton, Headteacher, Sir Charles Parsons School, said:

"Our students are so excited by the arrival of the new minibus. It will be used extensively every school day, as well as during the holidays and after-school clubs. Students rely on using the school minibus for residential and day visits, summer club visits to the coast, curriculum visits to art centres, other schools for sports competitions and matches, and work experience opportunities, college visits and courses. These have been significantly reduced in recent months due to the age and 'health' problems of our old minibus.

"The Friends of Sir Charles Parsons School' (which is the schools registered charity) raised half the funds for the new bus through regular fundraising activities such as sponsored events and coffee morning. However, if we'd had to raise all the funds ourselves for a new bus it would have taken over two years, during which time students would have missed out on life changing experiences. The support from Variety, the Children's Charity, The Bingo Association and Buzz Bingo has been invaluable."



Jo Carter, Director of Fundraising, Marketing and Comms, Variety, said:

“The huge generosity of The Bingo Association continues to overwhelm us. The support of The Bingo Association’s members and customers has directly funded the donation of 26 Sunshine Coaches in the past four years, making a real and tangible difference to thousands of disadvantaged and disabled children around the UK.

“Today’s donation will mean that pupils at the Sir Charles Parsons School will continue to be able to travel daily to competitions, curriculum visits, after school clubs and exciting days out.”

Miles Baron, Chief Executive of The Bingo Association, said:

“I would like to thank the members, like Buzz Bingo, who are present today, for the incredible support and generosity of their customers and staff. Customers from more than 340 bingo clubs across the UK have made this very worthy donation of a Sunshine Coach possible.

“We have now raised over £1.3 million for Variety in the past four years – a truly incredible amount – and it is brilliant to see that this has such a fantastic, direct impact on improving the lives of thousands of sick and disadvantaged children around the UK.”

- ENDS -

For further information please contact:

The Bingo Association on 01582 860921

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

Notes to editors

About Variety, the Children’s Charity

Variety believes that neither disability nor disadvantage should prevent a child from realising their full potential. This year, Variety will celebrate its 70th anniversary in the UK, having been founded in October 1949. In this time, the charity has supported almost one million disabled and disadvantaged children.



With a focus on helping children make the most of their childhood, Variety provides support in the following five ways:

- Through the provision of bespoke **Sunshine Coaches**, making it possible for children to get out and about so that they can learn practical life skills and enjoy trips out to places they otherwise couldn't get to
- Through the provision of **customised wheelchairs**, helping to increase independence and improve medical outcomes
- Through the provision of **specialist disability equipment** to individuals and organisations in ways that will make the biggest difference
- Through the **delivery of the Variety Great Days Out programme**, creating memorable experiences through educational initiatives and exciting outings
- Through the design of specialist **projects to transform the facilities of schools and children's hospitals**

Variety 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 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)

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.

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) Castle Bingo (13) and many single site operators.

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.

W: www.bingoassociation.co.uk.