

March 15, 2017

Financial Management Committee  
City of Burnaby  
4949 Canada Way  
Burnaby, BC V5G 1M2

**RE: Variety Kids Can Project**

Dear Chair & Members,

Variety - The Children's Charity of BC is seeking a \$10,000 grant to support our new Variety Kids Campaign in 2017/2018. Whether it's the ability to succeed in school, at play, or the simple activities of day-to-day life, Variety's goal is to improve the quality of life for children who have special needs and support them in their unique development.

Research supports that early intervention increases the developmental, educational and social gains for children with special needs and reduces the potential for secondary problems later in life. While much has been done in regards to health promotion for children and families, accessibility to services is still a problem. This is where Variety - the Children's Charity of BC steps in.

Variety BC helps over 1600 children in need each year and spends an average of \$2,500 for each child per year. Families that require our assistance fall just above the poverty line, bringing in an average combined family income of about \$40,000. In Metro Vancouver, 47% of the annual income of a two-parent, two-child family is spent on housing, leaving families with little economic security, struggling to care for one or more children with special needs. Recognizing that the need for our services continue to rise, we are launching the Variety Kids Campaign to raise \$2,500,000 to help an additional 1,000 children.

We are excited that the campaign has already received a leadership gift of \$1,000,000 from the Milan and Maureen Ilich Foundation and look forward to partnering with the City of Burnaby to help better serve our local community. On behalf of Variety's board of directors, I would like to extend an invitation to all members of the City of Burnaby's Financial Management Committee to attend the campaign launch event on Tuesday, March 28<sup>th</sup>. We will forward to you a formal invitation via email with more details and a link to R.S.V.P.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our request. Enclosed is our proposal for funding. Please contact Meghan Bradner, Manager, Major Gifts & Recognition at 604.268.3896 (or by email at [meghan.bradner@variety.bc.ca](mailto:meghan.bradner@variety.bc.ca)) if you have any questions or require more detailed information.

Sincerely,



Kristy Gill  
Chief Executive Officer, CEO

ENCLOSURE



# Variety Kids Can

Submitted to: City of Burnaby

March 15, 2017

Anna Domagas  
Development Officer  
Variety - The Children's Charity  
4300 Still Creek Drive  
Burnaby, BC V5C 6C6  
604.268.3883

## Executive Summary

Variety - The Children's Charity of BC is seeking a grant for the Variety Kids Can campaign which aims to extend our support to an additional 1,000 children with special needs in BC.

Since 1966 Variety BC has been providing direct help to families who need financial assistance in order to access vital equipment and support services for children 0-19 years of age living in BC or the Yukon, who has a qualified need (medical/developmental) as recognized by a designated professional, and whose financial circumstance limits their ability to afford the item or service required for their health and development.

Our goal is to connect children and youth with special needs to the services they need as early as possible by addressing accessibility and covering the associated costs to ensure that the children receive the equipment and support they need at a time when it can have the biggest impact on their development and future opportunities. Funding in the amount of \$10,000 is requested to support more families in the City of Burnaby, and to address the urgent and growing need for our services in this community. Your contribution will have an immediate and lasting impact on the life of every child who benefits from this campaign.

## Statement of Need

The lifelong benefits of early intervention and support for children with developmental disabilities are well documented. The earlier a child's special needs is not only diagnosed but also addressed, the more likely the child and family will experience meaningful results. While much progress has been made in the development of new and improved equipment, therapies, and specialized programs, the problem Variety strives to address is accessibility.

In 2016 Variety helped 109 children (and their families) in Burnaby totaling \$305,502 – numbers which have almost doubled since the previous year when Variety spent \$164,502 to help 68 families.

Faced with an unexpected and unknown future, parents of children who have special needs are overwhelmed by the costs of care, the pressures of providing for their families and the demands of parenting. In addition to medical, rehabilitation and other direct expenses that are often beyond what is covered by the healthcare system, families also face opportunity costs, as parents and family members must often give up or limit their employment in order to care for children with diagnosed medical conditions or developmental disabilities. Many children and families sit on lengthy waitlists to receive government funded services, missing or delaying the opportunity to fully benefit from early intervention support. For children with special needs, support is essential, early intervention is critical, and the parents we serve simply can't afford what's imperative for their child's development. This reality occurs every day. They need help and they come to Variety.

Such was the case for the Hinton family. Oliver and Elliott were born with a form of muscular dystrophy and require leg braces that must be replaced yearly as the boys grow. These custom orthotics would have cost parents Jen and Mike an astounding \$3,500 a pair for a total of \$7000 each year.

*“As my husband and I sat down to consider how much all of this was going to cost us, our hearts sank because we realized we couldn’t possibly afford it. My husband works incredibly hard for us, but the cost of living in Vancouver is very high and we had no idea how we could ever afford to give our special guys all the help that they need. It was horrible to think that as parents we couldn’t help our kids.” – Jen*

With help from Variety, Oliver and Elliott are able to run, jump and be active like other boys their age.

## Program Description

The Variety Kids Can Campaign will raise \$2,500,000 to help and additional 1,000 children in BC. Contributions to the campaign will ensure that children in communities throughout Metro Vancouver and across British Columbia will receive the following vital services and equipment to aid in their physical, mental, and emotional development:

- Mobility, communication, and adaptive equipment such as power and manual wheelchairs, hearing aids, orthotics, and standing walkers to give children their freedom and independence
- Life-saving medication and supplies such as diabetic supplies and feeding pumps for children who cannot be fed orally
- Specialized therapies such as speech & language, occupational, and physical therapies
- Tuition to specialized schools and tutoring bursaries for children with learning disabilities
- Counseling services for children and youth facing mental health challenges

## Goals & Objectives

Through the Variety Kids Can campaign we hope to give these children the support they need to succeed in the adult world and the opportunity to grow into their best selves - inspired to brave more challenging times, and energized to become the leaders of tomorrow, affecting others positively the way they have been affected by the generosity of others.

Giving children with special needs access to the equipment, tools, services, and specialized educational programs they need can significantly increase their ability to integrate into future social environments, including school, community, and employment.

Families caring for one or more children with special needs often experience frustration, stress, disappointment, helplessness and social isolation. When a child with special needs receives support



early on, it impacts not only the child but can also improve the wellbeing of the entire family. By helping to alleviate some of the pressures and equipping parents with the tools and knowledge to help their child can further affect the development of the special needs child by building a strong, positive, and supportive environment

More specifically, our main goals are:

- To improve the quality of life and enhance the development of children with special needs
- To improve the home environment and family dynamic by providing support and assistance to the children's families
- To lay the foundation for children and their families to have greater opportunities for full participation in society

Variety has been providing direct help to children for over 50 years. Children like Thaddeus who was born premature at 31 weeks and weighed only four pounds. Joint contractures at birth prevented him from straightening his arms and legs, and was diagnosed with Central Core Myopathy – a disease weakening his muscles. Variety helped to cover the cost of an orthotic back brace (\$2,358) to hold his spine and prevent a scoliosis curve from progressing when he was only 15 months old, but the biggest assistance came from physiotherapy (an average of \$2,000 each year from 2 – 4 years of age) and a specialized tricycle (\$3,100) to give him increased strength and mobility. Now, 8-year-old Thaddeus can participate in wheelchair basketball, racing, and sledge hockey, and is living proof that early intervention can transform a child's life.

*"Without the help of Variety, Thaddeus wouldn't be the strong and independent boy he is now."* – Candace (mother to Thaddeus)

Thaddeus and his family are just one of thousands of families across British Columbia who reach out to Variety each year. The City of Burnaby's investment of \$10,000 will promote inclusion and equal rights through accessibility, and ensure that Variety can help children with special needs not only survive, but also to thrive.

## Budget

### Revenues

*Foundations	\$	1,500,000
Fundraising Events	\$	550,000
Individual Donors	\$	250,000
Corporate Donors	\$	200,000
	\$	<u>2,500,000</u>

### Expenses

Mobility & Adaptive Equipment	\$	1,250,000
Life-Saving Medication & Supplies	\$	500,000
Specialized Therapies	\$	400,000
Educational Tuition & Bursaries	\$	250,000
Counseling	\$	100,000
	\$	<u>2,500,000</u>

Staffing, marketing, administration, and fundraising costs will be coming out of Variety's general budget.

\*\$1,000,000 foundation revenues have already been confirmed.

## Evaluation

Variety will conduct a 12-month follow-up with all grant recipients to collect feedback and measure the impact that grants have had on their child's health and the family overall. Data obtained will seek to measure improvements in a child's:

- Physical and emotional well-being
- Independence (personal control, choices, competence, performance, education, and personal skill)
- Interpersonal relations with family and friends
- Community integration and participation

Participation is not mandatory. To protect the privacy of grantees, all responses will remain anonymous.