

Wheelchair costumes turn kids into superheroes

Did you ever dream of being a superhero when you were younger? This man runs a charity that helps all children make that dream a reality.

Tasks

Do the preparation task first. Then watch the video and do the exercise. You can also read the transcript.

Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–h) with the vocabulary (1–8).

Vocabulary

1. awkwardness
2. to break down barriers
3. non-profit (organisation)
4. spinal muscular atrophy
5. to dress up
6. to be supportive
7. to bridge a gap
8. to overcome something

Definition

- a. to defeat or succeed in controlling or dealing with something
- b. the feeling of being difficult to deal with and embarrassing
- c. to connect two things or to make the difference between them smaller
- d. to improve understanding and communication between people
- e. giving help and encouragement
- f. not intended to make a profit, but to make money for a social purpose
- g. to put on special clothes to change your appearance
- h. a genetic disease that affects part of the nervous system

Task 1

Are the sentences true or false? Circle the correct answer.

	Answer	
1. Ryan Weimer feels that most people are comfortable around those with disabilities.	True	False
2. Ryan knew a lot about wheelchair disabilities before his son got spinal muscular atrophy.	True	False
3. Ryan started Magic Wheelchair to help his son with a Halloween costume.	True	False
4. The first thing Ryan's team built was a spaceship.	True	False
5. Magic Wheelchair builds costumes all year round.	True	False
6. Magic Wheelchair's designs are based on the wishes of each individual child.	True	False
7. Ryan says that some children may only have one chance to experience Magic Wheelchair.	True	False
8. Ryan says that the important thing about Magic Wheelchair is that it gives children and families an experience to remember.	True	False

Discussion

How did the video make you feel?

Transcript

Ryan Weimer: Normally there's this awkwardness around disability. But with that costume on there, that changed how people saw my son. They saw him first before they saw his disability. It just helps break down that barrier. 'Magic Wheelchair' is a non-profit that builds epic costumes for amazing kiddos in wheelchairs.

Magic Wheelchair started when my son was three years old. Halloween rolled around and he wanted to be a pirate. We were new to the whole disabilities and wheelchair thing. We didn't know anything about spinal muscular atrophy. I saw him sitting in his wheelchair and [thought] 'Ah, we could dress him up as a pirate – be a pirate in a wheelchair. Let's ... Let's build a ship.'

We have made probably about 40 different costumes. We have teams right now, all over the country. We have a team in France and [are] working on a team in Australia. We're just gonna (going to) keep on boarding teams cos (because) we wanna (want to) build year round.

It's hard to build for people that are in wheelchairs. But it ultimately starts with the kid, it's whatever they want to be and then we make it a reality.

Halloween was kind of our initial push, but we're seeing like Comic Con, right? I mean, what's cool about that community of CosPlay – that's a very supportive community. The cold reality of childhood diseases are some of them won't be around for next Halloween, so let's find something that we can do while they're here with us, so they have these ... they have these great memories and that their ... their families have memories when they're gone. It's almost like a cure for the day cos (because) they don't see the wheelchair, they just see these amazing kids, and it bridges gaps and overcomes that awkwardness that we have in society. They're ... star of the show. It's awesome to see.

Answers

Preparation task

1. b
2. d
3. f
4. h
5. g
6. e
7. c
8. a

Task 1

1. False
2. False
3. True
4. False
5. False
6. True
7. True
8. True