

## Introduction

Children with disabilities are rights bearers and, as such, should be enabled to participate and be included in social and cultural life; including opportunities to participate in sport (United Nations 2006). However, the complex interplay of organisational constraints, inequitable structures (Darcy and Dowse 2013), interpersonal and intrapersonal processes means children with disabilities have fewer opportunities to be included in sport and physical activity, have lower levels of physical activity than their peers (Carlon *et al.* 2013) and experience low performance expectations (Murphy and Carbone 2008). Children with higher levels of disability have lower levels of engagement than children with lower levels of disability (Orlin *et al.* 2010) and differences are also seen across different diagnostic groups (Field and Oates 2001).

The concepts of inclusion and participation in disability sport or mainstream/community-based sport are complex, political and contested. Historically, disability sport started from - and arguably remains embedded within - a medical (nature/extent of impairment), rehabilitation, (re)integration model (Wedgwood 2013; Brittain 2004). A persisting rationale for the (re)integration of differently able people (and their differently functioning bodies) into able-bodied society is based on empowerment, emancipation (Wedgwood 2013), health and well-being (Murphy and Carbone 2008). However, inclusion is not a 'given' within disability sports. Exclusionary practices have been driven both by able-bodied disability sports leaders and by disabled sports people adopting a bounded approach to what they consider to be 'suitable' disabilities (Wedgwood 2013). Although these arguments are most apparent at the elite level, they are played out in everyday sporting practice for those adults and children with disabilities with more ordinary sporting ambitions and capabilities.

Including people with disabilities in mainstream sports is challenging; some question whether it is realistic or achievable (van Amsterdam, Knoppers, and Jongmans 2012). Sporting facilities for adults and children within community settings are underfunded, dependent on volunteers to provide support and remain separate from mainstream activities in the setting (Tregaskis 2003). Environmental obstacles such as rules (Bult *et al.* 2011), overestimation of risks (e.g., injury) versus benefits (Murphy and Carbone 2008), the need to match children's preferences and support needs to available sports programmes (Scholl, Glanz, and Davison 2006), lack of recreational and transportation facilities and the underestimation of the potential and abilities of children with disabilities (United Nations Children's Fund, (UNICEF) 2007) can constrain participation and may marginalise the child's family (Lyons *et al.* 2009) due to lack of opportunities for their family unit to engage in sport.

Contemporary and deliberative mainstreaming of people with disability into sport is perhaps most evident in the attempts to ensure inclusion of children with disabilities into physical education (PE) activities within schools. However, evidence of PE teachers creating genuinely inclusive opportunities is thin; PE practice continues to be underpinned by abelist sporting assumptions of fast, team-based, competitive games that are only marginally adapted to help include children with disabilities (Haycock and Smith 2011). Fitzgerald (2012, 456) notes that simply opening up existing sporting opportunities "perpetuates a discourse of difference that positions at the margins those (disabled) students who do not match up to normative ideals".

Neither disability sports nor mainstreaming are perfect options; each in their own way perpetuates degrees of exclusion whilst advocating inclusion (Peers 2012). In some sports and for some participants, technological advances are starting to blur the distinction between “the binary categories of able-bodied and disabled” (Wedgwood 2013, 7). At both an elite and a more community-based level the move to reverse integration is creating challenges, for example able-bodied people wanting to participate and compete in wheelchair sports (Medland and Ellis-Hill 2008). Aside from the mightily contentious politics that surrounds such moves, reverse integration offers different opportunities for able-bodied and disabled sport (e.g., increasing the number of teams). Sport in the future could potentially be something that genuinely is for all if more visionary thinking opens up ways in which sport can be engaged in by people with or without disability (Medland and Ellis-Hill 2008).

Few studies address the viewpoints of children with disabilities of their own “inclusive” experiences. Spencer-Cavaliere and Watkinson’s (2010, 283) study, for example, showed that “children’s feelings of legitimacy and inclusion appeared to stem from a sense of importance, perceived competence, and value in the activity setting”.

The arrival of clubs which offer genuine opportunities for children with disabilities to engage in sport in an equitable way with their able bodied peers and siblings may prove beneficial for children, their families and the wider society. This research study was designed to address this deficit in evidence about children’s and families’ experiences of such clubs.

## **Methododology and Methods**

This study was underpinned by an appreciative philosophy (Carter 2006; Cooperrider, Whitney, and Stavros 2008) which meant the research lens focused on critically examining ‘what worked well’ whilst not dismissing negative experiences. This philosophical stance was adopted since we felt it was an empowering paradigm from which to research the children’s experiences. The study focused on what the children could do rather than focusing on limitations as might occur if a traditional problem-oriented approach had been used. A mixed qualitative methods approach was adopted, employing (a) participant observation, (b) children’s research activities, (c) focus groups and (d) interviews.

### ***Aims***

The aims of the study were to explore, from the children’s, parents’/carers’, siblings’ and stakeholders’ perspectives, their experiences and perceptions of ‘The Cheetahs’ and what benefits (if any) occur as a result of bringing children with disabilities and children without disability together.

### ***Setting***

‘The Cheetahs’, a wheelchair sports club, based in the north west of England, for children with disabilities and able-bodied children and their families, was the chosen site for the study.

## ***Target Population***

There were three core target groups for this study.

**Children:** included both children with disabilities and the able-bodied children who attended The Cheetahs to play wheelchair sports. The able-bodied children included siblings, cousins and friends of the children with disabilities as well as children with no specific connection with children with disability.

**Parents:** included parents of the children who attended The Cheetahs to participate in the study (regardless of whether they usually stayed and observed the sessions or if they left their child and returned to collect them at the end of the session).

**Stakeholders:** included stakeholders involved in running The Cheetahs, professionals at the leisure centre, helpers, supporters and local government officials.

## ***Design***

The methods chosen were congruent with the appreciative approach as they facilitated the collection of data about 'what worked well' within the club. Different sources of data created opportunities for different modes of expression and communication (individual, group, verbal, text, visual) which we planned to integrate and synthesise to build a rich tapestry of The Cheetahs.

### ***Participant Observation, Photographs and Conversational Interviews***

Every member of the research team spent time engaging with the children and families during each session. They also spent time in the wheelchairs, joining in with the children's sporting activities so as to gain an experiential, embodied appreciation of the club's activities.

The researchers undertook active participant observation of ten club sessions (including setting up and packing up) with the aim of noting the usual activities and interactions that occurred during a session. Conversational interviews with those observed facilitated the researchers' understanding of issues and events across the whole time frame of the project. Field notes were made of observations and the key ideas from the interviews. As part of the participant observation, photographs of participants engaging in the club activities created a visual record; this photography was undertaken by a professional photographer.

### ***Children's Research Activities***

The activities (activity packs and survey) were designed to ensure that children with different cognitive and functional abilities were able to contribute. Support, where necessary, was provided by the most appropriate person (e.g., parent, sibling or researcher). Each child who agreed to take part was given an activity pack to take home with them during the first three weeks of the study. The pack contained an information sheet for the child, stickers, colouring pencils, and three activity sheets. The activity sheets prompted the children to: (a) draw a picture with a wheelchair in it; (b) write a story about a child and a wheelchair, and (c) write down three brilliant things you can do in a wheelchair.

The children were invited to take part in a group survey. The researchers worked with three small groups of

children to survey their opinions on various aspects of 'The Cheetahs'. The questions were printed on large sheets of paper which allowed the children to work both as individuals and as a group. A mix of open and closed responses such as 'Do you look forward to coming to The Cheetahs?' and 'How do you feel when you are at Cheetahs?' was used: children could write down or speak their answers. The survey aimed to be engaging and yet provoke the children to think through their answers. Each child who participated was given a special certificate that thanked them for taking part in the research study.

### Focus Groups

Two focus groups were undertaken with the parents/carers, older siblings and other family members who attended the club. These focus groups were held in a corner of the sports hall, away from the main activities being undertaken by the children. The focus groups explored a range of questions around why the participants brought their children to The Cheetahs and any benefits or changes they had experienced or desired as parents/a family/part of the community.

### Interviews

Interviews with key informants were undertaken either face-to-face or by telephone. These interviews broadly focused on the benefits (and challenges) they perceived, the reasons for their involvement in The Cheetahs and the context in which they saw disability sport.

### Ethics, consent and assent

Our ethical stance was participatory, inclusive and non-coercive: based on respect, beneficence, non-maleficence and justice. Access to the club was carefully negotiated and agreed. The study was approved by an Ethics Committee at the University of Central Lancashire. Information packs were specifically designed for each target group. Written informed consent was gained from the adult participants for both their participation and their child(ren)'s participation. After parental consent had been gained the children were approached and asked for their written assent. During participant observation a rolling approach to consent was used with the researchers checking at the start of and during each session if participants were willing to continue their involvement. Consent was given for the use of quotations, the materials (e.g., drawings) that the children produced and photographs taken during the course of the study. All such materials appear with permission.

## **Data analysis/interpretation**

Data analysis was thematic and iterative (Attride-Stirling 2001) and required the integration of the different datasets so as to create clear, coherent constructions of the participants' experiences. The diversity of data types (text, visual, verbal) facilitated the expression of children's individual responses and perspectives. The primary focus for thematic analysis was on the text-based data (transcripts of interviews, focus groups, field notes, children's lists and stories, qualitative data from the children's survey) were analysed using thematic analysis. Each participant's contribution was considered separately before being considered as part of a group data set (that is, children, parents, key informants). These group data sets were analysed separately before

being synthesized with the final level of analysis occurring across the entire data set. Preliminary codes were identified, reconsidered, explored and refined. An iterative process was used to generate the final set of codes. These codes were then collapsed into sub themes and main themes. The children's drawings and the photographs have been woven into the interpretive process as appropriate and are used to illustrate particular points. Descriptive statistical analysis was undertaken with the data generated from the closed questions in the survey.

## **Findings and Discussion**

The study engaged with 63 people. Twenty five children actively took part in the study: nineteen participated in the survey (fourteen girls, five boys) and ten children (seven girls, three boys) participated in the drawing, story-telling and listing activities. Four girls took part in both activities. An additional twelve children, who did not participate in the other core research activities, were observed during sessions. Fourteen stakeholders were interviewed and some visitors to the club were observed and engaged in informal conversations. Ten parents (nine mothers and one father) and two siblings took part in the focus groups.

In the findings, there are places where distinctions are made between the parents of and children who had a disability and the parents of and children who were able-bodied. Whilst this reflects the demographic of the club, it is somewhat at odds with the spirit of club (and the way the researchers worked with the participants) to be dividing parents and children into 'two sets'.

Four main themes and one unifying theme were identified (see Figure 1); these had consonance across all participant groups. Quotations are used to illustrate the text and the following abbreviations are used: P-CwD (parent of a child with disability); P-AC (parent of child who is able-bodied); CwD (child with disabilities) AC (able-bodied child); S (stakeholder); V (visitor).

### ***Realizing potential***

At a pragmatic level, children with disabilities and their able-bodied siblings, friends and peers were enabled to play sport together once a week in a venue where the sports and activities were all wheelchair based. However, the club achieved much more; it fostered the realization of potential.

### **A place of opportunity**

The Cheetahs was perceived to be an "important and unusual place"(S) where children and their families could meet up and play sport together regardless of whether they were able-bodied or had disabilities. The parents explained that sport was "important to them as a family" (P-CwD) but that it was "hard to find sports for disabled children" (P-CwD). As one parent explained:

*"the options out there for a disabled child to participate in sport are limited. At the moment there is this club and swimming. Not much of a choice if you don't want your child to feel left out".*

The limited opportunities for children with disabilities to participate in sport found in this study are widely reported in the literature (Clark and Macarthur 2008; Michelsen et al. 2009). Parents descriptions of sporting

activities as being for “either able or disabled children” (P-CwD) and rarely for “mixed groups” (P-AC) are typical of findings from other studies (Haycock and Smith 2011; Murphy and Carbone 2008). The feeling of being marginalized extended to the families who explained “even harder to find a place [to do sport] for us as a family” as has been seen in other studies (Field and Oates 2001; Lyons et al. 2009, 41-48).

### *Benefiting from participating together*

Although all the children gained from participation, there was a sense that the children with disabilities gained more, simply because there were so few opportunities elsewhere for them to play sport and even fewer where they could compete with able-bodied children and “participate in a full way”. There was a feeling that the children with disabilities were gaining “confidence that actually they are entitled to be part of this world and to take part in sports” (P-CwD). Other studies also show that children with disabilities gain confidence in their sporting abilities when they are able to participate and demonstrate their capability (Spencer-Cavaliere and Watkinson 2010) and broadly fits with the notions of emancipation and empowerment discussed elsewhere in the disability and sport literature (Darcy and Dowse 2013).

The parents of the children with disabilities reported positive changes in their children’s “confidence”, “ability to mix in a group”, “social skills”, “make friends” and “communication”. One child was described as “coming out of their shell ... and not being as shy” (P-CwD). Lyons et al. (2009) note that parents reported that their children gained enhanced self-confidence, social skills and a stronger belief in self. Although in our study we found that parents of children with disability were positive about the relationships between the children with and without disabilities, other studies have found more neutral responses (Martin and Choi 2009).

One of the stakeholders felt that the children with disabilities were “learning skills to work as a team because they’re not the only one [in a wheelchair]”(S). Parents explained that their children’s attitudes to sport were changing from “I can’t do sports” (P-CwD), “I haven’t got a club to go to” (P-CwD) and “I can’t keep up” (P-CwD) to more positive attitudes such as “I’m really, really good at sport” (P-CwD). The children reflected a similar shift as one child explained:

*“I’m good at going fast and doing zippy turns and throwing the ball, I didn’t know I could go faster than [able-bodied friend] before I came to Cheetahs”*

The benefits of interaction for the able-bodied children included learning to understand “how hard it can be for a child to be in a wheelchair”(P-AC) and learning to realise that “disabled children have to do this all the time... they have to think and plan all the time”(S). One of the able-bodied children thought it was fun using the wheelchair at the club but that it would “really hard work if you had to use it all the time”. The attitudes of the children in this study had consonance with attitudes of children in Tamm and Prellwitz’s (2001, 223) projective pictorial study showed children with no disabilities had positive attitudes towards children in wheelchairs, were willing to play with them and were able to identify some of the obstacles that the child with disability faced in play situations and in the general environment. Parents of able-bodied children perceived the club as being a place where for their children could “learn that everyone is equal”, “think about disabled children more”, “gain an understanding of the difficulties of a wheelchair user”, “understand why her friend is

in a chair”, “understand how hard it is to move in a wheelchair” and “develop new skills”. Evans et al. (2013, 15) also note how non-disabled children’s embodied experiences of wheelchair basketball challenged their preconceptions “about disabled individuals’ physical capital”.

### ***The invisibility (and divisibility) of disability***

Stakeholders talked about the “energy” that was evident in the club and that it “really broke down barriers”. Interestingly, time and again field notes document a question that new visitors (e.g., sponsors, health professionals) apparently felt compelled to ask: ‘So which ones are the disabled children?’ This question was never intended to be malign and was often asked in the context of a discussion about the importance of inclusion. However, it seemed to reflect an initial desire to ‘sort’ the children. It was generally a learning point for the person who asked the question that “not being able to tell” (S) was a measure of the club’s success in “levelling the playing field” (P-AC). Other studies have shown that where inclusive practices are embedded and children regardless of ability or disability can play together that there are major benefits (Scholl, Glanz, and Davison 2006). Studies have also shown “physical activity by children with physical disabilities may help to moderate the stigma in their environment”(Barg et al. 2010 p379).

The children clearly felt that the club was “brilliant” (AC) because it was for “able-bodieds and disabled bodies” (DC) and “we’re all the same here” (AC). The children without disability became more confident and understanding as they got to know the children with disabilities, as one child explained “I was kind of worried at the beginning... but then I found out she [new ‘best’ friend] is just like me ‘cept her legs don’t work”. Other studies show that disability awareness programmes can improve knowledge, attitudes and acceptance of disability (e.g. Ison et al. 2010) or attitudes towards friendships can become more favourable over time (Weiserbs and Gottlieb 1995; Weiserbs and Gottlieb 2000). This was echoed by one of the stakeholders who had invested a great deal of energy into creating the ambience of the club. As she explained:

*“as far as we can see, actually, none of the kids see anybody as more disabled or not disabled, they’re just kids playing sport, in a chair, that’s really fast and [can do] fancy tricks once they’ve learnt how to” (S).*

Some of the stories the children wrote reflected a matter of fact attitude to the wheelchairs; some talked about it as an object that was ‘just there’ and went with them wherever they went (see Table 2, Story 1).

### ***Ambivalence and attractiveness of wheelchairs***

As objects, the wheelchairs created both a sense of resistance to them as well as something of seductive pull; this was evident in the children’s and adults’ attitudes. Everyone who visited the club was asked to “go for a spin in a chair”; it was an unwritten rule that created different responses. Some visitors were really keen to try the chairs out. Others, however, were initially really resistant at this form of reverse integration; in these instances, there was a palpable sense that using a wheelchair could in some way blight their health and invoke the need for a chair. A common response was: “Oh, I don’t need one yet, don’t make me old before my time” (V). A little gentle persuasion, sometimes from the children who acted as ambassadors for the chairs, generally resulted in the visitor trying out a chair. The initial resistant attitude was generally converted into one where

they were “less frightened by the thought of potentially needing one” (V). These ‘conversions’ were small moral moments where the club was not just shifting attitudes of the members but also affecting thinking in the wider community. The stories the children wrote also had moral moments in them and some of the stories reflected the temporality of wheelchair use (see for example Joseph’s ‘conversion’ story (see Table 2, Story 2). Sapey et al.’s (2005) study of adult wheelchair users reflects on the social construction of the wheelchair and provides good insight into why people’s attitudes may have initially been negative and/or ambivalent. They note that the wheelchair is the “symbol of disability, despite the fact that only a minority (less than 10%) of disabled people are wheelchair users” (Sapey, Stewart, and Donaldson 2005, 493).

However, the children in our study had many positive impressions and ideas about wheelchairs, why some people needed them and the fact that they could be beneficial as well as fun. Findings from Apeldoorn’s (2012) study reflected young women’s positive attitudes to their wheelchairs. Reverse integration studies note that using a sports wheelchair can be part of the attraction for able-bodied participants (Medland and Ellis-Hill 2008) The children in our study mostly they talked about wheelchair skills such as how to “ride [in a wheelchair]” (AC), and “move in a chair better” (CwD). Whilst one child reflected that “it’s hard to push a wheelchair” (AC) another explained that “when you’re in a wheelchair you get strong” (CwD). Similar findings can be seen in Goodwin and Watkinson’s (2000) study which showed that children with disabilities learned new things, had fun and built up their strength through participation in sport.

Some of the parents of children with disabilities perceived the club to be an important way for their child to establish a positive relationship with their wheelchair as some had “something of a love-hate relationship” (P-CwD). The mother of a boy who was “getting to the point of needing a chair fulltime” explained the club “helps him to understand and enjoy time in the wheelchair”. Another mother explained that that her daughter “now loves to take part in her chair and being part of the group” (P-CwD).

However, despite the fact that the children were accepting of disability, difference and the need for some children to have to use wheelchairs, there was also a deep seated sense that it would be good if children could “walk OK without them [wheelchairs]”(AC). Cassie’s story is typical of the “wish for a cure” (see Table 2, Story 3).

### ***Fun and fellowship***

The children described their experiences at the club in very positive terms describing it as making them feel “happy”, “amazed”, “excited” and “joyful”. They looked forward to “the games we play”, “making friends” and “trying different things”. Making new friends was something that all the children talked about. Other studies have shown how sporting activities can promote the development of new friendships for children with disabilities. Kristen et al’s (2002) study had similar findings to ours as they found making new friends encompassed both the social and emotional aspects as well as the opportunity to play sports together. However, this was not effortless, and as one child explained, “I didn’t like it when I was put in a different team from my friend... but then I made a new one!” (CwD). The coaches, helpers and parents took care to introduce children to each other and playing games together was a good way of fostering friendships (see Table 2, Story



4).

Some of the children who went to school together clearly felt somewhat separated at school playtime and looked forward “playing properly together”. Many other studies have identified the challenges to children with disabilities and their able bodied peers playing together at school (Haycock and Smith 2011; Tamm and Skär 2000; Spencer-Cavaliere and Watkinson 2010). Children with disabilities describe good and bad days in relation to their experience of physical education at school (Goodwin and Watkinson 2000); bad days were ones where their participation was restricted, they felt socially isolated and their competence questioned and good days being those where they experienced a sense of belonging, were able to share benefits and in which they had a sense of belonging. The inclusive practice of Cheetahs aimed to give children ‘good days’ each time they attended. Children and their cousins were also able to play the same games together and these children liked “seeing my family *and* playing”. The club created the only opportunity for playing together in wheelchairs, and as one child, explained:

*“it’s funny playing the same game together in wheelchairs... it’s good funny”*

Some children were accompanied by older siblings who took on a caring role as well as joining in some aspects of the club. One sibling explained how her sister who was a wheelchair user is “much happier on a Friday”. Another child’s sibling explained how:

*“normally everything related to her disability is bad, like the way we always have to go to the hospital but here, at ‘The Cheetahs’, her disability is fun and a happy thing”.*

At Cheetahs, the focus was on sport, participation and inclusion and the children were able to background ability or disability and “simply participate” and as with other studies, they and their families valued this shift in perspective away from having to always consider disability. Other work has shown positive outcomes, such as children developing their sense of “becoming someone” in terms of their conception of themselves and their ability to assert themselves (Kristen, Patriksson, and Fridlund 2002) and the opportunity to develop and an enhanced self-identity (Murphy and Carbone 2008).

The parents felt that the club gave them the chance to be “able to watch the children enjoying themselves whilst having a break” (P-AC) and having a chance “to chat to other parents” (P-CwD). One parent said that their socialising was often limited to “a group of disabled children only” (P-CwD). Clearly the social aspect of the club, the opportunity to meet new people and to have “tea and biscuits and cake” was important. Stakeholders thought it was good to see that the children were:

*“just enjoying it and they’re all equal whether they’re able-bodied or disabled so it’s good fun, good exercise and you see the kids with a glint in their eye and a smile on their faces!” (S)*

### **Thrills and skills**

Thrills and skills were strongly evident in the children’s drawings (see Figure 2); and this aspect of participation resonates with the adult literature about sport relating to agency, abilities and power (Darcy and Dowse 2013). The children who had disabilities often found that they were in the position of being an expert who was able to teach wheelchair skills to their able-bodied peers. This was something that many of them relished. As one

child explained "I like showing off my turns". Fred's story reflects a 'skills based' story (see Table 2, Story 5). Goodwin and Watkinson's (2000) study demonstrated how in some sporting activities the children with disabilities were able to out-perform their able bodied peers and how this made them "feel special". All of the children enhanced their wheelchair skills during the sessions as they learnt how to "go fast in a chair" (AC), "play in a wheelchair" (AC) and "do sports in a wheelchair"(CwD). The sporting activities were interwoven with elements of wheelchair skills training and this appeared to promote the acquisition of skills. Skills training has been shown to improve wheelchair skills, reduce shoulder pain and enhance independence (Sawatzky et al. 2012).

Our field notes reflect that some of the children, both those who did not use a wheelchair frequently and those whose muscles tired easily, were getting quite fatigued by the end of sessions. However, most felt that were getting fitter and provided reasons for this. Some reasons focused on wheelchair fitness, for example "my arms don't ache as much" (AC), 'my arms are getting stronger" (CwD) and "I can move about more in a wheelchair" (CwD). Other more general aspects of fitness were reported such as "I feel fitter" (CwD) and "I can play longer" (AC), "I can do more" (CwD) and "I ate lots of tea after Cheetahs" (CwD). Children understand the physical benefits from participation in sport and other studies have demonstrated that children with disabilities gain strength (Goodwin and Watkinson 2000). The parents also reported physical changes such as their child "becoming stronger on the whole" (P-CwD), and having "increased muscle tone" (P-CwD), "increased coordination and strength" (P-CwD). Both sets of parents reported that the club provided a "good work out" (P-AC) and good "physical exercise" (P-CwD). Although these findings fit within a medical-rehabilitation model, the emphasis was on inclusion and enjoyment and 'getting fitter' rather than an illness-impairment orientation.

## **Conclusion**

The factors influencing children with disabilities' participation in sport and physical activity are complex and multi-factorial (Kolehmainen et al. 2011). The Cheetahs created a setting in which disabling expectations (McMaugh 2011, 853-866) and the many barriers to participation (Bult et al. 2011) which normally impede children with disabilities from participating in sports were overcome. Arguably, its success arises from the fact that it was neither a 'disability only' nor an 'adapted mainstream' club. The starting point was one of inclusion; its values were participatory and the emphasis was on fun and engagement. The only criterion for being involved was that you were a child who wanted to play sport in a wheelchair; this deliberately blurred the categories of able-bodied and disabled. Inclusionary practice was achieved through resolute and strategic leadership; 'service aptitude' (Scholl, Smith, and Davison 2005) within the club was high. Without settings such as The Cheetahs, children with disabilities will continue to be marginalised, socially segregated and excluded. The Cheetahs provided a legitimate and equitable space in which children and other people learned about the limits and damage generated by ableist and disablist attitudes. The leap of faith necessary for the development of inclusive community recreation described by Schlein and Miller (2010) is perhaps less of a leap than they suggest. The Cheetahs has shown what is possible when children, regardless of disability, are given the chance

to exercise their right to participate in sport with their friends.

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