



Michael Josephson MBE Charity Impact Report

The Fed is the largest Jewish social care charity in Greater Manchester and supports one in seven Jewish homes and over 6,500 people every year across our city region.

One of these services is our Children's Centre – located at our Heathlands Village site and from where we operate our Smile Group Service - which brings hope, joy, and vital support to over 180 Mancunian Jewish children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities every year. This incredible project provides essential services to children who are often overlooked, misunderstood, or excluded by society. It is just one example of the incredible and diverse range of services The Fed provides.

Every year, Smile welcomes children who face conditions such as ADHD, autism, epilepsy, spina bifida, or complex conditions like ML4, which presents with the physical traits of cerebral palsy. These children are not defined by their conditions, but rather by their strength, resilience, and unique personalities. However, their care needs are great and their challenges, many. Some children struggle with aggressive behaviours, others with communication or mobility issues. A number of children require one to one care.

Despite the obstacles they face, we ensure that every child who walks through our doors is met with love, acceptance, and a sense of belonging. Smile is not just a service; it is a safe haven. It is a place where children can express themselves freely, develop important life skills, and experience the simple joy of being a child. And it's all possible because of our dedicated staff and volunteers, who ensure that every child feels like they are the most important person in the room.

Located in the heart of The Fed's Heathlands Village, our Children's Centre offers a welcoming and nurturing environment in a Jewish setting. With a

bright, cheerful space equipped with everything from sensory rooms to creative play areas, it's a place where children can engage in imaginative play, learn to bake, cycle, or even interact with exotic animals. The centre is a vibrant place of joy, where every child is encouraged to share, make friends, and take part in activities that expand their horizons.

But Smile is not just about play—it's also about providing respite for parents, siblings and guardians. The pressures of caring for a child with special needs are enormous, and our goal is to offer parents the peace of mind they deserve. Parents can relax, knowing their child is in safe hands, supported in every way possible, allowing them to focus on their own well-being or spend quality time with other children or relatives in the family. The need for this service is constant and ever increasing.

In 2022 we have had over 2,300 and in 2023 we had over 2,400 attendances at our sessions.

Sadly, many of the children we support face social exclusion. Due to their conditions, they are often not accepted in mainstream activities such as school camps, community groups, or even social events. One boy, whose 16th birthday was celebrated for the first time thanks to Smile, shared with us, "I didn't have friends, but I have now—from The Fed." That is the power of inclusion. That is the life-changing difference we make in their world.

Our efforts, though, go beyond playtime. We also offer practical support, addressing needs like allergies, feminine hygiene care, and school exclusion, which add extra layers of complexity to their lives. These are children who face daily challenges that many of us cannot even begin to imagine. Yet, with the help of our donors, we can continue to provide them with the care, love, and opportunities they deserve.

The Fed also recognizes that many parents face their own struggles, whether mental or physical health challenges, and these difficulties impact their ability to care for their children's needs. That's why we stand by them, offering not only practical support but emotional support as well.

However, we can't do this alone. The Fed relies on our donor's generosity to continue this vital work. The children we support count on us - and we count on our incredible donors and community – people like Michael Josephson.

Together, we ensure that these children are not defined by their challenges, but by the love, care, and opportunities that they receive. We can continue to provide them with the chance to play, learn, and grow in a supportive Jewish environment where they are valued for who they are.

The donations from the Michael Josephson Ball of £25,000 in 2021 and £25,000 in 2022 allowed us to:

Extend the play area to incorporate some of the adjacent woodland, to create a forest play area. This provided an adventurous nature reserve for the children we support. A place to explore and learn about the world around us, a calm, tranquil and beautiful space.

Purchase additional play equipment, particularly a wheelchair-friendly swing which is used by both older people and children - even at the same time.

