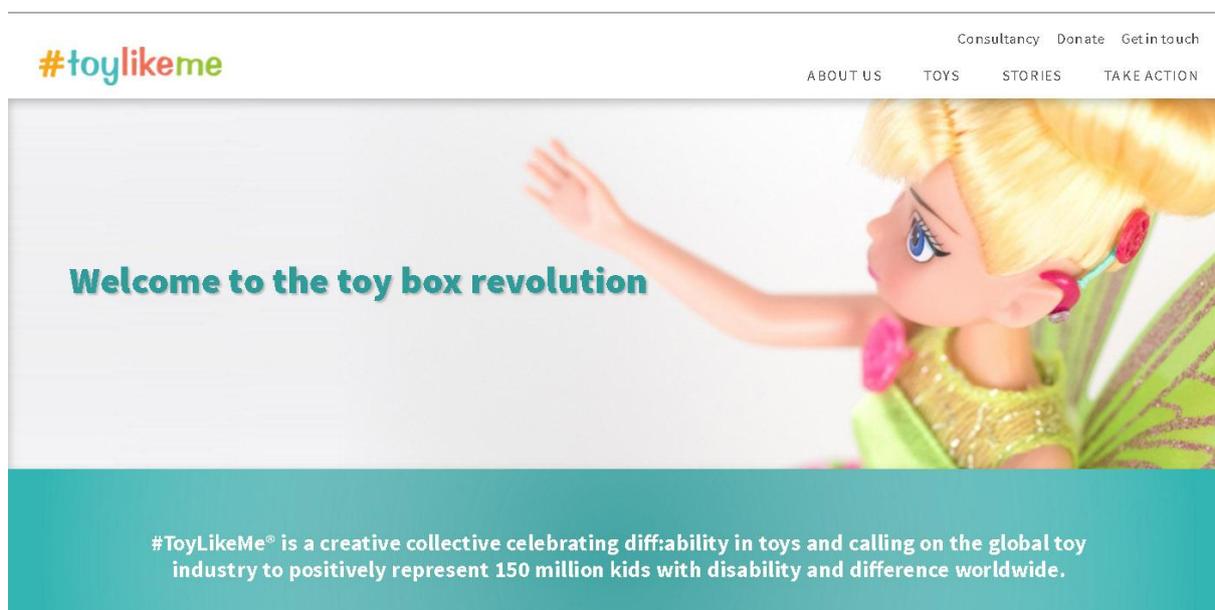


***** PRESS RELEASE *****

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#ToyLikeMe Launch Website Featuring World's Largest Range of Deaf Toys as Tinkerbelle gets a 3D Printed Cochlear Implant!



After successfully crowd funding earlier this year #ToyLikeMe launch website hub to connect customers with products which represent diff:ability and continue their call on the global toy industry to better represent 150 million children worldwide with disability and difference.

The website, which launches as the Rio Paralympics is in full swing, features images of #ToyLikeMe's signature makeovers such as Hulk with a hearing aid and Storm Trooper with a prosthetic blade, as well as the world's largest collection of deaf toys with hearing aids and cochlear implants available to buy, thanks to the power of 3D printing. Yes, characters including Tinkerbelle, Paw

Patrol's Ryder and Frozen's Kristoff have all made it to the front of the audiology waiting list!



Photos should be credited to #ToyLikeMe/bethmoseleyphotography.co.uk

"We're turning triple dipple somersaulty backflips of happiness to launch toylikeme.org," says Rebecca Atkinson, the UK journalist and creative consultant behind #ToyLikeme. *"We've scoured the internet looking for products which represent diff:ability. Now for the first time ever, parents and carers can find them all in one place."*

Atkinson, who is herself partially deaf and partially sighted, established the #ToyLikeMe 'toy box revolution' in April 2015 to call on the global toy industry to positively represent 150 million disabled children worldwide. With over 40k followers in 45 countries, and fans including Stephen Merchant, Julia Donaldson and Katie Piper, Atkinson hopes the unique celebratory approach taken by #ToyLikeMe will help bust pervasive stereotypes and inspire change in the way that diff:ability is presented to children, both diff:abled and otherwise.

“It’s time diff:ability got a creative airing,” says Atkinson. “For too long diff:abled people have been portrayed in an unimaginative and boring light in the toy box. Wheelchairs are nearly always in the hospital sets and usually grey. At #ToyLikeMe we aim to use creativity to push the aesthetics of disability into the modern times and shake out the dust!”

#ToyLikeMe hope that the products featured on toylikeme.org will be enjoyed by all children, not just those with diff:abilities themselves. *“Harper Beckham who was recently snapped with a toy wheelchair has shown that ALL children can enjoy playing with diff:abled toy,”* says Atkinson. Recent research by academic Sian Jones at Goldsmith University’s Psychology Department has also found that non-diff:abled children are more open to forming friendships with diff:abled classmates after playing with wheelchair toys.

Note for editors –

- In August 2016 Harper and David Beckham were photographed with a toy wheelchair. The image was carried by the tabloid press and the upturn in interest in diff:abled toys was discussed in a Daily Mail comment by Sarah Vine.
- #ToyLikeMe was established in April 2015 by British journalist, Rebecca Atkinson, and parents of children with disabilities who were tired of not being able to find positive diff:ability representation in toys. The group started to makeover toys to give them diff:abilities and invited followers to send in their creations. The results went viral and have been shared and viewed thousands of times.
- There are 770,000 children with diff:abilities in the UK and 150 million worldwide
- A change.org petition calling on Lego to include disabled mini-figures received over 20k signatures. A similar one aimed at Playmobil received over 50k supporters.
- #ToyLikeMe has received global press, TV and radio coverage, including Fox, CNN, Sky, BBC, Guardian, Mail, Upworthy, Distractify.

- #ToyLikeMe has received celebrity backing including comedian Stephen Merchant and Gruffelo author, Julia Donaldson.
- Playmobil became the first global brand to back #ToyLikeMe and are working to produce a line of characters that positively represent disability for released in 2016/17

For more information, press pack or further images visit –

toylikeme.org/about-us/press-media/

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