


variety liberty swings





History of the Liberty Swing

The Inventor - Wayne Devine

Thanks to Wayne Devine, children with disabilities can now have as much fun on swings in a playground as their able bodied mates - no more sitting on the edge and wondering what it would be like to fly through the air and feel the breeze on their faces.

In 1988 Wayne was struck by the fact that conventional playground equipment did not cater for children with disabilities. His heart sank as he watched able-bodied children laughing and enjoying the playground swings in his local park, whilst a child in a wheelchair looked on with envy. It was at that time that Wayne had the original idea of developing a swing for children in wheelchairs - a dream that has taken him 13 years to realise.

Wayne set about constructing a prototype out of timber and meticulously tested various structures and configurations to ensure a smooth and safe swing action whilst taking into account the special needs of children in wheelchairs.

However, after nearing perfection of his original idea, he was faced with a huge dilemma - his original idea was focused on designing a playground swing for children in wheelchairs only. How would his design be able to be enjoyed by a child with some other type of disability who was unable to use a conventional swing, such as a child without the use of their arms for example?

At this time Wayne was faced with a crisis - whether to scrap the whole idea entirely or to persevere with his dream and endeavour to incorporate some modifications to ensure that all children with a disability were able to take advantage of his swing. Faced with this problem, Wayne's determination was made even stronger.

After many, many hours and countless sketches and models, Wayne finally came up with a feasible way to incorporate a seat into the swing whilst still being able to accept a conventional wheelchair.

His truck loaded with his prototypes and sketches, Wayne headed down to Melbourne from Sydney to meet with the design team at Nylex Rotomold to establish a way of constructing the swing's capsule out of heavy-duty plastic. A timber construction simply wouldn't stand up to the rigours of an outdoor child's playground. An internal steel structure had to be included to support the weight of up to 250 kg.

After finalising the signage and locking mechanisms and making yet another ramp, Wayne's dream was realised in July 2000 when the first swing of this type was opened in Old's Park, Forest Road, Penshurst NSW.

Thanks to Wayne Devine's tireless efforts and persistence, the Liberty Swing can be enjoyed by children in wheelchairs and people with other disabilities that preclude them from using a conventional swing.





Variety Liberty Swing Program

Remember how much fun you had as a child visiting the local playground? The exhilaration of playing on a swing is something that most children enjoy, and nearly all take for granted. For those in a wheelchair however, the simple pleasure of swinging through the air was never an option until Wayne Devine invented the Wheelchair Swing.

The Liberty Swing is a revolutionary design in play equipment for people with disabilities which allow children in wheelchairs the opportunity to enjoy the fun and recreation of swinging.

Variety in Australia initiated the Variety Liberty Swing Program in 2004, followed soon after by Variety New Zealand.

This Program aims to provide every community with at least one Liberty Swing in a major park or playground, so that all kids get a chance to have a 'swing in the park'.

Variety Victoria was the first 'tent' to pioneer the Liberty Swing for Variety.

"A normal part of growing up is to be able to go on the swings. When we first saw it....there was a queue for the kids to get on of no less than 30 all the time. We knew that we had to put one in for the kids of Melbourne." Norm Hutton, Variety Victoria.

Tony Hasham, former National Chairman of Variety Australia, and instigator of the national program says, "The swing will bring laughter and exhilaration to thousands of Australian wheelchair-bound children who have never experienced such a simple joy. To witness the smile on a child's face who is enjoying his or her first swing, is a very emotional and unforgettable experience."

A Liberty Swing costs \$23,000 with installation costs at \$12,000 to \$15,000 and Variety has committed to deliver 30 swings each year for the next ten years to special needs children and their communities. Anyone who has attended a presentation of a Variety Liberty Swing can tell you how fantastic it is to be able to see the joy brought to the lives of the children who receive it.

Many of the swings commissioned so far have gone into rural areas, reflecting our commitment to support children from all parts of Australia.

To date Variety has placed a total of 121 Liberty Swings in communities around the country in just under three years.

It was with great excitement that Variety NT bought it's first Liberty Swing in 2006 with a commitment to purchase one per annum for the children of the Northern Territory.

In participation with the Darwin City Council our first Liberty Swing was installed at the Jingili Water Gardens and has been a constant source of fun for all.

The Variety Liberty Swing Program offers excellent opportunities to corporate and private philanthropists to be involved in something very special for your community.



Liberty Swing Opening in Jingili Water Gardens

