

Fundraising Andy picks up MBE for 20-year campaign

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A BRAIN injury survivor who made it his mission to raise thousands of pounds for brain injury and children's hospital charities, has picked by his MBE at Windsor Castle.

Andy Baker, 33, lives in Didcot and is the founder and CEO of Play2Give, an Oxfordshire fundraising organisation.

He was born with a brain injury and was cared for since birth, he then suffered a head injury at the age of eight which resulted in him needing further treatment and later surgery at the age of 12.

It was this background and a



Andrew Baker gets his MBE

campaign launched by the Oxford Mail to get the Oxford Children's Hospital built that propelled Mr Baker into fundraising.

And two decades on, he headed to Windsor Castle last week to be presented with his MBE by Princess Anne.

Andy said: "It was the best day of my life, the proudest day, it was magical. After nearly 10 months of waiting to actually go to Royal-

ty at Windsor and meet the Princess Royal, who was hosting the ceremony, it was really amazing."

He added: "It was perfect timing; next February it will be 20 years since I raised my first £1,000 at St Birinus. It is a big milestone, as Play2Give will also be 15 next year."

As a pupil at St Birinus, he started raising money at the age of 14, in what started as a dream to raise £500 to help build the Children's Hospital.

That dream turned into the organisation Play2Give, which has now raised about £250,000 for Oxfordshire charities.

Play2Give has hosted a range of fundraising events in support of the Children's Hospital, Headway Oxfordshire, and Ronald McDonald House.

In November 2020, the Didcot

fundraiser received an email 'out of the blue' informing him that he had been chosen to receive the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE) for his charitable work.

At the time, Mr Baker said he felt like Christmas had come early.

He said: "I was speechless, really; it took a while for it to sink in, it took a few hours.

"Nothing is higher than an honour from the Queen, so it was quite a nice early Christmas present."

The fundraiser is looking forward to a bright future for Play2Give and hopes his MBE will help give the organisation more recognition and support.

He said: "Although the MBE is for me, it is also a nice tribute to all my team and my supporters."