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**KILMARNOCK STANDARD**

**Plucky pair learn to walk with a spider’s help**

[Mar 2 2012](http://www.kilmarnockstandard.co.uk/ayrshire-news/news-east-ayrshire/kilmarnock-news/2012/03/02/) by Clair Fullarton, Kilmarnock Standard

INSPIRATIONAL twins Ellie and Laurie Finlayson are learning to walk with the help of a special ‘spider’.

No nasty creepy crawlies are involved, instead the plucky pair are receiving pioneering physiotherapy on a web-like apparatus made up of elastic ropes called a Spider.

The device is based at Footsteps Centre in Dorchester-on-Thames, Oxfordshire.

Ellie and Laurie, from Kilmarnock, are spending three weeks at the centre as part of their course of physiotherapy following a life-changing operation in America last October.

The Annanhill Primary pupils were confined to wheelchairs before undergoing Selective Dorsal Rhizotomy surgery at St Louis Children’s Hospital in Missouri, USA.

Ellie can now easily walk on crutches and is starting to take her first independent steps, while Laurie can get about using a K-walker.

Family, friends and fundraisers have since been amazed by the siblings’ new-found movement.

The twins’ mum Isobel said: “After the first week of Footsteps and the Spider, we have seen a big improvement in both of the kids’ strength and control of their tummy and leg muscles.

“The Spider allows the children to stand without any help as the elastic pulls them up.

“It allows the kids to feel what it should be like to stand up and stretch by themselves knowing they are safe and won’t fall.

“The children work so hard on the Spider because they absolutely love it.”

Isobel added: “Footsteps has not only helped Ellie and Laurie to gain strength but also helped them to realise their own ability and give them the confidence they need to move forward.”

Generous Standard readers backed the ELF campaign raising a total of £151,439.50 to pay for the twin’s operation in America and follow-up physiotherapy for the kids back home.