

news

winter 2015

positively shaping children's futures



Director's Welcome

Welcome to Family Care's Winter Newsletter when we reflect on all the activities which have taken place throughout the last few months and cast a peek towards Christmas.

I was delighted to attend Spiral's Birthday party in October. The Nottingham Girls High School proved to be very generous and welcoming hosts and many children and their families had a great time - it's always been one of the real highlights of the year and so a massive thank you to colleagues in "Spiral" who put so much time and effort into laying on such a terrific party.

On a very sad note, Family Care lost one of its very own with the passing of Vera Hall. Vera was a true legend in Family Care's story and you will read Sue Jones' tribute to Vera elsewhere in this Newsletter. May she rest in peace.

Our Adoption Manager, Tony Kalirai moved on and we thank him for his contribution to the work of the team and wish him well on his return to Local Authority adoption work.

Colleagues, volunteers and friends of Family Care continue to show their great generosity towards others as we joined in the MacMillan Coffee Morning and Children in Need Day with a series of fundraising events for these other charities who also undertake much-needed work with children and their families.

Finally I do hope as many of you as are able will be able to come along and join in our Christmas Carol Service at St Jude's in Mapperley on Sunday 13th December.

Steve Hargrave

Tribute to Vera Hall

Thank you to Sue Jones for writing these heartfelt words about Vera Hall:

With sadness we share news of the death in September of Vera Hall. Vera Hall was Family Care's Manager and Principal Social Worker for 24 years from 1966 until her retirement in December 1990.

Vera worked directly with many hundreds of individuals over the years. Within Family Care, she developed professional caring services with vulnerable families, and with birth families, adoptive parents and adopted children and adults. Under her leadership the agency's work achieved standards of excellence, recognised nationally by government review and by peer agencies in the voluntary and statutory sectors. Vera influenced developments in adoption practice, research and registration, always with recognition of the lifelong impact for everyone personally involved.

For those who enjoyed the privilege of working with her, Vera was a mentor and role model. She was a woman of great integrity, energy, compassion, practicality and calm professionalism, with a warm sense of humour. She was able to relate to anyone, whatever their circumstances. Vera has enriched the lives of very many people whom she encountered.

Our thoughts are with her family.



Sphere Domestic Abuse



Our first birthday celebration of 'Sphere' is coming up in February. We're teaming up with Notts County Football in the Community to provide a multi-sports activity afternoon on Tuesday 16th February at Ellis Guildford School and Sports College with arts and crafts for families who have worked with us over the last year. We will be providing refreshments, and of course a birthday cake to celebrate what looks to have been a busy but very positive year!

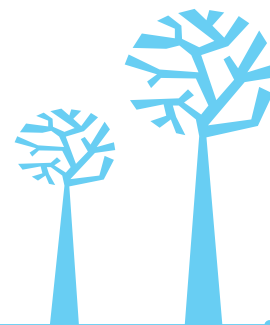
We continue to work hard to provide therapeutic support for the children and young people referred to us. We also work very closely with their carers and are

developing therapy that helps heal and build on parent/carer - child relationships. This individual and family work has been our focus and between us we have seen and offered support to 41 children and their families since the summer holidays.

Two of our team have attended further Theraplay training following on from the level one training that practitioners across the service did earlier this year. We believe this will be enormously helpful to us in providing a skilled and effective service as this helps build relationships through therapeutic play and helps children to connect with others and their own emotions.



In addition to the domestic abuse work we continue to run our very successful therapeutic girls groups for the Rushcliffe Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service. We were delighted to hear after a very positive inspection, that our contract for that work has been extended beyond April 2016.



Adoption

In early November we bade a fond farewell to Tony Kalirai who has been heading up our Adoption Team as Manager since January 2014. Tony has returned to working within a local authority and we all wish him well with his new post. Until a permanent replacement for Tony is in place we are fortunate to have Margaret Bell on an interm basis. Margaret has many years' experience of working within a voluntary adoption through her time at DFW adoption. Margaret has said she has been made to feel very welcome and is looking forward to her time at Family Care.

National Adoption Week took place slightly earlier this year on 19th-25th October. We answered a commonly asked question everyday on our Facebook page, which we hope people thinking about adopting found useful. The focus of this year's week was highlighting children over the age of four who needed adopting. It was particularly wonderful to hear from a Family Care adopter who had adopted her daughter who was aged 11 (she is now an adult and parent herself) and listen to her experience of adopting as a single parent.

As an agency that offers 'lifelong support' we're really proud of the regular groups and training we offer our families and we've recently updated our Adoption Information Pack to reflect all the different support available.



We're always happy to look at adapting our support dependent on the current needs within our families so if you've adopted through Family Care and have a particular need please let your Social Worker know.

As well as the support we facilitate, it's always great to hear about peer support. One of our adopters has organised regular coffee mornings for adopters of under 5's which are going well. If you've adopted through Family Care and have a young child and want to find out more, please get in touch with us for more details.

We have in place dates for Adoption Information Evenings in 2016 right through until September. These are all at our offices on Magdala Road from 7-9pm dates for these are:

- 19th January
- 23rd February
- 22nd March
- 19th April
- 24th May
- 21st June
- 19th July
- 20th September

We are also holding an Information Evening for LGBT adopters on 7th March in National LGBT Fostering and Adoption Week.

The most important part of these evenings for people is hearing our adopters share their stories. If you feel you would be comfortable enough to

share your journey to adopting through Family Care please either let your Social Worker know, or call Laura on 0115 9603010, email: laura.mynett@familycare-nottingham.org.uk. We can always organise for you to come to an Information Evening first, or tell your story alongside someone else. We'd particularly like to hear from people who have had children placed in the last 2-5 years.

Finally a reminder for all our adoptive parents with children in school. The deadline for notifying your school to ensure they can claim the pupil premium is before 21 January 2016. You will need to provide supporting evidence, for example, the original Adoption (Court) Order. This will then trigger the payment of the pupil premium to the school / education provider from April 2016.

If you informed the school of your child's adopted status for the January 2015 School Census, it should not be necessary to provide evidence again. You are, however, advised to double check with the school before 21 January. If your child has moved schools, you will be required to provide evidence again as information is not transferable from one school to another.



www.facebook.com/familycareadoption

Spiral Bereavement



Spiral has had an extremely active few months. As well as delivering the core emotional support services to bereaved families directly, we have held a number of activities and social events. We try to build our support on the feedback we receive and are currently making plans for our 2016 Calendar so this can be sent out to families in the new year.

Included in this year's programme of events we've been enjoying the great outdoors with a trip to Vernon Park, Nottingham where we went pond dipping and had a planting session thanks to John the Park Keeper which enabled children and young people to get close to nature.



Pictured: Examining the findings from the pond.

We've also been having fun in the great indoors too with an amazing turn out at Planet Bounce for our autumn half term coffee morning. Families who came along enjoyed an energetic trampolining session thanks to 'Comic Relief'.

'It was brilliant. My favourite bit was the basketball trampoline. When can we do it again?'

Our Summer Fun Day continues to be well attended with 28 children and young people coming along this year to Conkers in Leicestershire. A big thank you to Boots and Nottingham Girls High School for their fundraising which enabled this trip to happen.



'This is the first time we've been to an activity with Spiral. This week is the first anniversary since dad died so it was nice to do something special all together'.

Boots also helped fund our 7th year birthday celebration event in partnership with Nottingham Girls High School. The High School was a great venue for our family friendly activities, enabling us to create one of our most entertaining celebrations with arts & crafts and a penalty game. Magic Duncan baffled many of us with his amazing illusions and magic, and the pamper zone was its best yet. A real treat! Thanks to our amazing volunteers who helped to create a warm and friendly atmosphere.



'The massage was wonderful. I feel so relaxed now, and I would have happily paid for my hair to be done'.

'The magician was amazing, the party was great for all ages. We really enjoyed ourselves'.

The core team at Spiral is made up of three Macmillan professionals so we were delighted to have the opportunity to attend the Macmillan Professionals Conference this November which celebrated their achievements and 40 years since the first Macmillan Nurse. The awards evening was hosted by world class Olympic athlete Roger Black who focused on the importance of team work in his motivational speech, a great event to be a part of and Spiral are privileged to have Macmillan's support with our service creating opportunities to develop new networks across their network.

**WE ARE
MACMILLAN.
CANCER SUPPORT**



spiral

supporting children and families

Spiral Volunteering

Spiral welcomed a team from Boots to help make over Family Care's waiting room.



It was a great team challenge to improve the surroundings our families so often use. Their hard work has really made a difference and we'd like to say a big thank you to them.



Pictured: The Programme Management Team from Boots brightening up our waiting room.

Our amazing volunteers are currently supporting a number of children and young people. We would however be keen to increase recruitment for more male volunteers and are currently exploring the best ways of doing this. If anyone has any suggestions for where we could promote this or know any men who'd be interested in volunteering with Spiral please contact Delphis on 0115 9603010 or e-mail delphis.akintunde@familycare-nottingham.org.uk

As a thank you for all the work they do and the time and support they give we will be hosting our 2nd annual celebration event for our Volunteers in December as part of the project funded by Big Lottery.



Fundraising



Macmillan Coffee Morning

Spiral hosted our first Macmillan Coffee Morning in September with a great contribution of cakes, raising £162.01 for Macmillan Cancer Support. A big thank you to everyone who supported the event, carers, staff, trustees, and new partnerships.



Spiral team members setting up for the morning.

Another charity who we receive support from is Children in Need. To raise money for this great charity a raffle was held in early November which raised £71.50.

Karen Usher is a great advocate for Spiral having accessed support for herself and her family. Karen ran this year's Nottingham Half Marathon in memory of her husband Jim Usher and raised £425 for our service.

Karen's words:

Four years after Jim's death Spiral are still committed to helping our family through difficult times whilst celebrating the memory of a fabulous husband and dad, the bereavement support has enabled us to move forward with our lives.

In the last two years Billy and Jasmine have enjoyed new sports like boxercise and climbing, been on a weekend residential and participated in many Spiral fun days with other children who have experienced a significant bereavement. The team at Spiral continue to offer me invaluable guidance and reassurance through the changes and challenges of family life. So to Angela, Sarah, Delphis, Oksana, Tania and the many volunteers at Spiral, a heartfelt thank you from Karen, Billy and Jasmine xxx

Thank you and well done to Karen, and all our other sporty supporters who have entered different challenges over the past few months raising a combined total of over £1560 for Family Care.



Photo: A well deserved message from his family for our supporter Steve after completing his open water swim for Family Care.



Christmas and New Year Opening

Our offices will be closed on Christmas Day, 28th and 31st December as well as 1st January.

Christmas Toys Collection

Our annual Christmas toy and gift collection is taking place on 8-10th December. As usual members of staff and volunteers will be at St John's Church Hall in Bilborough in the day accepting, sorting and distributing new toys and gifts for families across Nottinghamshire.

For more information please contact Sam Wilson in Support Service on 0115 9603010.

Family Care Gallery

Do you have any artwork by your children that you'd be happy to donate to brighten up our walls?

If so, please drop or post them in to us as we'd love to display it.

Mothering Sunday

It might seem early to be talking about events in Spring but Mothering Sunday is on 6 March and we've produced a Mothering Sunday Service brochure for use in churches. If you would like a copy please contact Chris Burton on 0115 9603010 or e-mail her on chris.burton@familycare-nottingham.org.uk with your name and address and she will post a copy out to you.

Carol concert

You might have seen in our last newsletter and on our website that we are holding a Family Christmas Carol Concert at St Jude's Church, Mapperley, 403 Woodborough Road, Nottingham, NG3 5HE on Sunday 13th December at 3.15pm-4.00pm. There will also be refreshments and a raffle following the service.

If you would like to attend please RSVP to Louise Casey-Simpson, Support Services Manager at Family Care on louise.casey@familycare-nottingham.org.uk.

Feedback

The aim of this newsletter is to give supporters of Family Care information about service developments, events and fundraising. We value any feedback you have on the format or content of this newsletter.

If you do not want to receive information on Family Care's work, please email chris.burton@familycare-nottingham.org.uk or write to Chris Burton at our address.



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