



Friendship
Project



for Children
Registered Charity No: 517684

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 13

SUMMER 2011

THE FRIENDSHIP PROJECT FOR CHILDREN

25TH

ANNIVERSARY NEWSLETTER

From the Chairman

It is a great honour to be Chairman of the Friendship Project in its 25th year. During this time the Project has supported over 1,000 children, disadvantaged by virtue of their family circumstances.

A big thank you to all the people who have contributed to the success of the charity over the years; they include Older Friends, Trustees, Management Team Members, Warwickshire Children's Services, CAF Officers and other Agencies. Thank you also to our many Funders and sponsors who have generously donated money to the Project.

I hope to see many of you at our main celebratory event on the 25th June.

John Hancock
Chairman



Funders

Our thanks to the many organisations and individuals who have donated money over the past 25 years of the Friendship Project, including:

Alan Edward Higgs Charity	Alstom
Ammco Trust	Angela Gallagher Memorial Fund
Ashow P.C.C.	Austin Edwards Charitable Trust
Baron Davenport's Charity	BBC Children in Need
Bewley Charitable Trust	Bodies and Co
Charan Health and Beauty	Church End Brewery
CostCutter (Warwick University Branch)	Coventry Building Society Charitable Foundation
DHL Exel Europe Ltd	F. C. Stokes Charitable Trust
Four Acre Trust	Garfield Weston Foundation
Gold and Silver Investments	Heart of England Community Foundation
Heart of England Cooperative Society	Henry Smith Charity
Holly Ball Committee	3i Solihull
Jaguar-Land Rover	Jarman Charitable Trust
Joanies Trust	Jo Bell/Helen Yendall
John Hancock	Kenilworth Lions
King Henry VIII Endowed Trust	Lloyds TSB Foundation for England & Wales
M & H Plastics	Michael Marsh Charitable Trust
Morgan Est	Mrs W Godfrey-Payton Trust
Noel Buxton Trust	North Warwickshire Community Dev. Fund
Norton Foundation	NatWest Community Fund
Planters Garden Centre	Provincial Grand Lodge of Warwickshire
Rotary Club of Royal Leamington Spa	Rotary Club of Southam 2000
Rugby Borough Council	Sheldon Trust
Sir Adrian Cadbury	Southam & District Lions Club
Southam Rotary Club	Southam Town Council
Stoneleigh P.C.C.	Stratford upon Avon Rotary Club
Stratford upon Avon Town Trust	TNT (UK) Ltd
Tudor Trust	Lydia Turner
Twenty-ninth May 1961 Charitable Trust	UIA
John Vallis	Waitrose (Kenilworth)
Wilmcote Charitable Trust	Warwick Forum
Warwick Lions Club	Warwick Rotary Club
Warwick S. U. Volunteers	Warwick Town Council
Warwickshire County Council	Wellesbourne Lions Clubs
Ron Morton	Yapp Charitable Fund

Powerful Generosity from local firms

Alstrom Power Ltd of Rugby have an employee's charitable fund, called the Willans Charities Association, where the staff donate via the payroll and the money is then distributed to local charities. We have been fortunate to receive a donation of £250 from this fund.

Jaguar Land Rover in Solihull also have an employee-only contribution charity fund, the Land Rover Charity Fund, and one of our long-standing Older Friends, Dean Robinson, who works there, kindly nominated The Friendship Project for Children to receive a donation. We were delighted and surprised to learn that we have been allocated the wonderful amount of £750 and John Hancock went along to the Solihull plant to receive the cheque at the end of January. After an exciting walk through the production area surrounded by part-built Land Rovers, we were presented with a giant cheque!



Left to right, Bryan Hamson, John Hancock and Lois Hamson receiving the cheque along with Older Friend, Dean Robinson and Adam Lawrence, Chairman of the Charity Committee

25 YEARS OF THE FRIENDSHIP PROJECT

Over the past 25 years, many people have worked incredibly hard to make the Friendship Project for Children the success it is today. In this special anniversary year it is appropriate to pick out just a few of those who have made significant contributions to the Project and highlight some of the important events that have taken place in that time.

Tribute must be paid to the Project founder and our first Chairman, Charles Raeburn who saw the 'Big Brother/Big Sister' organisation working in America and recognised the need for something similar here in Warwickshire. In 1986 the Friendship Project was established as a charity, at that time operating only in Warwick.

Pam Daniel was the first Project Coordinator, from 1987-2002. Pam worked with Charles Raeburn, helping him to develop many of the procedures for recruiting Older Friends.

John Vallis, former County Engineer, was involved with the Project from the early days. He made a significant contribution as coordinator of fundraising and also had spells as Chair and Vice Chairman.

In 1992 there were 38 Friendships and the new role of Group Supporter was first introduced; their role being to guide a small number of Older Friends and monitor their Friendships. This remains a vital role within the Project in assisting Area Coordinators.

During the 1990's the Project had a flourishing branch at the University of Warwick. Each year between 30 and 50 students befriended young people in different parts of Coventry. The student's activities were ably coordinated by Peter Muckersie and Val Gough, retired head and deputy head of Castle Sixth Form Centre in Kenilworth. Occasionally, students from both Coventry and Warwick Universities do still apply to become Older Friends.

1993 saw a new branch being set up in Stratford upon Avon with Ruth Beesley as the first branch coordinator. The following year a branch in Rugby was established.

In 2000 the Nuneaton and Atherstone branches were established: Maureen Quinn being the first Coordinator for Nuneaton and Johanne Rutter who took over from Carol France and Pat Falkner in 2001 for the Atherstone branch. Then finally in 2007 the Southam branch was established.

We are immensely proud that Helen Yendall, a highly talented local poet, is a former Older Friend. Her poem 'A Child in the Corner' typifies the plight of many Younger Friends.

Over a number of years Dr Vic Tuck has worked with current Chairman John Hancock as consultant on Child Protection issues. Likewise Martin Cliff has been an important link with Children's (formerly Social) Services and we are grateful to Vic and Martin for their ongoing support.

In 25 years there have been many changes: Barry Aust took over from John Leary to develop the role of Operations Manager. He also acted as fundraiser for a year unearthing new funders. In 2006, Pete Aldersley joined the Project as Operations Manager and was an Older Friend for a time. Pete created Xanadu, the Project database and maintained it until realising that the Operations job had grown so much that another new post of Project Administrator was needed, this being created in 2007.

Sadly in 2009, Treasurer Roy Edwards died. IT specialist Chris Buck joined the Project and introduced expense payments to Older Friends by electronic transfer, a great improvement to payment by cheque. Chris has recently stepped down as Treasurer and is now looking after the Project website.

Needing a new Treasurer and a new Funding Officer following the death of Carol Morton last year, Alan Marshall happened to be in the right place at the right time and is now making his mark in both roles. Alan is working with John Hancock and the Area Coordinators, both ably assisted by their respective husbands, to find new funders and making funding applications.

The six branches have come together into two areas, each having its Area Coordinator who works closely with CRB and Briefing Officers: Lynne Ballantyne and Pauline Higginbottom for Southam, Warwick and Stratford branches and Lois Hamson and Judy Sims for Atherstone, Nuneaton and Rugby branches.

Two other people deserve a mention in this brief tribute on the Project's 25th Anniversary, they are Michael Coker our President and Cheryl Rawbone the Project Secretary. Both have been with the Project since it all began back in 1986 (and neither look old enough!).

John Hancock became Chairman in 2004. His sheer passion for the Project drives the rest of the management team to build on the work of the past 25 years. He has stepped in to help out in differing roles when needed; he has acted as Treasurer, Fundraiser and Area Coordinator, he is now continuing in helping to raise funds, he is the Child Protection Officer and also a Group Supporter. In 2007, John produced a booklet to mark the 21st anniversary of the Project. In 2011 he is hoping to be a proper Chairman!

The Project management team come from many different backgrounds, but all share the desire to help as many of the needy children in the county as possible. All of them work tirelessly to do their job, from sending out application forms, interviewing applicants, arranging Matches - the tasks are endless.

Today, Group Supporters, the links between Older Friends and Area Coordinators, play a vital role in the smooth running of the Project, supporting approximately 65 Older Friends who generously volunteer some of their time each week to a vulnerable child. *Together we are making a difference—Ed.*

I was delighted to receive this email—Ed.

Tuesday 21st December 2010

Hello All,

Before you all settle down into a huge heap of mince pies and brandy butter, I write to announce the glorious winner of my Christmas competition. The judges Orla (now 13) and Isobel (now 11) have pronounced from an amazingly wide field of SIXTY SEVEN entries, one has been chosen. Never was it harder to choose between entries: nominated charities ranged from schools in Kenya to the Sheffield Wildlife Trust, via Multiple Sclerosis and bowel cancer (as it were). They are all immensely moving, and I've learned a lot about your cherished charities.

So... drum roll ... A cheque for £100 will be making its way to The Friendship Project nominated by Helen Yendall. Here is her winning poem:

**The Friendship Project charity helps many kids in need
It pairs them with an 'older friend' and sows a friendship seed.
Young carers, the bullied, the lonely and the sad -
Through outings, trips and laughter, the Project makes them glad.
It shows them that they matter, it helps to stop their tears
It give them fun and friendships, that last for many years.**

Best wishes,

Jo Bell

Director, National Poetry Day;

Co-programmer, Ledbury Poetry Festival 2011 with Jonathan Davidson

Our thanks to Jo for this generous donation; congratulations to Helen and our thanks to Orla and Isobel for choosing the Friendship Project.

Helen Yendall is a former Older Friend and writes:

I first met Sam* when he was twelve and until he was seventeen I took him out every weekend. He's now almost twenty-three and we are still in touch.

Sam has learning disabilities and he's not academic: reading and writing have always been a struggle. But he's got plenty of common sense and he's a polite and sensitive lad, who gets on with people.

As a child, his family didn't have much money, or a car, so treats and outings were few and far between.

From the start, I wanted to give him experiences that he might not otherwise have had. I wanted to see him grow in confidence and realise that he was just as good as anyone else.

We had lots of 'adventures' together, including many 'firsts': his first time strawberry picking, conker collecting, blackberry picking, water sliding, playing badminton, ice skating and tobogganing at the Snowdome. Even the simplest activity was fun: like flying a kite in the park.

We suffered the torment of watching his local team lose most of their football matches (and occasionally the jubilation when they won!) and he has certainly made me laugh. As the eldest child though (I am one myself!), he can be a worrier, so I have always tried to defuse his worries and encouraged him to be carefree and to enjoy his youth.

He certainly always enjoyed our trips. I used to pick him up in my car and before we'd even fastened his seatbelt, he'd ask, "What are we going to do *next* week?!"

During our friendship, Sam spent 3 years at a residential training college, after school, where he had some great experiences (eg: trips overseas and to his beloved Manchester United). He took it all in his stride – partly, I hope, due to the attitude I have tried to instil in him of taking every opportunity life throws at you.

He now has his own council flat and his first girlfriend. He's still close to his family and although he doesn't currently have a job (he has some medical problems which don't help with that), he's such a hardworking lad – who likes to earn money – that I don't think it will be long before he finds something that suits him.

Whenever I see him – which is just a few times a year now, although we text and phone too – he's always pleased to see me. "I've missed you," he tells me. "Have you missed me?" I like to think that I've been one of the constants in his life; someone who hasn't let him down, someone who's always tried to let him be himself.

I am sure we will always be in touch and I hope that one day, if he has a family of his own, that he will be the kind of father who, remembering some of the 'adventures' we had, will enjoy spending time with his children – even if it's just flying a kite in the park.

**not his real name*

Chantelle is an 11 year old young girl who has been befriended by one of our adult volunteers for the last 2 years.

When she was originally referred to our Project, she was a sad, shy, quiet little girl, lacking in self-confidence, and she had difficulty in socialising and sustaining relationships because of her inability to express her feelings in an acceptable way.

The following letter, in exactly her own words, was recently received from her and speaks for itself:

Dear Lois

Since I've known Linda I've become a more happier girl. Also I have got on more with my Mum and Dad and I have been concentrating on my family more. I have also met some of Linda's family, and they are really nice to me and they are really friendly.

And now I also know if you work hard and concentrate you will become a happy girl, because you will know what to do and you will also get high marks.

Now I am a happy girl, me and my friends haven't fell out so much, and also I've have made new friends at my different school.

Since I've knew Linda for 2 years we have done lots of things together, my favourite things are Drayton Manor, cinema, swimming, baking cakes, snakes and ladders, meeting people in Linda's family, and also meeting Linda, Doug and Stanley and also William.

From Chantelle



And this is the story from the Older Friend's viewpoint:

When I first met Chantelle (over two years ago now, unbelievably!) my over-riding feeling was that she was an unhappy little girl. Her relationship with her father was not good, and she was having problems at school due to disagreement with her peers. Being the oldest of four children, her mother had very little time to even consider what difficulties Chantelle might be experiencing.

We soon developed a rapport and I found Chantelle very easy to please – she was enjoying 'one-to-one' for possibly the first time.

Chantelle had a few friends who were a bad influence but she is now part of a group of nice girls, those who aren't pushing the boundaries but just enjoy playing together. I receive regular updates on their activities.

Gradually I believe that she has seen that it is possible to have disagreements with friends and siblings which don't lead to fisticuffs! There are other ways to deal with differences of opinion and even accept that you disagree!

I must say that a positive role model had been her former head teacher at her primary school – it meant a lot to Chantelle that he was the instigator of our Friendship and always took the trouble to ask how we were doing.

From Chetwynd Junior School, Nuneaton:

I am writing in response to your letter. Chantelle was identified through initial teacher concern, and then through the CAF process was referred to The Friendship Project

She was a child who benefited immediately from the support of your charity. The simple link of a 'trusting friend' was invaluable - her anxiety in school was noticeably diminished when she had somebody 'on her side'.

The relationship with the head teacher (Mr Roy Garner) and his support, alongside the Project, definitely had an impact upon Chantelle.

Intervention was just at the right time for Chantelle, and it is lovely to hear that the Friendship has continued.

May I add the Head Teacher's appreciation to your group for the work which you have done with Chantelle.

Pam Breeze, SENCO

CHRISTMAS 2010

The Christmas Party, 2010 for Younger Friends aged under 11 took place at the Queen's Road Baptist Church in December. Each Younger Friend had delicious party food, played games, led by Pauline Higginbottom, Lynne Ballantyne and Matthew Redmond. Mathew also entertained the children with his wonderful magic show.



Only four girl Younger Friends came along, outnumbered several times over by rather noisy boys, but all had a good time. Whilst

the youngsters let off steam, Older Friends could choose from a variety of cakes and mince pies and a cup of tea

At the end of the afternoon, after seeing Santa, each child went home laden with balloon sculpture, goody bag and a present from Santa.

The big question remains "Why was Santa beardless?" Suggestions are that Mrs Claus had got fed up with his unruly whiskers and demanded he shave.; or that he decided to loose the beard so that they didn't tickle the ladies when he gave them a Christmas kiss. Will the beard be back this year?



Thanks to Older Friend Carrie Els for taking the photographs

A group of Older Friends, Younger Friends (the over 11's!) and their supporters braved the elements of a cold Saturday 27th November to travel to Rugby for the Project's Christmas Bowling treat!

The keen group excitedly queued up to trade outdoor shoes and boots for bowling shoes and the helpful staff at Rugby Superbowl set up each team's 'computerised scorers' so play could commence without delay! Once we'd decided which colour, size and weight in bowls suited each person play commenced in earnest. Some people were absolute 'naturals' whilst others amongst us were pretty surprised when we knocked down a 'respectable' number of skittles! At half time we enjoyed burgers, sausage, chips etc and we didn't count the calories! With renewed energy the second games got underway.

For the Adults first place went to Doug Hunter with an overall score of 260, with Chris Buck coming in a close second place with a score of 259. The 'Younger Friends' champion was Jakob, scoring 228 and in second place Chantelle with 211 (well done young lady!).

Everyone had a lovely afternoon and at the end of the day it's the taking part that is all important (perhaps that's because my score was on the 'low side'!!). The consensus of opinion was that the event was another Friendship Project Christmas success which perhaps may be repeated in 2011?

Kay Aldersley
Group Supporter



'VOTE' OF THANKS

Thank you to everyone who voted for the Friendship Project at **NatWest Bank**, their Community Chest did give the Friendship Project £3,000. It was your vote that enabled us to receive this.

Again Thank You.

Lynne Ballantyne
Area Coordinator South Warwickshire

Anniversary Special Events

As you will all know by now, there are lots of events planned for our Birthday Year, and notice of these will be circulated locally and will be on the website during the course of the year. There is something for everyone, lots of fun and fundraising, as well as efforts to raise the profile of The Project. Please come along and support where you can.

However, I also wanted to take the chance to say 'Thank You' to my team of volunteer Older Friends, and recognize their contribution to the success of The Friendship Project, as well as to mark our 25th Birthday. So a Celebration Evening is to be held on 18th May to gather together some of the professionals who make referrals to us, Head Teachers who ask us to get involved through CAFs, some of the local sponsors who make our work possible, as well as my team of Older Friends and Group Supporters without whom we could not be so successful.

We are delighted that Heart of England Community Foundation will be supporting this event through The Jack and Edith Griffiths Charitable Trust.

Lois Hamson
Area Coordinator, North Warwickshire

PETE'S CORNER

In the last couple of months I have relinquished my position as Operations Manager to take up a more back seat role as Operations Support. I have enjoyed the last five years very much. In that time I have brought the Project out of the pen and paper era into the computerised 21st century. We now have all the Older and Younger friends on a central database making it much easier to keep track of friendships and the status of volunteers CRB's. I have changed dramatically the way that expenses are handled thus ensuring good stewardship of our funds especially important in these tough financial times when funding is much more difficult to obtain. And building on a previous Operation Managers work I have revised all of the paperwork/documentation that is needed for a charity such as ours.

In this momentous anniversary year I hope that I in some small way have made the Project 'fit for purpose' for the next 25 years and I wish it all the best in the future.

Pete Aldersley,
Operations Support



25th ANNIVERSARY EVENTS

A number of special events have been organised to take place throughout 2011, to enable all our Older Friends and supporters of the Friendship Project to celebrate our anniversary



11th March	Coffee Morning at Overslade Centre, Rugby
2nd April	Coffee Morning at the home of Cheryll Rawbone
5th May	Flower arranging demonstration by Bulkington Flower Club
18th May	Celebration Event at Courtyard Restaurant, Higham Lane, Nuneaton
25th June	SUMMER PARTY & FUN DAY at Old Leamingtonians RFC
9th July	COFFEE MORNING at the Green Man, Long Itchington
13th August	SPONSORED RAMBLE AND PICNIC at Hatton World
21st September	COFFEE MORNING at St Peter's Church Hall, Mancetter
October	EVENING DRINKS for past Trustees and supporters at the home of Cheryll Rawbone
November	CHILDRENS' EVENT, Atherstone, part of Dickens Evening Charity Event

WHERE TO GO

Try the **Elizabeth Svenden Trust**. This charity is located at the Pilkington Donkey Centre at Sutton Park, Sutton Coldfield. Contact with animals has been proved beneficial to children and here children have to chance to ride and perhaps even adopt a donkey.

Go to www.elisabethsvendentrust.org.uk for more information.

Inspiring engineers of the future. **Imagineering** runs out-of-school clubs, fairs and annual events for engineers of the future. The Imagineering Foundation is a registered charity which was formed over 10 years ago and works closely with companies such as National Grid, and Jaguar Land Rover. It has a purpose-built educational facility at Gaydon.

For more information visit www.imagineering.org.uk

Arty Party at Dobbies. Pottery and glass painting, soap and candles. 10.30 am-4pm on Saturdays.

More ideas for outings with your Younger Friend on our website at www.friendshipproject.co.uk

Bodies & Co generously donated a magnificent £6,000 to the Project following their Charity Fashion Show Extravaganza held at the Royal Spa Centre last November. Thank you to Bodies & Co and to all who made the event such a success. The money raised is being used towards helping our Older Friends make life better for a child in need.

BODIES & Co
The fitness organisation -
And now including
SLIMMING

Bodies hold fitness sessions in Leamington, Warwick and Kenilworth and also offer advice and encouragement to those trying to lose weight.

For more information call Jenni on 01926 492 183

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