

Our NEW Chairman!

This is my first newsletter as chairman, and I would just like to introduce myself to those that have not met me personally over the many years that I have been involved with the Friendship Project, going back to its formal launch in 1986. I would like to say on personal level how your many contributions are appreciated, and to thank all involved within the project, either directly, or in roles such as fundraising or support, it is really important that we all work collectively at all levels as a team so as to support the work of Friendship Project, ensuring we continue to help to make a positive difference to a child's life.

I must also say a very big thank you to John Hancock who has been chairman over the last nine years and a tremendous servant of the project. John has stepped down to Deputy Chairman, and will now chair the Operations team meetings, is our nominated safeguarding officer, along with support on bid fund raising, and CAF attendance and training. His experience and qualities are greatly appreciated, along with his time which is always freely and voluntarily given.



Cheryll Rawbone.
The Project's new
Chairman

(Continues inside....)

🌿 Merry Christmas & Happy New Year to all
our volunteers, supporters and funders! 🌿

Friendship Project Friendship Bracelets

Our Fund Raising team have had these designed and made up for all our supporters. Wear them with pride and help spread the word! We haven't put a price on them but would welcome your own donation (hopefully over £1, hint, hint ;) To buy yours, get in touch with Sue on suefrost@friendshipproject.co.uk or call on 0845 838 2098



Friendship Project Donors 2013... so far!

Our heartfelt thanks to the following organisations and individuals who donated money to the Friendship Project in 2013:

Donors

Aubrey Allen
Aviva
BBC Children in Need
Coventry Building Society
Gina Worrall
Institute of Export – Coventry branch
Leamington Rotary Club
M & J Johnson
Old Fourpenny Hotel, Warwick
P & K Read received through CAF
Stratford Town Trust
Terry Hague
Tom's Fund
Waitrose
Waitrose – Kenilworth
29th May 1961 Charitable Trust

£25,526.66

What We've Been Up To... A Visit to the Guide Dogs!

16 Younger Friends and their Older Friends enjoyed a visit to the Guide Dogs Training Centre in Leamington. We had a very interesting talk about the training, a DVD and then a tour of the centre, meeting Oliver, the centre's cat. Some of the puppy walking volunteers brought their puppies to spend time with the children. We all had a go walking through the "sensory tunnel" and walked the obstacle course in a blindfold being guided by one of the "trainee" dogs. Then we got to make jam sandwiches and hot drinks while wearing a blindfold. Everyone went home after a picnic with a "goody bag". A good time was had by all. Thank you to all the staff and volunteers at the Centre, especially Benn who had organised it for us.



What We've Been Up To... Running n' Raising!

It was a beautiful Sunday morning and conditions were pretty much perfect! Congrats to everyone who participated; those lovely medals were well deserved! (Left to Right)....

- Chris Buck 44:46
- Georgi Curtis 1.22:58
- Shawn Gladwin 59:17
- Helen Goldingay 1.22:56
- Catherine Marshall 1.05:49

A great day was had by all, so much so that we're already planning our next event, **The Stratford**

10k on 8 sept. If you're interested in feeling fantastic on a Sunday morning (albeit after a bit of run), we'd love you to join us. We're even thinking of organising some (gentle) training runs in the



week to prepare as best we can. Please contact Shawn Gladwin (shawn@friendshipproject.co.uk) of our Fundraising Team for further details.

What We've Been Up To... Winning Awards!



Aviva Broker Community Fund Award Winner 2013

Oval Coventry has a close association with a local Coventry and Warwickshire charity, the Friendship Project for Children (Friendship Project). Involvement of Oval staff in fund raising events and activities is encouraged by Cheryll Rawbone, Managing Director of Oval Coventry, who is also a founding trustee of the charity. Oval provide hands on practical support with office space for meetings; printing of guidelines and information leaflets; and distribution of newsletters, so are a valuable resource for the Friendship Project. As well as Cheryll who is the current Vice Chairman, Valerie Wallace Burrows, Facilities Manager at Coventry is Honorary Secretary.

In January, Valerie entered the Friendship Project into the Aviva Broker Community Fund Awards and we were delighted when we reached the final, competing against 214 other insurance brokers from around the UK. As part of the award, Aviva sent a camcorder and instructions on how to produce a film to promote the charity and with some professional assistance from Martyn Lee, - Media & Communications at Coventry University; a 15 minute production was filmed at the Coventry Transport Museum.

The film was accepted and we were invited to the Grand Finale on Tuesday 16 April. We attended a reception and lunch in London, along with the other 24 finalists and we are delighted to report that we were presented with a cheque for £7,500, together with a plaque for the Oval Coventry office, from Will Greenwood, member of the 2003 England World Cup winning team. Cheryll and Valerie representing Oval, along with two other members of the Friendship Project, John Hancock and Jean Dennis, were delighted to accept the award.

Oval Coventry is proud to be associated with this local charity, which has helped over 1,500 disadvantaged children since foundation in 1986, and we are delighted that we have been able to help ease the fundraising burden by winning this award from Aviva, one of our insurer partners, and also providing promotional opportunity for the charity too.

Each year the Friendship Project has to raise in excess of £45,000, so this award will contribute significantly in helping to improve the social and emotional well-being of disadvantaged children. The Friendship Project is keen to recruit both additional volunteers and to receive further donations.

NEW(!) Chairman's Report.... Cont...

(Continued from front page...)

In this newsletter you will find details of changes to our Operations Team, which as well as goodbyes and welcomes, we have also expanded so that we now again have an Area Coordinator specifically covering the Alcester/Shipston/Stratford upon Avon areas, after a gap of a number of years. Additionally, we are opening events to all geographical areas within the project, so as not to lose any friendship links that have been built up over the years, and also to give more opportunities to integrate across the whole of Warwickshire, and for volunteers to take advantage of what is taking place even if not in their immediate locality.

Big thank you to Lois, who stepped into to cover the South Warwickshire area as temporary Area Coordinator for South Warwickshire, in spite of her husband Bryan's health deteriorating, and also to Pauline who has helped her with the training of the new team, and supported the transition process.

We have been very fortunate in funding awards this year, and have received an award of £7,500 from Aviva in the spring, along with various other both local and larger bids. Some of these are pictured in this Newsletter. Additionally as a new venture we also attended the Leamington Peace Festival and the Stratford River Festival, to promote the Friendship Project, and to raise some funds, with raffle ticket sales, and small donations. Many thanks to Shawn and his fund raising team for organising this. We will also be at the Dickensian Evening in Atherstone later in the year.

The AGM this year was followed by a useful emergency first aid session, and then in June we were fortunate to have a dedicated Friendship Project training session for Safeguarding, which our new operations team members were able to join, alongside trustees and Older friends, and many thanks to Jean, and Judy for organising this, and Esther Chamberlain, who has been an Older Friend with the Friendship Project for over 6 years, and has been delivering Safeguarding Training as part of her 'day job' for 3 years throughout neighbouring counties.

Operations Team – Farewells and Welcomes!

This year has seen a few changes to our Operations team, with two employees leaving us. Farewell to Lynne Ballantyne who was the Area Coordinator in South Warwickshire for just over two years, as well as previously being a longer term older friend. She was ably supported by her husband Sam, himself an older friend, until earlier this year. Both provided devoted service to the Project. Dave Beckett also left us after just a year or so in post, so as to follow his and his wife's dream of a place in the sun, and they will now be spending around half of the year at intervals in Tenerife, as they purchased a new home there in February. Dave said he felt his role as Project Administrator was one of the best and most worthwhile jobs he had held. We would like to extend the Projects thanks to them for their work, and extend our best wishes to all for the future.

Sue Frost joined us as Project Administrator to replace Dave at the start of April, after a short handover period, and in the intervening period has been getting to know the systems, her fellow team members, and volunteers. Sue has had a career in both University Library Services, and British & Irish Association of Law Librarians, and also lectured on part time basis in law at Warwick University. She is experienced in Access databases, and has also in recent years been or is still actively involved as a School Governor, Editor of local Church Magazine, Member of Parish Councilor, Vice Chair of same, and Lay celebrant at Helen Ley House. The Project is putting in place a new database system which should be completed and fully up and running, by the year end.



In Leamington/Warwick/Kenilworth areas our new appointee as Area Co-ordinator from July is **Fiona Hopley**, who started off working life as a caterer which gave her a great opportunity to travel and see the world. After completing an HND in Hotel and Catering Management, she worked at Harrods as an Assistant Manager and moved around their 16 restaurants. She then spent a year using some of her secretarial training at the Lawn Tennis Association, rubbing shoulders with the likes of Tim and Greg, before moving to Leamington 15 years ago, and now has three children. While they were growing up Fiona specialised in making celebration cakes. She now coaches at Leamington Lawn Tennis club, which has given her some valuable experience in dealing with a broad spectrum of children. She is really enjoying her new role as Area Co-ordinator and hope that I will be able to contribute to putting a smile on the younger friend's faces.



Helen Yendell is the new area coordinator for Alcester/Shipston/Stratford Upon Avon, from July 2013, and was originally an Older Friend for 8 years in North Warwickshire, then prior to taking on the role of Area Co-ordinator in South Warwickshire (in July 2013), Helen worked for several years in a variety of administration, marketing and event positions, including 4 years at Warwick University. She is delighted to be involved with such a worthwhile charity and is looking forward to working closely with colleagues and Older Friends in the Project, to help bring some happiness to the lives of disadvantaged children. Outside the Project, she enjoys walking her dog and 'creative writing'. Helen has taught adult evening classes for Solihull College and since moving to Gloucestershire, near to Shipston, in 2012, she has set up her own writing class in Moreton-in-Marsh.



I am sure you will all join me in welcoming our new team members to the project.

Cheryll Rawbone

Chairman

What We've Been Up To... Dickens Night

Dickens Night has become a longstanding festive event in the town of Atherstone, in Warwickshire, which encompasses the switching on of the town's Christmas lights. Dickens Night has become a firm favourite with the townsfolk of Atherstone, This year we were there once again on hand to raise the profile of the Charity, raise some money, and share in the merriment!



What We've Been Up To... Out on the Festival Circuit!

This year, the Fund Raising Committee (FRC) launched its programme to raise awareness of the Friendship Project throughout Warwickshire. The campaign was kicked off by attendance at Leamington Peace Festival on 15th and 16th June followed closely by Stratford's River Festival 6th and 7th July. Each time, the stall was decorated with all the new marketing materials which came just in time! At both events, we had a number of people express an interest in becoming an Older Friend, and all we spoke to were impressed with the charity's work.



The FRC would like to send a big thank you to all those volunteers who helped with the events. Having an Older Friend present proved a great success in encouraging potential new friends, as they were able to give a first-hand account of usual activities and allay any concerns. Our festival circuit continues in November with attendance at Atherstone's Dickens night on 30th November, where we hope to have similar success.

We have learned a lot from these appearances, not least how to erect a gazebo, and intend to feature in future festivals. If you feel a specific event would provide significant coverage to raise our profile, please speak to your Area-Coordinator and we will be pleased to investigate the possibilities.

Corporate Governance Update

We have continued with our stated aim of review and updating of documentation, with the revised Guidelines being produced and circulated in April, and for those few that have not acknowledged receipt, and confirmed that they have received, read, and understood them could I make a plea on behalf of the Project Administrator for you to confirm this to Sue Frost please.

It was mentioned in our previous newsletter that from a governance perspective we would be refreshing, reviewing and updating our systems and process, and this work is underway. It is particularly important with volunteers involved on generally a one to one basis that the Guidelines are followed, and any queries or clarification is sought from either the Group Supporters or Area Coordinators, if anyone is in any doubt. Part of our governance and project management reporting role is also to make sure that the friendships are monitored and regularly reports are obtained, and I would just like to stress the importance of the monthly reports from Older Friends, these are used to monitor suitability of activities, frequency of outings, and progress of a friendship, and any potential issues that are arising on either side. This information is of paramount importance to us, and is part of our audit trail. Even if only brief email, please make sure that you provide these to the Project administrator every month.

Our current project is a Procedural Manual for the Operations team, which has been drafted, and is now with the team members for their input before finalising at the Operations team meeting in October. Our new Employment Contracts and Employee handbook have been completed, and rolled out. Photo ID cards, yes we are still planning to get these issued to all, and photos either in electronic jpeg format to SueFrost@friendshipproject.co.uk or passport size by post to her as soon as possible. Please write your name on the back, if posting as Sue does have one she is not sure who it is!

Updated Documentation on Website...

We're continually evaluating our documentation and looking to make improvements to make it more relevant to your needs. This year we've completed an overhaul of all our documentation – all of which is now live on our website (www.friendshipproject.co.uk). We invite take a look and feedback any thoughts to chris@friendshipproject.co.uk. We'll do our best to get any changes made ASAP!



Raffle Winners

Below are our lucky raffle winners which were drawn on 30th November. We sold over £400 worth of tickets so a massive thank you to all those who took part. For those of you who didn't win, don't worry, there's always next year!

Ticket Number	Prize	Winner
1204	Camcorder	Mrs J Miles, Stratford upon Avon
640	Christmas Tree	Mrs Susan Humprey, Warwick
152	Warwick Castle Ticket	Jane Wharmby, Milton Keynes
139	Will writing	Wendy Wadsworth, Leamington Spa
494	Months Membership Nuffield Health	Jon Sargis, Warwick
386	Golf Lessons	Ed Kenny-Levick, Leamington Spa
627	Land Rover Ticket	Gillian Bishop, Cubbington
663	Kettle	Gail Smith, Broad Camden
1260	Aubrey Allen Voucher £20	Cheryll Rawbone, Leamington
1077	Larousse Wine Book	Helen Colquitt Morecombe
1711	Bottle of Prosecco	Kath Hancock, Kenilworth
1482	Cookbook	Edwin Scholey, Rugby

New Promotional Materials

Our Fundraising Team, have overseen these fantastic new promotional materials. If you feel these would be of use to you, then please get in touch with SueFrost@friendshipproject.co.uk and she'll be happy to send you some copies.



North Warwickshire Case Study

A local infant school identified a child who needed our involvement. The family had previously been supported by Homestart following the parent's divorce and separation. Mum had custody of four children and was struggling to give each the attention they needed. She was trying to get into full time employment and needed to attend appropriate training and this was putting additional pressure on the time she could spend with the children. There was no extended family support available. This particular child, then aged 7, was beginning to show short attention span, aggressive behaviour and was very insecure. His attendance at school was good but there was a lack of progress and his behaviour was deteriorating.

We had a male volunteer available, who met with the child and his mother. It was agreed to establish a friendship, and this has now continued for over two years. The child has shown a marked improvement in his behaviour, the Older Friend has helped him build a bike, and his school report reflects a big improvement. Mum has now completed a training course and has a full time job and the home environment is much better. Our volunteer has been able to give this child a positive male role model and has encouraged him to develop interests in normal activities a child of his age would enjoy. They go on outings, they both enjoy the cinema, but they also spend time chatting and sharing time together at the library or even cooking meals.

Help us raise important funds... simply by shopping !

Probably the easiest and most fun way ever, to raise funds for your favourite charity! We've teamed up with online charity fundraiser, www.easyfundraising.org.uk to help raise funds for our activities with minimal input from our supporters. This is how it works...

easyfundraising
.org.uk

1. Start at easyfundraising

Let's say you want to buy a book from Amazon. Instead of going to amazon.co.uk, you go to easyfundraising.org.uk.

2. Make a purchase

You click from the easyfundraising website through to Amazon to make your purchase. The price of the book is exactly the same as if you'd visited Amazon directly.

3. Get a donation

After you have bought your book, Amazon will make a donation to our cause as a thank you for shopping with them. easyfundraising collect these donations for us, and it costs nothing!

And this doesn't just apply to Amazon, either. There are over 2,700 online retailers to choose from. All you have to do is choose **The Friendship Project for Children** as your beneficiary charity. Enjoy your Christmas shopping!

Contributions for next time...

We're always on the look-out for news surrounding the activities of our Older and Younger friends. If you've got a news item you'd like to share with us, please drop us a line at chris@friendshipproject.co.uk and we'll get in on the website and the next newsletter!

**GET
WRITING**



Friendship Project for Children

www.friendshipproject.co.uk

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