



Home-Start Bristol Summer Newsletter 2012



On July 7th, we marked the 25th anniversary of Home-Start Bristol's registration as a charity with a party for volunteers and families. There was much to celebrate - over 2,000 families with young children in the Bristol area have been helped since that start in the 1980's and hundreds of local volunteers have had the pleasure and privilege of helping them.



One honoured guest at the party was Sheila Fielden who was a

Home-Start volunteer in the early days. She talked about how she had felt the need of help when struggling with small children herself - and how pleased she was to discover later that Home-Start could give her the chance to provide that much needed help to other parents.



So this was all a fine excuse for a glass of bubbly, all kinds of fun and games and a delicious birthday cake, courtesy of Patisserie Valerie.

A very good time was had by all!

Other VIP guests at the party were the Lord Mayor of Bristol, Councillor Peter Main, and the charity's new Patron, Charlotte Leslie MP.

Home-Start Bristol Chair, Ken Booth, thanked the team of staff and volunteers who had worked so hard to make the party a success and all the local businesses whose generous donations made this party possible and provided free raffle prizes. The charity is particularly grateful to the children's entertainers who kept everyone happy in spite of the weather. Children and adults alike were mystified by magician The Great Jaydini and enthralled by what was in the bag of Bigbugbag Man. The queue for the table of Face up Face Painting never dwindled and the results were mostly delightful - occasionally terrifying!



Families are, of course, at the very centre of everything Home-Start Bristol does. Ken spoke of the determination with which staff and trustees would work to carry on in the future - an uphill struggle in these hard times. For the moment, however, the charity can look back, raise a glass and celebrate!

Heuristic Play

I recently attended 2 Volunteer Training Events at Speedwell Children's Centre, one on **Heuristic Play** (and the other on Schematic Play). They were both extremely informative and I came away reinvigorated with ideas to share with the family I support. **Heuristic Play** is aimed at pre-toddling children to encourage independent play and exploration. By preparing a low round basket with any safe variety of non-plastic, household objects, babies are provided with the opportunity to learn about their world by selecting objects they're interested in, entirely by themselves, often through 'mouthing' them. This can be a cost effective and interesting way of stimulating young minds! Plastic objects are not recommended as they all have the same texture but nail brushes, sponges, spoons, pebbles, cones etc are!

We were given access to some wonderful materials from Bristol Scrapstore and I went away equipped with a large box, some large tubes and lots of materials for children to investigate.

Anna Thompson Volunteer/Volunteer Rep

Southmead Community Shop

Did you know that you can buy fruit and vegetables from the shop at Southmead Community Centre every Tuesday between 12 and 4pm? Prices are kept low by not making a profit - instead any money made goes back in the pot to buy stock for the following week. You can also place an order for the following Tuesday.

For more info e-mail:

info@southmeadcommunitycentre.org.uk

Free legal advice

Tuesday 12 June, 9.30am to 11.30am,
SPAN, 176 Easton Road

Advice on divorce, writing a will, child maintenance and more. To book call 952 2712.

Free legal advice drop-in

Wednesdays, 2pm to 4.30pm,
Citizens Advice Bureau, 1 Quay Street

By Albany solicitors, specialists in asylum and immigration legal advice. Free drop-in service.

We pride ourselves on our partnership working with children's centres which have been developed to meet local needs. Here are some of the activities you may find on offer:

Gym Tots, Stay and play, Breastfeeding support group, Rainbow Group for children with special needs, New parent group, Baby massage, Advice and information about paying for childcare, Childminder sessions, Tums to Toddlers, Health Surgery and lots more.....

You'll find a safe and welcoming environment, with easy access to a range of activities and information to help. Why not visit one to find out more!

Catch 22 community space challenge

Young people from Barton Hill have transformed a plot of land into an award winning allotment in St George. During 2012 they will be working in the community improving public spaces, clearing rubbish, litter picking, planting flowers, building benches and bird boxes, making hanging baskets and much more. If you know an area in need of improvement contact luis.dias@catch-22.org.uk

Funding News

We are very grateful that all kinds of local companies and organisations donate money to Home-Start Bristol. Whether the sums are large or small, they make an enormous difference. In 2012 so far we have received donations from Oldland and Dodington Parish Councils, Horfield Methodist Church and local companies Wessex Water, Rolls Royce and STMicronics. We have also recently received generous cheques from The Merchant Venturers and Simplyhealth. Heartfelt thanks go to all of these organisations. These grants (apart from those from Parish Councils) will instantly be put to use to support families as part of our 'Reaching Communities' project. There are ways in which you too can help!

- Register with easyfundraising.org.uk and do all your on-line shopping through that site. The stores you buy from will donate to your nominated charity - Home-Start Bristol - at no cost to you!
- Buy Phoenix cards from Janet who donates all proceeds to HS Bristol - thank you Janet! Better still, hold a coffee morning and invite her to bring cards to sell to your friends.
- If you, a relative or friend work for a local company, tell them about us - they will probably have charity giving schemes.
- If you are doing something special, think about being sponsored through Virgin Giving - and if there's a rusting old vehicle cluttering up your drive, give it to Give a Car!

Get in touch with the office for more information about any of the above. And, once again **THANK YOU!**

Lack of play space!

I am on a mission. Both families I have supported live in North Bristol and one of the glaring problems has been the lack of play spaces.

I care for my four year old granddaughter three days a week and while she enjoys indoor activities such as colouring and cooking, getting out to the local park, meeting her friends, running around and climbing is much more exciting. For me, to sit and chat to other parents and grandparents while the children play safely is a welcome interlude in the day.

My first family was a depressed and tired mother with low energy levels. The small children were confined to the house for long periods and had temper tantrums because they were bored and lacked stimulation. My advice was to take the children to the park as much as possible but there was nothing within walking distance. Fortunately I was able to take them to Blaise Castle. What a pleasure it was to see them all relaxed, smiling and enjoying each other's company.

Imagine my dismay when I moved on to my second family in Brentry to find no play space there either. I was so appalled by the situation I contacted the local councillor. It appears that there is a large area of North Bristol i.e. Sea Mills, Kingsweston, Coombe Dingle and part of Stoke Bishop that do not have a green play space. Bristol City Council aims to have a play space 'within easy walking distance' of every home.

I was a nurse for the whole of my working life so tend to look at a problem from a medical viewpoint. Is anyone else worried about the stress on mothers caused by lack of open spaces and how it affects wellbeing and life span? It seems particularly ironic that there is a government campaign against childhood obesity and yet there is failure to provide somewhere to exercise. I intend to pursue the topic further.

Watch this space!

Celia Ellis (Volunteer and Volunteer rep)

Your views matter!

We would love to hear from families and referrers about your experience with Home-Start. We particularly welcome any suggestions about how we can improve our service. **You can now do this online** - just log onto our website at www.homestartbristol.org.uk and go to the 'Contact Us' page! We look forward to hearing from you!

Diary sheets

We love to hear about your visits, which is why we have made some improvements to the diary sheet! You can now add comments **next** to the boxes asking for codes rather than on a separate page! And..... this **improved version** with expandable boxes is available for you to download from the website. **Please let us know what you think.....**

We need volunteers!

We are starting our third volunteer training course this year in the Barton Hill area on Wednesday, 19th September and are looking to recruit volunteers from Bristol as part of 'Targeted Expansion' a project funded by the Big Lottery. The course which is 1 day a week, 10am-2pm for 9 weeks (breaking for any school holidays) will prepare volunteers for visiting families in their homes.

If you are interested please visit our website at www.homestartbristol.org.uk or call the office on 0117 9501170.

Hi! My name is Loretta and I have been a Home-Start volunteer for about 18 months now.

I really enjoy volunteering and love the feeling that I can help families through some difficult times while at the same time gaining experience and increasing my own awareness.

I feel I can relate to a lot of the families as I am a single mum with 5 children and as a child myself I had to adapt to living with a parent who had mental health issues.

Since joining Home-Start I have gone on to do a Maths and English course and I am currently training to be a sports coach, something I have always wanted to do. Being a volunteer, doing the course and meeting new people who I wouldn't have met in my everyday life has given me back some of the confidence I lost while being at home full time looking after my young family. **Loretta Allen, Volunteer**

Preparation Course This last course was held in the Greenway Business Centre with a very lively bunch of keen volunteers including Steve, our second male trainee! A record number embarked on the accreditation and as we gave it far more emphasis all the way through the course than previously, people were able to tackle assignments each week so by the end the majority of the work was completed. Well done to all those that worked so hard!



Accreditation from a volunteer's prospective

Attending the Home-Start Volunteer Training Preparation Course was an incredibly rewarding introduction to what Home-Start offers. Choosing to get the course accredited by the Open College Network (OCN) was another story! When did I last do an exam? Could I still do it and why would I? Initially, it seemed to be a good idea to gain a written qualification, a daunting prospect however, to actually formulate my understanding to paper. Surprisingly, it felt great to take over the iPad (from the kids) for me (Mum) to do "my" homework and it was also an empowering experience to realise that yes, I could still write a short essay! A choice of Level 1 or Level 2 is offered, depending on how much work one wants to put in, but even Level 2 was easily obtainable. I found that the accreditation process actually supported our learning of the Home-Start ethos. By completing the individual assessments as we learned about them, on a week by week basis, encouraged our self confidence, understanding and role within Home-Start. We were supported by our Home-Start co-ordinator, through individual feedback and also from other volunteers who were experiencing the same process.

I feel that the accreditation process encouraged and supported my insight in recognising what a valuable role we can offer as a Home-Start volunteer within the community.

Cas Bourne-Jones - Volunteer



Summer Picnic!

(For families, volunteers and their families and the staff)

Wednesday 22nd August 11.30am - 1.30pm

(Weather permitting if in doubt phone on day)

St Andrews Park

Bring a picnic

This is a lovely park with a safe enclosed (dog free area) AND a great padding pool (bring towels and a change of clothes!).

There is also a recently renovated playground, ice cream van, tea garden and loos! A chance to relax with your family knowing other adults are there to help out.

We will meet on the grass near the pool.

HOW TO FIND IT: between Effingham and Somerville Rd, St Andrews. A short walk from the bus stops on Gloucester Rd and Montpelier Station. Call the office if you need more info on how to find it.

Parking is on the surrounding streets.

We are keen that as many people can join us as possible so if you are able to offer a lift or meet up with someone to make the trip easier please give the office a ring and we will do our best to link people up with one another.



Volunteer Refresher Day

A must for all volunteers - please put this date in your diary!

**Wednesday, 3rd October 2012, 9.30am - 2pm
(to include lunch) Venue to be confirmed.**

A chance to re-visit some of those skills learnt on the prep course, meet fellow volunteers and gain new skills to assist with your volunteering.

Accreditation news!

Congratulations to Yasmin, Hazel and Sally who all achieved an OCN Level 2 qualification.

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