

Kith & Kids

SPRING 2012



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editor's notes

This Readabout is absolutely jam-packed! As we have had so many activities, events and information we wanted to share with you, I've had to extend this issue. So I hope you enjoy reading all about what's been happening at Kith & Kids. But before you get stuck in, there are a few announcements I'd like to make...

Firstly, we are very happy to welcome Kate Caryer to Kith & Kids, who is working as a part-time intern on the Projects Team. She has not only got stuck into the work, but grasped our unique office humour too!

Unfortunately, we are also sadly saying goodbye to Miles Law who has just left Kith & Kids. She has been a wonderful Projects Coordinator for the last three years. We are really pleased to have worked with her and I'm sure all of you who have been on projects, clubs and all the other many activities that she has been involved with will agree! We wish her every success in the future and hope to keep in touch!

We'd also like to say a huge thank you to everyone who filled in the family survey. This really did help us prepare stage two of our Lottery application, which has now been submitted. Fingers crossed!

And a little note: if any of you go to Tesco (or know anyone who does) please do collect in the school vouchers and send them in. There's not that much time left!

Thanks and enjoy the read!

Maithi



interview with JOHN SPENCELEY

I've been working every Monday at a company called Ward Thomas Removals. It's based in North West London so I have to drive half an hour there and back each time. I planned my journey before I went to be quick and easy, trying to avoid traffic.

I work in the warehouse team and my duties include:

- Sorting the packing materials
- Using the recycling machines
- Helping in the fine art department

This is my first proper job. I've even got my own uniform and steel capped boots. I'm also learning lots of new skills. For example, each box has got different size and I've been sorting them out in the right order. I've been lifting boxes and so I had to learn how to lift in a safe way. Since I've been working, I've been more tidy and organised generally - at work, home and at Kith & Kids.

I've really enjoyed meeting all my new colleagues, especially my supervisor Tom. All the Ward Thomas staff are friendly and helpful and they made me feel part of the team straight away.



Clare Palmer writes about the experience of her daughter leaving home.

It's nearly two years since my daughter Elinor, aged 24 at the time, moved out of our home into supported housing in Islington. As every parent with a disabled child knows this is the most significant change we have to face in our lifelong task of caring. For reasons of my ill health I knew she would have to move soon, and my greatest fear was of her having to live in residential care a long way away from family, friends and networks.

I remember vividly the email that arrived telling me of a vacancy about to come up in a house fifteen minutes away, where Elinor could share with three other tenants, all with high support needs like her. I sat in shock and panic, unable even to speak about it to anyone for a whole day. It seemed unimaginable that my lovely daughter could be looked after, and her needs, wishes, hopes and dreams be responded to, by a team of support workers, however good they were at their job.

I was in for another shock! Elinor settled into her new home very happily. She had weekly visits there beforehand so she, her potential housemates and the staff could get to know each other. I decided not to be there for those visits, as it seemed to me my anxiety would just get in the way, and I wanted her to make new relationships on her own terms. With family help we decorated and furnished a beautiful room for her with her own tv, dvd and cd player. The night before she stayed there for the first time (we started with three nights a week and increased them gradually), I could hardly sleep, and neither it seemed could Elinor. We sat together on the sofa in the chilly dawn, and I remember talking to her about this big change in our lives, about how much I loved her and we would still see a lot of each other. Elinor does not communicate with words, but she sat there with her head on my shoulder, her hand in mine, and seemed to calmly accept what I was saying.

Letting them go or letting them grow?

Perhaps the biggest shock of all has been learning to separate my feelings from hers. Our lives as full on carers mean that we can find it more difficult to let go than our sons and daughters do. I did not realize that Elinor was more than ready to leave home, which is completely normal for a 24 year old. I thought no-one could look after her like I could, and this is still true, but she makes different, and successful, relationships with the staff, who after all are mostly a lot younger and stronger than I am now. Although I will never be easy with the staff shift system, I have to recognize how well she deals with it. Her lovely room, her familiarity with the place and its routine, and her warm connection with her housemates are I think as important for her security and stability as the staff. She has had many people look after her in the most personal way throughout her life, and is used to managing that kind of change. The life skills our children acquire are not always obvious to us when they live with us.

Elinor and I have both changed. We see a lot of each other, and she spends every third weekend with me, but freed from the yoke of providing her personal care and support we enjoy each other's company more. She is always delighted to see me, but fine when I go. It's as if she's saying "See you soon, Mum" as any grown up daughter might do. I am involved in her life and her house in all sorts of ways, I am still her benefits appointee, I organize meetings with friends and family, I suggest activities for her, but gradually I am developing more of my own life, seeing friends, going to the cinema, joining writers groups, finding there can be a life outside caring. Most important of all I believe now there is a good chance Elinor will be well provided for after I die.

Planning for the future

Elinor used to spend a night a week at King Henry's Walk respite centre. It also provides the crisis service for adults with learning disabilities within the borough. Quite regularly there would be someone admitted whose life had literally fallen apart with the illness or death of their parent, as they were unable to live in the family home any longer. They were likely to be middle aged or even older. They would stay there until a placement was found for them, which might well be a long way from everything they had known.

I felt great sympathy for these people, and I have come to realize that the most valuable gift we can give our adult sons and daughters is the chance to settle into a new home while we are still active and able to be involved in planning their new life.

Clare Palmer lives in Islington. With other family carers she set up the Way Forward Group to provide mutual help in planning for their relatives, in the hope they can have their own home, with support, in Islington in the future. This article was published in the Centre 404 Family Carers' Newsletter, January 2012. clarepalmer@yahoo.co.uk

Kith & Kids Themed Parent Meetings:

Saturday 27th October: Pampering Day

A selection of relaxation and beauty treatments to treat yourselves for the afternoon, including Shiatsu massage and make up treatments – more being added all the time!

Sunday 11th November: Wills and Trusts – what to do and how to do it.

Michael Ross (Norwood)

Saturday 24th November: Getting the best out of Social Services Assessments

Hugh Constant (Social Care Institute for Excellence [SCIE])

Sunday 9th December: Supporting your son or daughter with their sexuality

Speaker TB

If you would like to attend any of these please contact us at 0208 801 7432 or email helen@kithandkids.org.uk/carol@kithandkids.org.uk

Other bits and bobs:

D's Day - 10th June at Coram's Fields - A special play day for all held in memory of Doreen Collins, co-founder of Kith & Kids. Climbing wall, face-painting, drumming and inclusive games. Free to enter.

Haringey Autism Activity Sessions – Spectrum Club (on Thursdays) at Bounds Green Scout Park , and also Saturday sessions at Somerford Grove Adventure Playground.

juliyang2@aol.com/<http://www.haringeyautism.port5.com/07925147296>

Netbuddy Dads Survey – Netbuddy and Scope have joined forces to represent the key role that fathers play in caring for their sons/daughters with learning disabilities. <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Dadandme>

“Everybody Matters”: **Challenging Behaviour Foundation film** – The CBF are putting together a film to address the need for person centred support for people with ‘challenging’ behaviour.

<http://www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk/strategy-group/everybody-matters-film/everybody-matters.html>

Top Ten Tips when choosing your support – Created by Voluntary Organisations Disability Group, This is a guide to help anyone who needs to buy social care support for themselves or a friend or relative (an adult or a child). <http://www.vodg.org.uk/uploads/pdfs/VODG%20Top%20Tips%20A41.pdf>

‘Getting It Right’ – Learning Disabilities Foundation – About managing your son/daughter’s personal budgets. You do not have to be in control of your son or daughter’s finances, recruitment etc if they have a personal budget. It is possible to use agencies to manage personal budgets. Nevertheless, it is worth reading in order to understand the ins and outs and intricacies of the system. Please note that while this has been put together by a Kent-based organisation and does mention Kent County Council quite a bit, lots of the information is relevant across boroughs. <http://www.learningdisabilities.org.uk/publications/getting-it-right/>

TfL Travel Support Card – Transport For London have brought out a card to support those with hidden disabilities to get around London on public transport.

<http://www.tfl.gov.uk/gettingaround/transportaccessibility/1201.aspx>

Supporting a new group!

On 13th April both Helens from our Family Support Team ran a workshop for a new group, “Wave” in Muswell Hill. Wave is a new club for young people with and without learning disabilities, aiming to create a fun space where they can socialise with peers. As a new group they asked both our Helens to run a training workshop centred on teamwork. It was a fun evening full of games and a lovely surprise to see a Kith & Kids member there too! Overall it was really nice to meet a new group of people and help them get off the ground. We wish them every success!

Respite Weekends

Since the last Readabout, Kith & Kids Respite Weekends have gone from strength to strength, having had our third weekend away! With the welcome addition of Bradley to the group, more volunteers have come on board, and the atmosphere and camaraderie of the group keeps on growing.

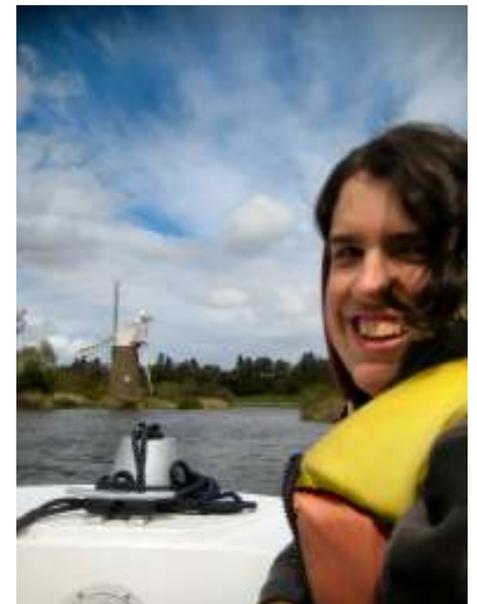
The weekend away in February took place in Dunstable, right next to Whipsnade Zoo. Here we stayed in a fantastic outdoor education centre called Dell Farm, where we had run of the whole centre, including a fantastic professional kitchen for each member to take a turn in cooking a meal for the group. Highlights included flying our own homemade flags and kites on Dunstable Downs, a trip to the zoo, and campfire songs in the farm’s yurt – and my personal favourite, the resident goats joining in with our warm ups in the fresh spring mornings!

Over the May bank holiday, we travelled further afield to the Norfolk Broads, taking part in fully accessible boating activities. The usual mix of games, art activities and singing songs proved enjoyable for the members, all with a slight nautical theme! The addition of fish and chips also went down very well...

Again, the members were able to practise key independence skills at the same time as enjoyable a relaxing weekend away from home. It was lovely to be in the Norfolk countryside, and the weather even stayed dry for us during our trip out on the water, where everyone had the opportunity to take a turn at driving the boat! We had a walk in the local area, stopping to see a beautiful barn owl, which was a real treat.

The opportunity to provide a break to families is fantastic. On our return, hearing of parents’ weekends away for themselves and their other children, or even the rare chance for a lie in, reminds us that although we all have fun away, we are also providing valuable respite for Kith & Kids families.

Helen Robertson



OUR PROJECTS

Social Development Project

In celebration of the upcoming Jubilee, we held a Kings and Queens themed Spring 2:1 Social Development Project. Of course we also had lots of different workshops such as art, craft, music, massage, video and dance so thank you to all of our wonderful workshopers who made it so brilliant! The project ran for five days and what a full five days it was...

Within the project the Youth Group focused on developing their travel and phone training. They all got involved with plenty of practical activities to help them plan and travel independently. The training culminated in an afternoon where they all had to make a journey organised by themselves. We can happily say they all made it there and back safely and in good time! Well done everyone!

There were also plenty of other outings throughout the week, where each participant, along with their volunteers got to take a day trip to a place of their choice. One of the most exciting trips was on the power boat on the River Thames. Riya, Saira and Aidan all thoroughly enjoyed it!

To end a brilliant week we had, in true Kith & Kids tradition, the project show based on the theme of the week. To get into the Jubilee spirit we held an exceptionally regal Kings and Queens parade where everyone showed off the fantastic hats they had made in arts and crafts sessions. Other highlights included: Bradley's and Oriel's fairytale story they had filmed in video sessions, enthralling the audience with their magical story of how the King (Bradley) and Queen (Oriel) met. There was also a spring fete, where there were all sorts of different market stalls such as pampering, spray painting, graffiti and a Name the Corgi stall too! The castle jenga made by those who took part in the craft workshop was especially impressive. And because no party is complete without music, we had a good old sing-song too. James M sang Daydream Believer and everyone joined in singing Arjun's very own composition about taking a train together. It really was a great end to yet another wonderful project. A huge thank you to all the volunteers who filled the whole week with so much energy and enthusiasm!



Weekend Clubs



Our term-times club sessions every other weekend are a great way to unwind for all those who come along to them. Last term we had just as much variety as usual with club sessions indoors and out.

Indoor activities included drama, art, craft, massage, pampering as well as a special Themed Day. The theme was all around South Asia which involved bollywood dancing, Bengali art (making bags), cooking including mango lassi and a delicious chickpea snack. There really was a wonderful atmosphere, with everyone participating in the wide range of activities on offer.

On the outings day, our participants, along with volunteers ventured out into London with trips to Nordoff Robins (a music therapy centre), and the indoor lawn bowls at Bounds Green.



The combination of having afternoon club sessions at Ermine Road Centre, and the extended clubs for trips out or special Themed Days, has really proved successful. The volunteers who come along make it extra special so thanks to all of you too!



Monday Socials

The Monday Socials really have been coming along very well. The group have got to know each other better than ever, including a new member, and the regularity of the volunteers also adds to the positive dynamics of the group. Last term they helped plan and choose all sorts of exciting activities. On the second trip out they went bowling and in true Kith & Kids style, both teams (despite fierce competition) finished with an exactly equal score of 333! We've even got a picture of the scoreboard to prove it (see above!). They also had a DVD night where they watched Ratatouille, which inspired them for the following week where they did their own cooking. The menu included pizza and fried rice and the group worked through the heat of the kitchen to create a very tasty meal.

On the last Monday Social they wrote a song:

'Monday Life'

I like Mondays, I like Mondays, I like Mondays.
 I like Mondays, I like Mondays,
 It's a fun day, fun day.
 People say that Monday gives you the blues
 But here at Monday Socials, that isn't true.
 I like Mondays, I like Mondays, I like Mondays.
 I like Mondays, I like Mondays,
 It's a fun day, fun day.

It's a Youth Group Evening with a chance to go out,
 Maybe for pizza, or just larking about.
 I like Mondays, I like Mondays, I like Mondays.
 I like Mondays, I like Mondays,
 It's a fun day, fun day.

adult services

Residential Project

On 24th April a group of young adults and volunteers (18 in all) went to Swanage, by the sea in Dorset, for their 4-day Residential. This was the furthest this group had been, which meant a longer journey there (3 1/2 hrs) and a massive 5 hours on the way back including a detour through Heathrow airport - GPS wins again!

Once they got to Swanage they could get on with starting the residential good and proper. The theme was around exploring a local area (how to get to know it) and therefore was a different sort of residential as there were less discussions in a large group. Instead, in small groups, they ventured out and found out about what there was to do in the area. The seaside town was explored with important landmarks such as the ice cream shop (!), the tourist centre and the pier of the year being found very quickly. Further exploration and research followed and discoveries included Corfe Castle and Jurassic Coast. Luckily the sun was shining every day meaning that everyone was happy to go out and about.

As well as investigating the area, the group still managed to run their own sessions too. These included: Reading music, relaxation, egg decoration (keeping in the Easter theme), "Pointless" quiz (modelled on the TV show), basketball, football, exercise session, sit-down table football, easter egg hunting and mask painting. Such a wide range of activities ensured that everyone was kept busy at all times! It was noted that these sessions have been improving, as everyone seemed to listen to each other more. Also, having the added extra of being able to go out into the town was much appreciated - especially to the local pub where they became regulars!

Healthy Activities

The healthy activities have begun in our new multi-functional room in the Irish Centre. We've had several yoga sessions as well as Zumba and they've gone very well! It's been great to see members of the adult group, volunteers, staff and others from The Irish Centre all join in. We'd really like families and more volunteers to join us too so please get in touch with Alex on alexm@kithandkids.org.uk to find out more!

We have also started a 5-a-side football team (on Wednesday eves) so if you like a kick about then please do get in touch with Alex!

Fundraising

The Self Advocacy group are continuing their efforts to raise money KK residencials and as part of this effort nine of them are doing a sponsored bike ride on the 29th June. They will be cycling 20K from Tottenham lock to Enfield lock and need your support! If you would like to join them or sponsor them then please get in touch with Alex!



love cake. eat cake.

On 25th May we launched our new fundraising campaign to raise money for our family support services through bake sales.

The launch was a traditional cake sale but with a musical twist! We had plenty of delicious cakes on sale made by families and volunteers as well as lovely cupcakes donated by Hummingbird Bakery (Angel Building, Islington). Eve Hurren made a special K&K cake for our "Guess the Weight Competition" (see second photo from top) and we discovered some creative cupcake decorators on the night too!

As well as all the cake, The Art of Kith & Kids were selling their unique framed prints of Doreen Collins' art as well as retro posters. There was also a beading stall run by Ben Parker which proved to be popular!

The evening's entertainment made our launch extra special with the Kith & Kids choir performing (the audience all joined in for "Hey Jude") as well as the very talented Helen Robertson accompanied by Joe Davin entrancing the audience. All in all, a lovely atmosphere and so nice to see so many people come and share cake with us! A big thank you to all who contributed to this very enjoyable evening.

Now we want YOU to hold a Love Cake. Eat Cake. event for Kith & Kids. It can be as small or large as you want, at a location you want. It can be as simple as taking some cake to your workplace on a Friday afternoon with an honesty box. We will give you a pack to help you on your way and have plenty of ideas too (including a recipe book!) So please get in touch with Maithi on maithi@kithandkids.org.uk for more information.



Sunday 8th July London

This 10K course follows an iconic route through Central London, passing Hyde Park Corner, St James' Palace, Trafalgar Square, Tower Bridge and plenty more. Over 25,000 people take part, giving it a wonderful atmosphere. We still have places - get in touch to find out more!

A huge thanks to:

NEXT who have generously donated £1000 for our Summer 2:1 Social Development Project.

Queenswood School who over the last year have raised £3075 in a variety of ways. They ran Krispy Kreme bake sales, a spring fete, sponsored walks and plenty more to raise money for Kith & Kids. Thank you so much to everyone involved especially Daphne Walton, a long-time volunteer, who nominated us.

Zachary Schaffer who swam 64 lengths (1 mile) in 63 minutes and raised £110!

Natalia Nowacka, Maiia Holub and Agnieszka Adamek who all ran the Superhero Fun Run, raising over £300 between them.

Philippa Nicholson who ran the Florence Half Marathon for Kith & Kids. So far she has raised £225 and has proven you can support Kith & Kids from wherever in the world you live!



London Marathon 2012

The London Marathon took place on 22nd April 2012. It truly was a wonderful day, despite the temperamental weather (well what's new?). We had a team of 28 runners at the start and we can happily say that they all managed to conquer 26.2 miles to get to the finish line.

When you watch the London Marathon you know why it is regarded as one of the best events in the world. The sheer determination of the thousands of runners and the enthusiasm of all the people cheering them on, amongst scores of other special moments, really does create an emotional and moving experience for all involved. We were able to spot our runners near Tower Bridge, thanks to all our great volunteers who came down to support them. After the race, the runners along with their families and friends, all came back to our after-party at Pizza Express. After hours of concentrating on getting one foot in front of the other, our runners were able to sit down, get a well-deserved massage (thanks to Ellie and Conni!), eat some pizza and simply share their experience with the people closest to them. A really special atmosphere - we wouldn't have missed it for the world.

Not only do our team spend months training and preparing for the big day, they also raise an awful lot of money. At the time of writing this, the marathon team of 2012 have collectively raised over £40,000 - and they are still going! So thanks to each and every one who ran for Kith & Kids and to everyone who has donated and supported them too!

We'd also like to mention that Chris Cullen, volunteer and choir leader, ran the marathon for the first time and managed to raise well over £5000. (over 3 times the target!) We are really proud and impressed by his effort and success on both fronts!

If you would like to join our Marathon Team for 2013 then please contact Maithi on maithi@kithandkids.org.uk.



Martin Unerman and Stuart Sampson having been running the London Marathon for Kith & Kids since 2003. Between them they have raised a phenomenal amount of money. Here's why and how they keep coming back to Kith & Kids!

When did you decide to run for Kith & Kids and why?

Martin: I decided to run for Kith & Kids because I wanted to support a smaller charity that was doing great work while not being overburdened with unnecessary admin costs. I had already run for another charity in 2002 and I have now run five times for Kith & Kids. I keep coming back because it's worthwhile and the support we receive from the Kith & Kids team is second to none.



Stuart: I also wanted to run for a smaller charity, where the sponsorship raised would make more of an impact and a difference to those it was trying to help. I particularly wanted it to be a children's charity and with my wife being a qualified special needs teacher Kith & Kids was an ideal charity. 2003 was my first marathon and now, including the one a couple weeks ago, I have run 7 times! Apart from the personal sense of achievement, you do get a tremendous high from being part of the amazing experience that is the London Marathon. The support of everyone from start to finish is amazing. Once you've experienced that you want to experience it again.

How do your family & friends feel about you running for Kith & Kids (time and time again?)

M: My family, in principle, is very happy and supportive...in practice they do get a bit fed-up with the time commitments that the training demands!

S: I think they are all very proud and pleased to be associated with it. My whole family really enjoy being part of the day each and every time I've run. For some they even ask me if I'm running again each year as I think it's their way of being able to contribute to a worthwhile charity, whilst at the same time showing that support to me personally.

Tell us your best and worst moments...

M: The best moment was finishing with Stuart in 2007 which was the first run after I had had heart surgery and also my Mum passing away...it was very emotional for me. The worst moment has to be having to defer from the 2012 marathon due to injury only five weeks before the run.

S: Crossing that finish line is always the best moment, but the very first time was the most emotional. I never thought I could run a marathon and now, including one in New York, I've done it 8 times!!! The one in 2008 was very satisfying as it was a personal goal achieved in running under 4 and half hours for the first time. 2011 was the worst one. After the half way mark I just felt empty and then had to run/walk another 13 miles as there was no way I wasn't going to finish.

Give us a running and fundraising tip to give to other runners.

M: Run, run, run and Ask, ask, ask!

S: Try and follow a tried and tested Marathon running schedule and stick to it religiously. I've followed one by an American called Hal Higdon who has run over 100 marathons. If you do the training mileage you know when you get to that start line you've got the best possible chance of seeing the finish line too. As for a fundraising tip.....nag, nag and nag some more and never get tired of telling people you are doing it. You'll be amazed at the number of people who'll be in awe of you and want to support you and the charity.

So why run the London Marathon?

M: It can be a defining moment in your life and once you have done it (even once) you will always have the achievement to remember.

S: If I can run a marathon anyone can. The hard bit is making that commitment to do it, but it'll be one of the most personal rewarding things you'll ever do in life.

INSPIRED? Contact us at maithi@kithandkids.org.uk for places in the 2013 London Marathon.

kith & kids conference ★ 9 may

Eligibility, choice, and quality of residential care for people with a learning disability

For those who missed this excellent conference, you can now view Luke Clements' presentation on-line by going to the Kith & Kids website and following the links on the **news** page or the **family support** page. Luke Clements is professor at Cardiff University Law School and the UK's leading authority on community care.

Presentations by parents (including our own Jean Willson, Ralph Rosen and Maurice Collins) and other speakers at the conference will be posted on-line next week.

The conference was completely packed out and we want to say a huge thank you to Maurice for the ideas and to Sandra Rosen for organising such a very informative and well-received event.

dates for your diary

D's Day (10th June) - A special play day at Coram's Fields (contact projects team to book your place)

British 10K Run (8th July) - A fantastic run in the heart of London.

Family Day (15th July) - At Markfield. Contact Helen Heath for more information.

Summer 2:1 Social Development Project
(29th July - 10th August)

Summer Camp (26th August - 2nd Sept)

Family Barbeque (16th Sept)