

Kith & Kids

Winter 2013



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Director's notes

Welcome to our winter Readabout and I hope you all have had a good start to 2013.

By now most of you will be aware of the financial challenges Kith & Kids is having to deal with and there is no denying that it causes a great deal of uncertainty for all affected by this.

We are committed to minimising the impact of the necessary cost cuts for our families and our staff, whilst also ensuring the longevity of Kith & Kids as an organisation.

During 43 years of operation we have had our lean periods from time to time and have found ways of keeping the Kith & Kids spirit, pulling together and continuing our core activities, while scaling back some other services until we could secure new funding. And that is exactly what we have to do again now – all contributing according to our abilities and in whichever way we can.

This newsletter will give you some examples of how you may be able to help but it also looks back on what was a great autumn term and excellent xmas/new year's projects. We hope that you'll enjoy the photos and stories and will join with us in our determined efforts to ensure we can create many more positive experiences like these in 2013 and the years to come.

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family support news

Parent Meetings and Family events:

It was a full term of parent meetings this autumn term. There was a wide range of topics covered from "getting the most out of Social Services assessments", "wills and trusts", and "sexuality and learning disability". Some of these topics, like wills and trusts, are hardy perennials and will always be vital but we also try to listen to what is happening for families now and what topics they would like to explore or get 'expert' knowledge in.

In addition, the parent/carer pamper afternoon was a real hit and definitely an afternoon to be repeated. The year finished off with the now traditional end of year parent meal out at Rimini restaurant with good food and company!

Joining forces:

Some parents whose sons and daughters have epilepsy have got together to explore possibilities with a provider about setting up a situation(s) for their children. This is still at its early stages.

Another group of parents whose sons have autism, are (still) exploring setting up a residential situation for their sons, most of whom have known each other for a long time through the self advocacy group. The process is proving frustratingly slow (in part due to the participants coming from different boroughs). There have been some tantalising near bites with people being interested in helping and there is still one company on the look out for a property and although it is taking a long time we are determined that it will happen.

Outreach

Outreach in Family Support comes under a number of guises: telephone support, open themed meetings/seminars, training... We have been asked to speak with a group of parents in Hertfordshire to discuss and explore ideas for when parents are no longer around. This arose from our conference last year. We really welcome the opportunity to support other groups to get started and develop. One example: we were very happy to be back with the inclusive youth group WAVE to offer some further training and ideas. Other training delivered has included autism awareness for staff involved with supporting overseas students at UCL.

Many of the phone calls and email enquiries we receive from non Kith & Kids' parents/carers and professionals are for information/support and involve signposting to relevant services in their area. Parents also regularly call looking for emotional support. Common queries/themes are: looking for activities for disabled sons/daughters (of any age, but often young adults), advocacy, assessment queries, or through sheer exasperation just needing to talk.

Families

It has been great to welcome new families to Kith & Kids with their sons and daughters joining different Kith & Kids activities, be it Monday evening clubs for those transitioning to adulthood, weekend clubs or projects. We have had a really positive response from parents about the welcome they have received from other families and how much their sons/daughters are enjoying activities.

Equally, we are receiving very positive feedback regarding our (still quite new) respite weekends, which by now have a bank of great volunteers. The latest weekend saw four members enjoy a break at a PGL activity centre in Sussex and the activities were indeed excellent: giant swing, archery, trampolining, nature trails... We still hope to find a venue that combines a great range of activities with self-catering options as the weekends are also focused on developing skills for greater independence and cooking/preparing meals is very much part of that.



Other Support

The nature of assessments has changed and the pressure to accept direct debits has revved up. Families are certainly seeing change in this financial climate and having to stand their ground when although needs have not changed, cuts are suggested. Whilst family support staff support parents who ask for this in meetings regarding this or other issues (e.g. re education, living situations, work placements, day care), it is true to say that increasingly frequently they/we have to turn to solicitors for advice to pursue our cases more effectively. Indeed we now quite often have to suggest this as a course of action for outreach enquiries.

Inevitably 2013 will continue to see changes in social care and additional financial pressure but we shall continue to challenge and together overcome the hurdles that are put to us.

The Family Support Team

FUNDRAISING NEWS

It's going to be a tough year in terms fundraising and we need your help to get through it. What we do know is that only through lots of people getting involved can we raise substantial sums of money. We'd like to say an extra special thank you to everyone who fundraised for us in 2012 - without your support we simply would not have been able to run our services. As a small charity we rely on word of mouth and so need YOU to look for new opportunities for us. Whether it is your school, place of work, or a neighbour who has mentioned they like running - please please tell them about us!

So read our posts, tweets and emails and become a Kith & Kids ambassador! We've racked our brains to come up with fun and exciting ways for you to get involved! So have a look through and get involved with one of these amazing events (convince others too!)...

love cake. eat cake....

...in a Valentine Cake-off!

Whether you love Valentine's Day or not, there's no escaping it so we've come up with a tasty way to celebrate. We want cake-eating to be the theme throughout the month of February. So plan a love cake.eat cake fundraiser for Kith & Kids by:

1. Organising a venue (work/school/home)
2. Inviting all your friends, family and colleagues (or whoever else is around)
3. Baking scrumptious goodies (or cheat by asking a local cake shop or bakery to donate them!)
4. Get selling!

If you can't organise a cake event - please ask a local cafe or bakery to have a collection tin on their counter or bake a special cake in aid of us! We'll provide you with a template letter - just get in touch!



nominate us!

Do you know a company or school that could support us?

By far the easiest way to get organisations to support us is if someone who works there or who has "an in" nominates us. So that's why we are asking you to think of anyone who could put us forward - it could be you, your siblings, your parents, friends, or anyone else you can convince. Here are three easy steps:

1. Ask your company/university/school if they support charities in any way.
2. Find out the person to contact and what we need to do.
3. Contact us with the details and we'll give you all the required information or contact them ourselves.

We challenge you to raise £500 for Kith & Kids in 2013.

Challenge #1 Trek Fest Beacons

8-9 June

54 miles in 24 hours or 27 miles in 12 hours

Walk through amazing scenery as well as undertaking an exhilarating mental and physical challenge. You'll be crossing the highest peaks in the Brecon Beacons (training ground to the SAS).



Challenge #2 London to Brighton

8 Sept 2013

54 mile cycle

A classic challenge where you will join over 2000 fellow cyclists to Brighton. Starting in the morning in South London - the challenge is completing the ride but you can do it in your own time - so get on your bike and enjoy the ride!

Challenge #3 Thames Path Walk

14-15 Sept

50k or 100k walk or run at daytime or night

An endurance walk or ultra-marathon run against the clock following the unique Thames Path National Trail; beautiful scenery, steeped in history, one exceptional challenge. You choose 50K or 100K, at day or night!



Challenge #4 Halloween Moonrider

25-26 Oct

100K cycle ride at night

Get spooked out on this twilight moonride! Join hundreds of other riders on this creepy cycle of London, taking you through some of this city's scariest sites. Don't worry you'll get refueled on pumpkin punch and a hot meal stop half way through!



Ride London 2013

Brought to you by the same people who run the world-famous London Marathon, Ride London 100 is its cycling equivalent. Aiming to be the largest charity cycle race in the world with 20,000 participants, Ride London 100 will begin at The Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and finish in central London on the Mall. Riders will cycle 100 miles and have to finish the event in under 9 hours. It's all taking place on Sunday 4th August and will be part of a two-day festival of cycling which includes an elite cycle race on the same day. This new and exciting event celebrates the legacy of London 2012 and promises to be a spectacular day.

So here are the facts:

Date: Sunday 4th August 2013

Distance: 100 miles

Route: Starts at Olympic Park, through city, Surrey Hills and finishing on the Mall.

The roads will be closed off.

Starting time: 6am-8am (depending on ability and fitness)

Registration Fee: £50

Minimum sponsorship: £600



Get in touch with Maithi on 0208 885 1517 or maithi@kithandkids!

Superhero Fun Run

Date: Sunday 19th May 2013

Distance: 5K or 10K (your choice)

Route: Regent's Park

Registration Fee: £20

Minimum sponsorship: £100

The superhero fun run returns! This is a great event to do as part of a group and you have the unique opportunity to become a true Kith & Kids superhero for a whole 5K or 10K! Running through Regent's Park dressed as a superhero of your choice, this will be an event you just won't forget in a hurry. And your costume is completely FREE!

So sign up to this event and be guaranteed a day full of laughs, silliness, and of course plenty of competition...

Kith & Kids Choir

Our choir is simply bags of fun! And we are looking for new members to join us in the new year. If you enjoy singing, being part of a group and just like to have a laugh then the Kith & Kids Choir is the right place for you!

The choir is made up of people of all ages with a learning disability or autism, their siblings and parents, volunteers and staff. We sing plenty of fun popular songs from All that Jazz to California Dreaming to Bruno Mars as well as less known numbers and have performances a couple times a year (plus Christmas carolling!).

So please contact Danielle at danielle@kithandkids.org.uk or 0208 885 1517 if you are interested. We meet every other Wednesday in Tottenham 7:30-8:45 and we don't do auditions!



Football tournament

Navigant Consulting organised a fantastic football tournament in November to raise money for Kith & Kids. Our football team were able to put forward two 5-a-side teams and what a success they were. All in all there were 8 teams and they raised £1115!

During the course of coming to practice, the team have seen a remarkable improvement in their fitness, which was demonstrated by their performance in the fitness tests. The tests include four minute time trials and a variety of sprints. We are looking for new members to add to the team (everyone is welcome!). We meet every Wednesday night from 6:30-8:15pm. Hear from two of our team themselves when we asked them why they come to football...

“ I enjoy coming to football practice with my friends Aled, Kojo. I like it and find it a very enjoyable sport. It gives me time to have exercise such as running and kicking the ball around. There was a tournament in the Autumn term with 8 teams playing against each other. It was good to play a match and compete against each other as a change to practice all the time. ”

Scott Simpson

“ I enjoy playing football with my friends. We meet once a week on Wednesday evenings at 6pm and we played a great tournament in autumn. It gets me out of the house instead of the pub. ”

Aled Williams



OUR PROJECTS

Social Development Project

Our Xmas Project was a loud, busy and boisterous affair with a warm festive atmosphere, some new faces and tons of enthusiastic volunteers. We enjoyed plenty of highlights in the workshops, such as in art where we transformed plain old glass jars into colourful hand-painted candle holders. Even Kith & Kids couldn't resist the Gangnam Style dance craze, which made its way into, not only our dance and video workshops, but the final show too.

As well as the full range of creative workshops, our long-term volunteer Daphne ran cooking sessions for the first time which were a tremendous hit. With three recipes on offer (apple and oatmeal cookies, veggie burgers and a lavishly decorated sponge cake) everything not only looked great, but tasted even better, and were gobbled up on the spot!

The days out were another highlight of the project, with trips as far afield as the Natural History Museum, the Childhood Museum, the cinema, bowling and karaoke. One group of intrepid explorers even took a train ride to the far-off land of Cockfosters...!

The Youth Group's theme for the week was 'helping others', and they took part in a variety of activities from writing thank you cards to making props for the end-of-project show. They also took photos of every participant at the project and their volunteers for people to keep as souvenirs. The group gave them out at the fete at the end of project (after artfully putting them on card), giving everyone wonderful memories of the project. It was great to welcome Aidan to the Youth Group for the first time too.

The final day of the project was a cracker. The village fete had loads of things to try out, including a photo booth, a new year's resolution stall, Youth Group's agony aunt stall, nail painting and an obstacle course. It all came to a climax with a barnstorming show, which this year was Kith & Kids' take on Dickens' A Christmas Carol with mean Scrooges (volunteers Alan and Gurpreet) trying to ruin Kith & Kids. After being wowed by the friendliness of the project and our talented cast of singers, dancers and artists, the Scrooges saw the error of their ways and took off their Scrooge hats to take part in a sing-along. Both performers and audience took part in a sensory snow experience with scented paper and white fabrics showered over the crowd, followed by scrunching up the paper for a brief snowball fight! Special mentions must go to Jessica who led a heartfelt White Christmas, and Kwaga, who led the Youth Group through Lean On Me (which she'd practiced with her volunteers while walking around Finsbury Park). There wasn't a dry eye in the house.

Overall it was a fantastic project with a high standard of volunteers (new and old) all getting stuck in. Our coordinators and workshopers all felt that all the participants on the project got especially engaged in the activities and all involved agreed that it was a particularly successful project.



Weekend Clubs

Our Weekend Clubs returned after the summer break for six afternoons of fun-packed creative workshops and activities. We welcomed two dynamic new workshop leaders onto Clubs: Andrew in music and long-time volunteer Marie in art. Both of them settled in brilliantly and we hope they will do more with us soon. This term's extended outings day was all themed around water. We had an exciting tour around the historic Golden Hinde ship where everyone discovered what it would have been like to live on a ship and we even learnt how to shoot a cannon! We also had a canal boat cruise along Regents Canal where we opened locks, and steered the boat (after a close encounter with the banks and some low-hanging trees). Finally some of the group went for the most watery activity of all: swimming!

We rounded off the term in December with a soft play day, with a deep ball pool, a giant earth ball and plenty of games. The afternoon was very relaxed and a nice opportunity for everyone to hang out and really get to know each other. Everyone commented on how nice it was to chill out! As an extra festive treat the Kith & Kids Choir came along for a special carol sing-along with mince pies and cakes! It was a lovely way to end the term and get everyone into the festive spirit.

Monday Socials

Monday Socials returned with a bang in the Autumn with not one, not two, but three new members joining the group: Emily, Aidan and Adam. As you'd expect, the small but friendly group welcomed the newcomers in right away! This time, the mix of evenings in and out included yoga, cooking, bowling, music, mug painting and a trip to Pizza Hut. And, of course, lots of games of Wink Murder, Grandma's Footsteps and Sleeping Lions.

This term has started with the creative juices flowing; the group made a special Monday Socials house, with each participant making a room of their own...See if you can guess what the rooms are!

HELP US FIND VOLUNTEERS!

1 in 3 of our volunteers are found by word of mouth so we need you to get talking! Our Spring 2:1 Project is always the hardest one to find volunteers for so please try and recruit as much as possible. We really need guys so get your boyfriends, dads, brothers and friends along!



adult services

Residential Project

Straight into the new year, from 2-5 Jan, 11 young adults and their volunteers, set off to Kent for their Winter Residential. The group travelled by train, bus and car. It all took place at Cudham Activities Centre run by Woodcraft Folk. The theme of the residential was team-building, aiming to bring the group together to work towards a shared goal developing communication, planning and cooperation skills. This was done in a number of ways, including many physical challenges centred around problem solving. A highlight was transporting toxic waste (aka bucket of liquid jelly) from inside to outside circumventing a series of obstacles using a selection of ropes. Safe to say the waste was successfully moved without anyone getting messy! Other group activities included crossing an imaginary river with a limited selection of rocks and deciding on essential items needed if the group were stranded on a desert island.

The group also took part in an activity where they wrote down positive comments about each other. Observations about each other included: kind, friendly, funny, intelligent, helping each other out and plenty more. The session was a great opportunity to take a step back and reflect on how different people are and what they each contribute to the group as a whole.

Everyone also ran their own sessions, an integral part of the residential. These included quizzes (covering topics from geography to music), baking and eating (!), playing pool, and painting t-shirts and plates. Overall the great atmosphere on the residential was enhanced by a comfy hangout room at the centre complete with a fireplace. The trips to the local pub and building campfires added to the theme of bringing everyone together and socialising. The group are already looking ahead to their next trip to Danbury Outdoors in Essex!



ELSP (Employability and Life Skills Project)

Last term the Employability and Life Skills Project participants focused on finding things to do outside of Kith & Kids. The group shared their current hobbies and investigated new ones. As part of this the group found out the many skills they can improve in this way while forming new friendships and cementing current ones.

In the Monday group each member took the stage and gave a great presentation to Kith & Kids staff and the rest of the Monday group. We learnt through powerpoint, props and the power of speech all about their hobbies which included theatre, football, cycling and going to the gym. It was a great culmination of all their hard work and research!

The new term has started now with the Monday Group focusing on researching work experience placements particularly gardening centres, office work, cooking courses, and retail work.

The Wed + Fri group are going ahead with their income raising work activities and have plenty of new ventures to get the cash in. We are particularly looking for good quality items to sell on eBay (e.g. old laptops, other electronics and branded items).

A new scheme that we hope to launch shortly is our snack box service. Do you work in an office? If so we could supply a snack box to you. Our boxes can be jammed full of healthy items or for all important sugar rushes less healthy items too. We can cater to your needs and preferences all at competitive prices so do get in touch if you can help us make our new venture a success.

Thursday evenings have also begun with a look back at the recent residential and plenty of games thrown in for good measure. The coming term holds a mix of games, quizzes and music nights while outings have begun with a enjoyable evening to the Worlds End pub in Finsbury Park.



Healthy activities

We are continuing with our fitness sessions on Friday afternoons so do come and join us. At the moment we have activities such as yoga and dance on offer so do get in touch to find out more! Everyone is welcome, the sessions are very inclusive and lots of fun!

If you'd like to know more or book then please contact Alex on 0208 801 7432 or alexm@kithandkids.org.uk

goodbye to...

...Scarlett who has been an amazing projects intern since the summer. We hope that she'll still be involved with Kith & Kids and wish her the best for the future.



dates for your diary

Weekend Clubs

23rd Feb (11-4.30) Outings to swimming, bowling or animal gardens

10 March (1-4.30) Performance club

Spring 2:1 Social Development Project (6-11th April)

London Marathon (21 April) - Come cheer on our marathon team - a wonderful experience...

Superhero Fun Run (19 May) - A 5k or 10K run around Regent's Park!

Ride London 100 (4 Aug) - A cycle challenge through London. Sign up now!