

### **Centre Manager's Report August 2017**

Despite it not being a gloriously warm summer, we have had a busy and productive month at the Centre. Centre bookings have continued throughout the month with organisations such as SATA (Scottish Accessible Transport Alliance) choosing the centre to host their AGM. FADMH (Falkirk District Mental Health) holding regular drama workshops and a new block of Personal Safety Awareness training getting underway and delivered by David Black. Fundraising activities took place, including Malvina's garden party which raised much needed funds to support the delivery of lip-reading classes for 2017/8. Corporate supporters Mitie, TSB, Arthur Mackay and Go Green pulled out all the stops and completely refurbished our café, and painted the halls and corridors. We are all set for our regular groups and classes starting back and we look forward to welcoming some new faces to the Centre.

### **Sensory Garden Refurbishment**

Preparatory work in the garden continues and we have the assistance of Falkirk Council Community Payback team to support us with labouring and grass cutting. We will be getting some new musical instruments installed in the Garden and replacing some of the surfaces within the next couple of weeks to help distinguish different areas. The main refurbishment is on hold until we get a decision on match –funding from Falkirk Environment Trust, expected in October.

Our tile project which has been sponsored by Kiran's Trust, Camelon Community Enterprises and Centre User Janette Scott is reaching fruition. The tiles have now been fired and glazed and community artist Brendan Gallacher is putting together the finished article which will form a key welcoming art installation in our refurbished garden.

## **Publicity**

Media coverage for the Centre has continued to be steady with the success of the charity shop being a particular highlight. This was once again mentioned on Central FM which has proven to be a big driver of footfall.

Social media publicity continues unabated and the power of this format was proven when we received a number of donations from Nicola Ure, owner of KC Bridal Wear in Falkirk. Nicola has sent a number of new high end wedding wear, including wedding dresses which retail at over £1000 and mother-of-the-bride outfits to the Centre for us to sell to raise funds for the Centre. Look out for more information on this in the coming weeks. Nicola got in touch because she noticed the charity shop feature in The Herald and then looked us up on Facebook, underlining the important role this now plays in today's society and the benefit of liking and sharing posts.

We received lots of other media coverage from the Café and Centre refurbishment. This included recognition for all the companies involved (Mitie, Arthur Mckay and Go Green). Malvina's garden open day received a mention in The Herald and we hope to gain further coverage with the announcement of the final total raised (£862). Once again, Malvina put on a fine event and even the early rain could not dampen spirits.

## **Fundraising**

We received a donation of £457 from local yoga teacher Sandie Murphy who recently held a birthday party and asked guests to make a donation for the Sensory Centre instead of a birthday gift. Big Thanks to Sandie and her friends and family for this generous donation.

The focus in the next few months will be on our upcoming fundraising activities, including; Edinburgh Kilt Walk on 17<sup>th</sup> September. Our very own Centre Team – The Sensory Strollers (Alison Gall, David Sutherland and Jacquie Winning will be walking to raise funds. Caroline Storey, Volunteer Co-ordinator will also be raising funds by taking part in the walk) If you would like to make a donation please follow this link:

<https://edinburghkiltwalk2017.everydayhero.com/uk/jacquie>

Our first ever Pop-up Restaurant will take place on Thursday 21 September from 6pm – 9pm. We have joined up with Forth Environment Link to host this evening which will feature fresh seasonal local produce. For more information visit our website:

<http://www.forthvalleysensorycentre.org/sensory-centre-tackles-taste-pop-restaurant/>

Our Afternoon Tea and fashion show is being delivered in conjunction with Clive Ramsey, Libby's of Larbert and Culture Clothing. This popular event takes place on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> October, 1-4pm. Tickets cost £15 per person.

We are planning to hold a Firewalk on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> October. For the brave amongst you there is still time to register for this unique event. Those wishing to take part are required to pay a £35 registration fee to cover materials and insurance and to commit to individually raising £150 for the Centre in order to make the event cost effective. This promises to be a magic evening and will have BSL support. Centre staff David Black and Sara Robertson are already signed up to take part in this event.

### **Centre Refurbishment**

Much of the Centre refurbishment work is now complete. One remaining task is the replacement of the table tops in our halls which Mitie will be attending to in the next few weeks. Hopefully once groups and classes get underway Centre Users will appreciate the new comfortable furnishings, improved lighting and modernised café. We will be displaying a wall plaque of appreciation for the generosity and support shown by Mitie, Arthur McKay, TSB and Go Green. Through their endeavours they saved the Centre in the region of £20,000 worth of work.

### **Groups and Classes**

**BPS (Blind and Partially Sighted) Social Group** - The group re-started on the 21 August after the summer break. The group had a catch up and discussion to plan a full programme of events and entertainment up until the end of the year.

**Bo'ness Outreach Group**– Next meeting 30<sup>th</sup> August. This will be a taster day at Jupiter's Urban Wildlife Centre in Grangemouth.

**Dining Group** – Next lunch outing will take place at The Copper Top in Camelon on Friday 1 September.

**Stirling Outreach Group** –Next meeting 8<sup>th</sup> August. Stirling Carers will be coming along to give a talk to the next meeting of this group on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> September.

**Health & Wellbeing** – A one-off Sound Therapy awareness session will take place at the Centre on Friday 25 August from 11am – 12noon.

**Knit and Natter** – Fortnightly Monday group is going from strength to strength. New members continue to join and are always welcome. A BSL interpreter is on hand to help with communication support. Many of the group are knitting Twiddlemuffs. Jennifer Ingles who attends the group handed in some beautiful crochet work to the Centre.

**Indoor Tennis** – Next fortnightly meeting take place on 25<sup>th</sup> August.

**Art Group:** The fortnightly art group takes place at Camelon Community Centre from 1.00 – 3.00pm on Wednesdays. This fun and creative class is delivered by community artist Brendan Gallacher. Next Meeting 23<sup>rd</sup> August.

**Carers Project** – This well-being group supports Carers and the people they care for and is funded by NHS FV. The group meets weekly on Thursdays from 12 – 2:30pm and includes a free healthy lunch for participants. Examples of recent activities include Ten Pin Bowling, an outing to the Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway. Activities are tailored to suit participant choice and ability. This week's activity will have a musical theme and next week (31 August) Becca Fowler from Princes Carers will be coming to give a talk. New members always welcome.

**BSL OAP group** – Social group meets weekly on a Wednesday for Bingo and entertainment.

**BPS Reading Group** – Fun, informal and interactive group run by Falkirk Libraries. New members welcome. Meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month. Next Meeting 19<sup>th</sup> September.

**Wednesday Group-** Monthly group with a historical theme, Next meeting 6 September 10 -11:30 speaker to be confirmed. BSL interpreter available.

**Slimming World-** Classes every Wednesday from 5.30pm.

**Braveheart-** The next monthly walk takes place on 25<sup>th</sup> August. Sighted guides available. The walk will be along Polmont Canal, the group will meet in the car park behind the bowling club (next to the train station). Leave at 1.30pm.

**Personal Safety Class–** 8 week course started on 4<sup>th</sup> August. There will be another course starting in October.

**Lip-reading-** class starts on 4 September from 6 – 8pm. Weekly class, registration essential. A separate lip-reading support group meet fortnightly on Wednesdays from 10 -12.

In addition we have regular IT classes for BSL users, Blind and Partially sighted people, a weekly deaf club and various drop-in evening groups. For further information regarding any groups or classes please contact Brenda Whyte, Group and activities Co-ordinator.

### **Up & Coming Events:**

- Thursday 14 September: 11:30 -1pm Open meeting Invitation to come along and find out more about the Centre. Information talks on the theme of technology from RNIB, Action on Hearing Loss, NHS FV and Neatebox
- Sunday 17 September – Edinburgh Kiltwalk
- Thursday 21 September: 6pm – 9pm Pop up restaurant delivered in partnership with Forth Environment Link and featuring fresh home cooked food made with local seasonal produce. Register via Eventbrite using this link <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/pop-up-dinner-tickets-36186277129>

- Sunday 8 October: 1pm – 4pm Afternoon Tea (Clive Ramsay) and Fashion Show (Libbys of Larbert and Culture Clothing) Tickets £15 Advance purchase essential
- Saturday 14 October – Firewalk
- Saturday 11 November – 7pm until late. Dine and Disco, Park Hotel Falkirk. Tickets £25. BSL interpreter available
- Saturday 25 November – Winter Fayre (times tbc)

*Report prepared by Jacquie Winning, Centre Manager, 23 August 2017*