

## Centre Manager's Report 27 January 2017

### New groups at the Centre:

In addition to our extensive programme of regular groups and activities, we have the following new activities

#### **Wellbeing Café Carer Sessions**

A new lunch and well-being group for carers and the people they care for is starting on Thursday 2 February 12pm – 2:30pm. Information sessions are provided for unpaid carers by Central Carers and social activities are provided for cared for people by FVSC. Sessions are free of charge and will include a healthy lunch for carers and cared for people. Contact Brenda Whyte for more information and to book a place

**Health and Well-being** treatments are now available at the Centre on Thursdays from 1 – 4pm. Treatments are provided by FV College students and include Mini Facial, Hand and Arm Massage, Indian Head Massage and Nail File and polish. Treatments cost £5. Contact the Centre to book an appointment.

**Toe Nail Clipping Service** is available at the Centre on Tuesdays from 9:30 – 4:30pm. This service is provided by a qualified foot practitioner. The service costs £12 and appointments can be booked by contacting the Centre

**Tennis** – Hannah Pickford, a qualified tennis coach will be offering weekly tennis lessons for adults with a sensory impairment from 3 February. There will be a separate group for children and young people starting at the end of February. Contact the Centre for more information and to book a place

**Braveheart Walks** – Braveheart are offering a regular programme of supported walks leaving from Camelon Community Centre. Volunteers will be on hand to provide guided support for blind and partially sighted people and deaf people to escort walkers from the Sensory Centre to the Community Centre if required. For an update on dates and walking routes please check our website [www.forthvalleysensorycentre.org](http://www.forthvalleysensorycentre.org) or Braveheart [www.braveheart.uk.net](http://www.braveheart.uk.net)

**Deaf and Hard of Hearing Social Group** – A new monthly social group for adults launched on Monday 16 January. This group will take place on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of each month from 7pm – 9pm. Activities will include arts and crafts, use of IT suite, pamper and well-being sessions. The next group will take place on Monday 20 February. Contact Lynne Frail at the Centre for more information

**Personal Safety Awareness** We are planning to start delivering these at the Centre in March 2017. David Black is currently undertaking an accredited training course with the Scottish Centre for Personal Safety. Classes will take place on a Tuesdays (time tbc) and will cost £4 per class or £30 for a block of 8 classes.

**Carrongrange Social Drop in Group** are now meeting at the Centre on a monthly basis. In January 28 young adults and over 20 parents attended. Feedback for venue was really positive with a few of the members already registered at the Sensory Centre. It was a good decision to open the Café – an additional £29.60 for café takings. At present this is a closed group for current/former Carrongrange pupils however, we plan to expand to the wider community of Falkirk. The group is for individuals aged 16+ with a sensory impairment or additional support needs and provides an informal, relaxed environment for people to socialise and meet new friends.

### **Fundraising**

A fund-raising group is being set up to get some new ideas and support us to raise the funds needed to sustain our activities. Centre users representing Blind and Partially Sighted and Deaf and Hard of Hearing groups have given their commitment to join the group and to take the lead on some fund-raising initiatives. The next meeting of the fund raising group will take place on 30 January. New members are encouraged to join. Contact Lynne Frail for more information

Over the past few months we have received a fantastic amount of donations both from individuals and from organisations. Supporters are too numerous to mention in this report. I have highlighted a few, however for a full list of supporters please visit the Our Centre section of our website [www.forthvalleysensorycentre.org](http://www.forthvalleysensorycentre.org) We are very grateful for every donation we receive.

We were recently awarded £12,000 from Tesco Groundworks fund (plastic bag tax fund) This is being used to upgrade our Sensory Garden and external area.

TSB Falkirk chose FVSC as their charity of the year have so far raised £805 Branch fundraising will continue throughout the year and staff will also be given the opportunity to join us for a day of volunteering at the Centre. The funds raised by TSB will help us to upgrade our hall furnishings

Centre Supporter Natalie Cliff ran a very successful crowd funding appeal on behalf of the Centre to help upgrade our garden. A total of £2201.97 was raised and this included some generous donations from individuals and from Briggs Equipment and Montana Care Homes.

Sensory Singers were very active during December, fundraising whilst carol singing at 2 Tesco branches and as guests of Stirling City Choir. These efforts brought in a combined total of £738.68 which will be used to help further promote the Sensory Singers and the Centre

Our BSL OAP group donated £200 to the Centre at their recent end of year lunch.

One of our Centre Users and volunteers Linda Harvey is currently raising funds to help us upgrade our cooker.

## Publicity

Our Website : [www.forthvalleysensorycentre.org](http://www.forthvalleysensorycentre.org) features our latest news and events including updates from Centre Partner organisations

Our active Social Media campaign is steadily increasing our following on Twitter and Facebook @FVSensory both of which are embedded in our website. We continue to receive endorsements from far and wide.

We continue to have Weekly features in the Falkirk Herald Community “What’s on” Section and regular feature articles in the news and occasional updates in The Stirling Observer and Third Force News, Newline and Rocktalk.

In January we had an article about our new Carer’s project published in the CSREC Newsletter. We have a similar article being published in the Falkirk Community News which is distributed free to every Falkirk household.

Montana care homes, who provide care at home for over 200 Falkirk residents, have agreed to include details about centre groups, activities and our café in their customer information packs.

Falkirk Food Buddies in conjunction with Outside the Box are helping to promote the Centre Café with a short film and interview with David Black our centre cook which will shortly be appearing on their website [www.otbds.org](http://www.otbds.org) Food buddies will also be attending our BPS and Stirling Groups over the next few months to explain more about how their food project can help prevent isolation for older people

BBC radio presenters Emma Tracey and Daniel Gordon, will be came to the Centre to interview Centre Volunteer Peter Wilson and David Black to record an audio package for a programme called The Food Chain on BBC World Service and for an article in Ouch Disability talk programmes. The BBC also took video footage. Programmes likely to be aired in February. Check our website for further information.

Central FM broadcast an interview with Brenda Whyte promoting our new Carer’s project

## Partnerships

**TSB, Lloyds, MITIE and Go Green and Arthur McKay** have joined forces to work with us to source furniture and fixtures and refit café, waiting area and halls and at a vastly reduced cost. These organisations have committed to bring staff along as volunteers to help with the Centre refit which is likely to take place by the end of March.

We continue to work with **Neatebox**, a digital company who produce smart phone apps to help make customer service experience and pedestrian crossings more user friendly for blind and partially sighted people. We have recently submitted a joint proposal to encourage **Tesco** to trial the customer service app. If successful, this initiative will be launched in June to coincide with Deafblind Awareness Week.

We recently met with **First Bus** Larbert Depot Manager Jim Brennan to discuss ways in which we can develop a partnership. We are keen to support First Bus by supporting their driver training programme to highlight the issues faced by BPS public transport users. First Bus want to help promote the Centre by advertising our services and sponsoring an event and local fundraising. There is also potential to support us with a bus trip for Centre Users in the summer – potentially to visit **Scottish War Blinded** Linburn Centre. This outing would be open to all Centre Users.

**Slimming World** group meets on Wednesday from 17:30 – 19:00 class. BSL interpreter is on hand and materials are also available in large print and audio format. The group is open to sensory impaired people and people from the wider community. On average there are 100 attendees per week at the Centre Slimming World groups.

**Developing the Young Workforce** (Forth Valley) Established links with several High Schools to raise awareness of sensory impairment and develop projects for enterprise and philanthropy. We are working with young entrepreneurs to encourage them to host their very own employer event at the Centre to promote awareness of Sensory Impairment issues to HR Managers

We continue our partnership with **PLUS Forth Valley** and we are exploring the potential to offer monthly parent and child cafes on a Saturday.

FVSC are currently supporting the **Howgate Centre**, Falkirk in their quest to become more Sensory Friendly. FVSC are providing sighted guide and sensory impairment awareness training for the Howgate Customer Service Team. We plan to provide further assistance by training volunteers to provide support to the Centre on an outreach basis.

**Fire Scotland** are interested in working with us to deliver community safety information to some of our Centre Groups. Potential sessions include CPR awareness, Sparks projects for children, fire safety and road safety, cook-safe project. There is also the possibility of a Fire Station “touch tour” for BPS Centre users. Fire Service are also keen to explore fundraising and volunteering opportunities with the Centre.

### **Café Tiki**

We are delighted to welcome Kirsty our new café assistant who joined our team in December. Our Café is being presented with the Healthy Living Award in March – congratulations to Sara and her team for achieving this recognition. Volunteers Linda, Erin and Lee continue to provide us with a selection of home baking. Café manager Sara is currently putting together a new spring café menu

### **Volunteering**

We have 49 volunteers registered to provide support for the Centre in a variety of different ways, including minibus driving, sighted guiding, baking and admin support. FVSC is working towards achievement of the Volunteer Friendly Award and we look set to have secured this by Feb 2017.

We are in discussion with Volunteer Scotland regarding our getting involved in Employer Supported Volunteering/ Corporate Volunteering. They are keen to work with us over the next 12 months to develop what we do here and use us as a case study.

Forthcoming Centre Events (some dates /times /prices to be confirmed):

Monday 10 April – Easter Egg Hunt

April - Spring Afternoon Tea including ladies fashion show

May - Charity fire walking event

May - Charity golf event

30 June – 6 July Charity Pop-up shop

July – Garden Party

Sunday 3 September – Ladies fashion show and afternoon tea

Sunday 1 October – Great Scottish Run

Saturday 18 November – Dine and Disco, Park Hotel Falkirk