

## **Centre Report- May/June 2018**

### **Intro**

We have all been enjoying the extended period of warm sunny weather which has been a real bonus for our Braveheart walking group and for al fresco coffees fresh from our café. We also have a bumper crop of organic herbs growing in the sensory garden which the Café are making good use of in our soups and salads. A variety of organisations including Scottish Senior Computer Group, Falkirk Council Housing Tenancies, RNIB Scottish Managers, SCOVl and Deaf Scotland and all made good use of our flexible event space and catering facilities. Two Centre staff who directly support Centre Users and Volunteers attended Safeguarding Training provided by Falkirk Council. We were delighted to host a garden party “Thank You” event for our volunteers to mark the start of Volunteer week.

### **1.Sensory Garden Refurbishment**

We took the decision to re-open the sensory garden whilst it remains a “work in progress”. Refurbishing work is evident and continues throughout the garden. Our tactile wall is nearing completion and our raised beds, bird boxes, bug hotels and seating made from reclaimed materials should be with us in the next couple of weeks. Sculptures and mosaics are taking shape and will really bring the garden to life. Facilities company MITIE have very generously provided us with a bespoke picnic bench and table which is fully accessible for wheelchair users. This is a welcome seating addition to our patio outside Café Tiki.

### **2.Publicity and Partnership**

We continue to build and develop our connections with other organisations. Centre staff and volunteers assisted First Bus drivers in the Stirling area to understand just what it can be like to use public transport with a sensory condition. Feedback from a similar session we

delivered with Falkirk First Bus drivers earlier this year was really positive, and customer service changes implemented as a result have been very popular with Centre Users. We are confident that our Stirling session will have a similar impact.

We will be delivering sensory awareness training for Forth Valley Rape Crisis staff and volunteers in June. This organisation wants to offer people with sensory loss the best welcome possible to help them feel safe and able to talk about their experiences. We will also be providing similar training for gallery staff and artists at Edinburgh Printmakers.

Forth Valley Sensory Centre would like to hear from any other companies and organisations who want to find out how to be more inclusive and considerate to people with sensory loss. Please contact us for more information.

During the last couple of months we have been busy providing awareness talks and Centre tours to highlight the features that make us such a unique service. We gave talks to University of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Age, Grangemouth Probus, Falkirk Beavers. Representatives from Solicitors firm Caesar and Howie, NHS FV trainee nurses, Stirling Council and DWP staff joined us for Centre tours.

We met with the Equality and Human Rights Commission at an event organised by Central Scotland Regional Equality Council (CSREC). Cycling Without Age (CWA), a new accessible project launched in Falkirk and rolling out across every Local Authority area in Scotland have invited FVSC to take share in one of their accessible bikes so that this opportunity will become available for all Centre Users in the next couple of months.

Our blind cook, David Black was interviewed last week for The Sun newspaper, following up on their previous coverage regarding blind people who undertake different types of sports. David is an avid fan of martial arts and teaches personal safety here at the Centre in partnership with The Scottish Centre for Personal Safety. As a result of all his hard work, David has been nominated as an inspiring individual at the National Diversity Awards. [Cast your vote for David using this link.](#)

### **3. Fundraising**

The Centre User Fundraising Group have elected Nan Hamilton as Chair. This is a strong move for our co-production group which is becoming even more actively involved with our community fundraising efforts, organising social events to help raise money, and Centre profile. New members are always welcome. The group meets on the third Monday of each month at 12:30pm

Our fund raising group have organised a can collection at The Howgate Centre in Falkirk on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> June, 10am to 4pm. If you can help us on the day, please contact Caroline Storey, our Volunteer Co-ordinator.

We will be holding an Afternoon Tea and Bake Off event at the Centre on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> July from 1-3pm. Tickets are on sale now and cost just £8. Guests have the option to bring an item of home baking to enter in our bake off and also to vote on the best cake of the day. There will be a prize for the winner and we plan to have a raffle.

Centre User Malvina Dwyer is once again opening her beautiful, award winning garden in Avonbridge to visitors to help raise funds for our popular lip-reading group. The garden will be open to the public on Sunday 5 August from 1 – 4pm. Tea, coffee, homebaking and a tombola will all be available on the day. Tickets £3 entry (£2 for concessions) Due to ill health, this will be the last opportunity to enjoy a visit to Malvina's wonderful garden space. Not to be missed.

A number of people have already signed up to take part in the Edinburgh Kiltwalk on 16<sup>th</sup> September. Promise to raise £60 for us and we'll pay your entry fee and give you one of our unique, collectable Forth Valley Sensory Centre t-shirts. All funds raised are topped up by The Hunter Foundation who will add 40 per cent to the total. If you raise £100 we will receive £140. Claire Moroney and Dawn McKinlay recently took part in the Glasgow Kiltwalk and managed to raise over £700 for the Centre. Thanks and well done!

Falkirk Provost Billy Buchannan will be hosting a Sing along entertainment roadshow at the Sensory Centre on Thursday 27 September from 2 – 4 pm. This popular show will feature well known

songs from the war and memorabilia. Tea Coffee and cakes will be provided. Tickets cost £5, all welcome.

#### **4. Volunteering**

Caroline Storey represented the Centre at the CVS Volunteer Manager's Forum– a good forum for networking, sharing practice etc. Lots of ideas at this meeting for acknowledging and celebrating volunteers which we took on board at our recent volunteer recognition event on 4 June.

Alison Harris MSP attended our event and presented all of our volunteers with an award to recognise their amazing contribution to the work of our Centre.

We have two great case studies on the Volunteer Scotland website. [You can read about veteran volunteer John Ormsby and what he gets from giving up his time to help others here](#). You can also read about 'young pretender' [Jennifer Preston who has already built up an impressive volunteering background](#) and wants to gain her 100 hours Saltire Award over the school holidays. Well done to John and Jennifer.

We were invited to take a stand at Denny and Dunipace Gala Day a couple of weeks ago – we had a sensory table and interactive activities to promote sensory awareness, including BSL finger spelling lessons. The event was supported by 6 volunteers and 1 partner volunteer from Stirling Council. A big thanks to everyone who gave up their time to help.

Two of our Centre Users have expressed an interest in becoming volunteers and we are in the process of arranging training and registration. It's always good to have our Centre Users involved and we extend a warm welcome to them to join our 50 strong team of excellent volunteers.

#### **5. Groups and Classes**

BPS Social Group will be going on for a sail on Loch Lomond and lunch for their summer outing on 18<sup>th</sup> June. This is the last meeting before the summer break. The group will start back on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> August

Our Dining Group met for lunch at The Coppertop in Camelon on 1<sup>st</sup> June. This group will restart on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> September.

Stirling Outreach Group enjoyed a Community Safety talk regarding financial harm by Bryan Mackie from Police Scotland. The group are looking forward to their summer outing to The Falkirk Wheel and then onto Bridge 49 for lunch on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> July.

Falkirk Knit and Natter Group –Next meetings 4<sup>th</sup> June. A BSL interpreter is on hand to help with communication support.

Knit & Natter at the Engine Shed in Stirling **are looking for new members**. The group meets fortnightly on a Friday from 10.30 – 12.00 and will be running throughout July and August. Please speak to Brenda if you are interested in coming along.

Tennis – The next tennis class will be on the 22 June from 12.00 until 1.00.

Our Art group have been busy painting designs on pebbles as part of Stirlingshire Volunteer Enterprise #VolRocks initiative. Look out for brightly coloured pebbles with our logo on the back. If you find them please take a photo and mention this on Facebook using the #VolRocks link. The art group are visiting Edinburgh Printmakers to take part in an interactive printmaking session 6<sup>th</sup> August.

Our Carers Drop-In Project takes place on Thursdays between 12 – 2pm and includes information sessions from Princes Carers and a healthy lunch from our café. New members welcome. Group re-starts in August.

Personal Safety Class meets on Friday afternoons. The next 8 week block starts on the 22<sup>nd</sup> June.

Our popular “Voices Off” conversational BSL class is open to members of the public and takes place on Wednesday mornings from 11 – 12 noon. This class is supported by volunteers and members of our local deaf community. Classes re-start in August.

Braveheart Walks planned for Friday 29<sup>th</sup> June; Friday 27<sup>th</sup> July and Friday 31<sup>st</sup> August. 1.30pm leaving from Forth Valley Sensory Centre. The walks last around 45 minutes and there is Tea & Chat afterwards

For more information on any of these groups or classes please contact Centre reception or email [brendawhyte@forthvalleysensorycentre.org](mailto:brendawhyte@forthvalleysensorycentre.org)

### **Up and Coming Events**

Saturday 30 June - Can collection at the Howgate Centre

Thursday 19 July - 1 – 3 pm Afternoon Tea

Sunday 5 August – 1 – 4pm Malvina's Garden, Avonbridge

Thur 6 or Fri 7 Sept (date tbc) – Visual Impairment World Sailing Championships, Rhu Helensburgh

Sunday 16 September - Kiltwalk Edinburgh

Thursday 27 September – 2- 4pm Singing Provost Event

*Report prepared by Jacquie Winning, 14 June 2018*

[www.forthvalleysensorycentre.org](http://www.forthvalleysensorycentre.org)

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