

forth valley sensory centre

Centre Report- September 2018

Introduction

Things have been non-stop at the Centre since we got back from our summer holidays. We were delighted to be invited along as guests to the World Blind Sailing Championships which took place in Rhu, by Helensburgh. We also had the opportunity to go along to the Scottish Parliament and hear Centre User and Trustee Laura Cluxton give a heart-felt speech about her experience of being blind and participating in sport. We have a packed programme of events and activities taking place in our Centre throughout the Autumn. This report provides an update on what we've been doing recently and our plans for the future. I hope you find it interesting.

1.Sensory Garden Refurbishment

I am delighted to say our mosaic inlays are now complete and add a real sense of drama to our garden as they reflect light and colour around the fountain and under the pergola. We will shortly be attaching our Centre User tiles to the Welcome Wall and the construction of our "Tin Lady" is almost complete. She will soon be joining our Tin Man sculpture after 12 years in solitude. Charity Partners, The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) based in Grangemouth, have installed new seating near the fountain and will be adding further raised beds, archways and plants in the next couple of weeks. Look out for our new "Talking Tree" which is located on the garden walkway. The garden is thriving and we are delighted to welcome lots of new visitors every week.

2. Partnership and Publicity

We continue to develop our relationship with **DWP**. David Black and Martin Allan recently gave a presentation at a 'Disability Confident' event in Alloa to raise employer awareness about recruiting staff with sensory loss.

We are working closely with the **NHS Forth Valley Food and Nutrition Team** who have supported David while he qualified to teach the Elementary Cooking Course. There are some free places available on a Food and Nutrition course being delivered at the Sensory Centre by the NHS Food team on the mornings of 20th and 27th November. Please contact the Centre if you are interested in finding out more.

Private companies are continuing to support our Centre too with **Malcolm Allan** Family Butchers and **Asda Falkirk** providing food for the Deaf Children's Family Day. **Tesco Camelon** have already signed up already to support our Winter Fair on 1 December.

First Bus have provided the Sensory Centre with a supply of new bus timetables and information which are available for distribution from our reception and café.

Architect firm **Arka**, are finalising the plans for a re-design of the resource area. These plans will form part of a bid we are submitting to RS Macdonald Trust to raise funds to transform the resource area into an interactive technology hub.

The launch of the new Forth Valley Awareness Cards, in partnership with **Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue, Scottish Ambulance, Falkirk Council, Stirling Council and Clackmannanshire Council** has resulted in some great publicity for the Centre.

We have trialled some promoted posts on Facebook in the past few weeks and the response has been largely positive. We are evaluating the effectiveness and will continue to explore new ways to reach bigger audiences with our message. Social media support continues to grow organically too.

Our website has now had over 50,000 views. If you have any suggestions about how we can continue to expand on our publicity, please let us know.

3. Fundraising

Funding bids are currently underway to support a number of initiatives. We have submitted a request to the Work Place Equality Fund to provide sensory awareness training and advice to organisations and businesses across Forth Valley in order to provide more employment opportunities for people with sight or hearing loss.

We recently passed stage one of a Climate Change Fund bid which would add new lighting to our Centre and provide information for Centre Users on how to access the Scottish Government's Home Energy Fund. We will be submitting the next stage of the bid this month and if successful, the final bid stage is December.

Forth Environment Trust have confirmed they are awarding us funding to develop a Kitchen Garden and get more school groups involved with the Centre. Our aim is to set aside some space to grow herbs and other items for the Café, making sure our cooking is as fresh and tasty as it can be.

Community Food and Health fund awarded us £3000 to enable us to provide elementary cooking classes. Classes start on 18th September and there is already a waiting list. David Black is the first blind person accredited to teach these courses, a real achievement for David and a huge benefit for the Centre.

Kings Fund Awards are open and we are in the process of submitting a nomination to recognise innovation at the Centre with our elementary cooking skills courses. We have always been a pioneering place, leading the way in terms of support for deaf

and blind people. This nomination recognises our effort and success and will hopefully inspire others.

Malvina's final Open Garden event last month resulted in a donation to the Centre of £1190 which will sustain our lip-reading classes at the Centre for another year. During the last 11 years Malvina has raised in excess of £10,000. This is a truly amazing effort and we would like to thank Malvina for her effort and generosity.

We have a number of fundraising activities coming up; our Sing-a-long with Provost Buchanan on September 27th promises to be a great afternoon and sold out weeks before the event. We have our first ever Race Night on 12th October, 7pm-9pm at Chapel Hall, St Francis Xavier's Church, Falkirk. Tickets just £3 and will include food. Come along for a great night out!

Last but not least our Winter Fair takes place 11am-2pm on 1st December this year. We will be looking for tombola, raffle and bottle stall items so if you can help, please get in touch. This is always a great day with stalls for the adults and activities for the kids. Free entry!

It's not too late to make a donation for the efforts of our Team of Kiltwalkers who completed the Big Stroll in Edinburgh on 16 September. All funds raised are topped up by The Hunter Foundation who will add 40 per cent to the total. Click on the link <https://edinburghkiltwalk2018.everydayhero.com/uk/forth-valley-sensory-centre-strollers> or make a donation at reception next time you visit the Centre

4. Volunteering

We are one of only 4 local charities to be awarded the Volunteer Friendly Award by CVS Falkirk. This endorsement of Quality entailed a thorough external review of our processes and the submission of a portfolio of evidence to support our quality approach to recruiting, training and supporting volunteers. We are proud to receive this award.

We would like to welcome our 3 new volunteers signed up in August – Christina, Shauna and Anne. We look forward to working with our new volunteers.

A volunteer role has been introduced to be a sighted guide for David Black in delivering the elementary cooking skills course and garden volunteers have been busy planting for winter veg that will be used in the café

Our volunteer Laura Stewart followed up the NHS equalities consultation event by facilitating a consultation with the local Talk and Sign group and collating evaluation and feedback from the group to share with NHS Managers.

It is a busy time for Caroline Storey, Volunteer Co-ordinator who recently attended the Volunteer Managers Forum at CVS Falkirk and found it useful for exchanging

information and ideas. Caroline spoke to some other third sector organisations who have expressed an interest in sensory awareness training. Caroline also completed Level 2 Food Safety course on line training and she plans to attend events at the Festival of Volunteering in Stirling to discuss how to recognise and celebrate volunteers and also how to continue to support and motivate volunteers

5. Groups and Classes

****New Group** Learn to Curl (Visual Impairment): first session on Monday 8th October 3.00pm – 4.00pm at The Peak, Stirling. Transport provided from the Centre.**

Stirling Group recently enjoyed an Afternoon Tea provided by Café Tiki and a Reminiscence session looking back at Schooldays and What the Doctor Ordered (Old style medication). In October we will be discussing New Technology to support people with vision loss.

The Art Class is now held fortnightly in the Centre on Wednesdays from 1.00pm – 3.00pm. The group are planning a visit to Callendar House on 21 November for a guided talk about the exhibition ‘Drawn from the Past - The Museum Mind’ by acclaimed artist Tessa Asquith-Lamb.

Our History Group will be going on an outing to the Japanese Garden at Cowden (near Dollar) on Wednesday 3 October. Transport available from Sensory Centre

BPS Social Group enjoyed trying out The Garden Shed Reminiscence Pod which was on loan from NHS Forth Valley. On 1st October Alec Anderson will be along to entertain the group with his popular show.

The Sensory Singers are having an extra rehearsal this month as they prepare for a performance for local Care Home residents who will be visiting the Centre to hear them on the 22nd October.

Stirling Knit & Natter; September sessions taking place at Volunteer Scotland Office, Jubilee House Forthside Way Stirling FK8 1QZ next meeting 10:30am Friday 28 September

Bunting Workshop taking place at the Centre on the 18th September 10.00am – 4.00pm.

For more information on any of these groups or classed please contact Centre reception or email brendawhyte@forthvalleysensorycentre.org

Up and Coming Events

- Saturday 22 September – 10- 11:30am, BSL tour at The Engine Shed, Stirling
- Thursday 27 September – 2- 4pm, Singing Provost Event at the Sensory Centre
- Wednesday 3 October – 10:30am, History group trip to Cowden Japanese Gardens
- Friday 12 October – 7pm – 9pm, Race Night at St Xaviers Church Hall
- Monday 22 October – Sensory Singers Concert, 11am – 12noon Sensory Centre
- Thursday 25 October – 12 noon– 1pm, Open Meeting following our AGM
- Wednesday 21 November – 2pm – 3:30pm, guided talk 'Drawn from the Past - The Museum Mind of Tessa Asquith-Lamb'. Callendar House
- Friday 23rd November -10.30 – 12.00 Scottish Author Maggie Craig will be talking about her latest book at the Sensory Centre
- Thursday 20th and 27th November – 9:30 -1pm , Food and Nutrition course, Sensory Centre
- Saturday 1 December – 11am – 2pm Winter Fayre

Report prepared by Jacquie Winning, 17 September 2018

www.forthvalleysensorycentre.org

@FVSensoryCentre