

# Our friends



*The newsletter of Friends of the Family Winchester*

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## Mayor of Winchester attends AGM

On 1<sup>st</sup> December, the Mayor of Winchester, Cllr Jane Rutter joined staff, trustees and invited guests at the Salvation Army Hall for Friends of the Family's AGM. The event hi-lighted the work of the charity's three projects which offer support and friendship to mums and under-fives, children aged five to 13 and dads.

Guests heard from a 5s to 13s parent, alongside Project Leaders Sam Hunt, Colette Dunford and Charlie Wright about how their work has helped families across Winchester during the year.

Speakers included Chair of Trustees Viv Wheeler, Major Shelagh Clift from the Salvation Army, trustee Jonathan Flory, and special guest Mayor of Winchester, Cllr Jane Rutter.

During her closing speech, Cllr Rutter said: "It is inspiring how Friends of the Family can transcend barriers and offer support to people who wouldn't get it from anywhere else. I'd like to say a huge thank you to the volunteers who are helping those unable to help themselves. You are the bedrock of our society. I'd also like to thank the professional staff employed by Friends of the Family as without them it wouldn't work."

Chair of Trustees, Viv Wheeler thanked the charity's funders and supporters and said: "We were honoured that Cllr Rutter was able to attend and gain an insight into the unique work we undertake with families in the local area."



Pictured above (from L to R), Chair of Trustees Viv Wheeler, Mayor of Winchester Cllr Jane Rutter and Patron Bishop John Dennis. Pictured below (from L to R), Project Leaders Colette Dunford, Charlie Wright and Sam Hunt with Cllr Rutter.



## **Penyards Property Management's £600 Christmas card donation**

**Friends of the Family has received a £600 donation from Penyards Property Management which will go towards its work supporting children and families across Winchester.**

Each year, Penyards Property Management chooses a different charity to benefit from its charitable Christmas card scheme – instead of sending Christmas cards, the company donates the money to a good cause.

Friends of the Family was nominated by Director Judith Davis who established Penyards Property Management 26 Years ago. Judith has a strong connection to Friends of the Family as she spent two years volunteering with the charity's 5s to 13s Project as a befriendeer.

Judith said: "I have first-hand experience of the excellent work Friends of the Family do in providing support and friendship to children and families who are struggling to cope. We wanted the Christmas card donation to go to a small charity that supports vulnerable people in Winchester and Friends of the Family have been dedicated to this cause for over 20 years."



*Judith Davis (left) presents Sam Hunt with the cheque*

Sam Hunt, 5s to 13s Befriending Manager, said: "We were thrilled to be nominated to receive this generous donation. It was a wonderful surprise to hear that Friends of the Family had been chosen to receive the money that would otherwise have been spent on the company's Christmas cards. We are hugely grateful to Judith for thinking of us and to everyone at Penyards Property Management."

## **Grant for Dads Group**

**Trustees Karen Hazlitt and Wynn Rees have been successful in their bid for £1,600 to support Friends of the Family's Dads Aloud Project.**

The Dads Aloud Project was started in September 2016 by Dads' Project Leader Charlie Wright and runs on the last Saturday of the month. The project provides a safe and relaxed environment where children can interact and play safely, and dads can chat and support each other. A hot breakfast and a large variety of toys and craft activities are supplied. Charlie Wright said: "The group is often a continuation of counselling therapy and allows dads to check in and discuss issues that have arisen over the month. The Dads have differing backgrounds and have faced difficulties in their lives, but they are all good, caring Dads."

Friends of the Family was one of 18 local voluntary and community groups invited by Winchester City Council to apply and pitch for money in a Dragon's Den style event. A total of £15,000 was distributed to local projects by the panel of dragons.

## **News from our families**

One little boy, aged 6, who has been frightened of going to the hairdressers, had his hair cut for the first time with scissors. His volunteer accompanied him and his mum to the hairdressers to offer her support.

One mum has signed up for the London to Brighton bike ride in June to raise money for cancer research.

One mum and dad have started their own business selling home-made crafts on-line and had a great Christmas. They hope to visit local craft fayres this year to expand the business.

One little girl's spellings have improved with her volunteer's help and she was thrilled to achieve six out of seven on her last test.

# Friends of the Family welcomes new Trustees

**Friends of the Family has welcomed Nicky Bryant and Locket Ward to its Board of Trustees.**

Nicky Bryant originally joined the charity as a volunteer befriender and spent 18 months providing support and friendship to a local family. The mother of four, who lives just outside the village of Upham, was asked to join the Board because of her voluntary and fundraising experience.

Nicky said: "Now that my children are no longer little, I have time on my hands to help. When Friends of the Family asked me to become a trustee, I immediately said yes because it is a fantastic charity."

Locket Ward has two children, aged 18 and 21, and has a smallholding in Owslebury where she has lived for the past 11 years. With a background in publishing, she is looking forward to bringing her skills to the charity and getting more involved. "I am so



*Pictured above are new Trustees Nicky Bryant (left) and Locket Ward impressed by the work of Friends of the Family and hope I can make a difference," she said.*

## Volunteers get together

In November, befrienders, trustees and staff got together for brunch at the Friends Meeting House. Volunteers discussed strategies for dealing with challenging situations and shared ideas for activities to do with children in the local area. The event enabled volunteers to share experiences of befriending over a coffee and a croissant.



On 13<sup>th</sup> January, volunteers for the Mums and Under 5s Group got together with staff and trustees for their annual Thank You meal at El Sabio, Winchester.

# Christmas at Friends of the Family

On 15<sup>th</sup> December, Friends of the Family held a magical Christmas party for all of the families that are receiving support from the 5s to 13s Befriending and Dads Support Projects.



Over 20 children, accompanied by volunteers and parents, attended the party, which took place at the Salvation Army Hall in Winchester.

The entertainment was provided by The Amazing Alvan who astonished the audience with his incredible magic and even showed the children how to perform some tricks of their own. The children then sat down to enjoy a fantastic spread of food which had been kindly provided by the Salvation Army. At the end of the evening, the children were thrilled to receive a Christmas present which had been purchased by the Salvation Army congregation.

The party was organised by Sam Hunt, 5s to 13s Befriending Manager, who said: "It was wonderful to see so many smiling faces. All of the children and adults thoroughly enjoyed the magic show."

## **The Mums and Under 5s Project celebrated Christmas with a party at the Friends Meeting House on 13<sup>th</sup> December.**

Seven Mums, eight children and six volunteers joined Project Leader Colette Dunford and Play Leader Pat Slade for music, dancing, party games and a Christmas buffet.

The children were in awe of Santa who gave each of them a lovely gift which had been provided by the Salvation Army.

Trustee Marcia Cunningham said:

"It was a special event which both mums and children thoroughly enjoyed. I'd like to thank the Salvation Army for supporting our Christmas parties and making them truly memorable."



# Join our team of volunteer befrienders

Friends of the Family is offering men and women the chance to attend a free two-day course in Winchester this May to train to become volunteer befrienders. The training will enable volunteers to offer support and friendship to a child, aged between 5 and 13, and the child's family. Anyone over the age of 23 who enjoys spending time with children is encouraged to apply. Volunteers must be available for two hours a week, either after school or at the weekend, for 12 months.

The training course is run by Friends of the Family's 5s to 13s Project which helps children and families across the Winchester district who are facing challenging circumstances. It covers all aspects of the befriending role and will equip participants with the knowledge needed to become a befriender and make a positive difference to a child's life. In addition to free training, volunteers receive regular supervision, paid travel expenses, opportunities for further training and invitations to volunteer get-togethers.

5s to 13s volunteer Amanda Berridge said: "Friends of the Family is a great organisation doing preventative and supportive work, much needed by local families. I have enjoyed making a small difference to a child who was in a very difficult place with limited opportunities for new experiences."

To apply for the May training course or to find out more about the role please email [volunteer@fotwinchester.org](mailto:volunteer@fotwinchester.org) or call Lisa Travers, Volunteer Recruitment Co-ordinator on 01962 864466.



Volunteers pictured with Sam Hunt, Befriending Manager, at the February 2017 training course.

## He's behind you!

Thanks to the generosity and kindness of a local man, 17 families were able to experience the magic of pantomime with a trip to see Cinderella at Winchester's Theatre Royal on 2<sup>nd</sup> January.

Friends of the Family was able to organise the special Christmas holiday treat after it was contacted by the private donor who said he wished to purchase tickets to the show for children and families who might not otherwise be able to see it. Thanks to the Theatre Royal, who provided the tickets at a reduced cost, 68 children and adults were able to enjoy a traditional pantomime with songs, audience participation and spectacular scenery.

Thanking everyone who made the theatre trip possible, Sam Hunt, 5s to 13s Befriending Manager said: "We are extremely grateful for this generous donation and also to the Theatre Royal for providing the tickets at a significantly reduced cost. All of the children and adults had a wonderful experience which they will remember for a very long time."

Speaking before the show, one mum said: "I am so excited. It's a great way to end the Christmas holidays. Thank you!"

# Three local charities benefit from Fusion Choir Concert

The Winchester Fusion Choir Christmas Concert took place on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> December at the Discovery Centre and raised funds for three local charities - Friends of the Family, Winchester Youth Counselling and Home-Start.

The concert, which featured 80 singers performing a mixture of traditional and popular Christmas songs, raised £550 for Friends of the Family. The event included a raffle, refreshments and a special appearance from Father Christmas.

Choir Leader, Marie O'Brien said: "It was a superb evening with lots of great songs, audience participation and much laughter. We were so pleased to be able to raise funds for three worthwhile charities which offer so much support to young people and families across Winchester."



## Curry night raises over £800

On 7<sup>th</sup> March, 32 guests enjoyed mountains of food at a fundraising curry night which took place at Gandhi Restaurant in Winchester. A magnificent hamper was raffled and a total of £816 was raised.



Chair of Trustees Viv Wheeler said: "Friends of the Family would like to thank our guests and our host, Ronnie of Gandhi Restaurant, for their great generosity and their ongoing support."

## Rock Choir fundraiser



On 26<sup>th</sup> November the Rock Choir performed a concert in the Brooks Shopping Centre and raised £394 thanks to the generosity of shoppers.

Pictured: Viv Wheeler and Jan Moll, Rock Choir Leader with the Rock Choir performers.

## Charity Grant

Former volunteer befriender Claire Linaker has won a £200 charity grant for Friends of the Family as part of the UK Rewards for Volunteering Programme.

Claire was one of 30 winners selected at random who had entered 25 hours or more on VolunteerMatch.org in 2016. Thank you Claire!

**Our Friends** is published by Friends of the Family Winchester Ltd. Please address editorial enquiries to: [lisa@fotwinchester.org](mailto:lisa@fotwinchester.org), tel 01962 864466, or write to Lisa Travers, Friends of the Family, 16 Colebrook Street, Winchester SO23 9LH



# Fun and games at after-school workshop



In February, the 5s to 13s Project held an after-school games workshop for children and volunteers. The children had fun trying a range of new and old games such as Dobble, Guess Who?, Pass the Bomb, Connect Four, draughts and chess. The most popular game was Twister! Everyone joined in and made new friends. They also enjoyed a healthy tea which included their favourite fruit kebabs. The workshops are organised once a term and each have a different theme. Sam Hunt, 5s to 13s Befriending Manager said: "Thank you to the Salvation Army for the use of the hall. It was a really fun afternoon."

## Forthcoming events

**6<sup>th</sup> May** - St Paul's Community Day, St Paul's Church, Winchester.

**6<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> May** – Volunteer Befriender Training. Email [volunteer@fotfwinchester.org](mailto:volunteer@fotfwinchester.org) for further info.

**1<sup>st</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> June** – National Volunteers Week

## We need Volunteers



- to befriend children aged 5 to 13
- for a minimum of 2 hours a week

This is a great opportunity to undertake a rewarding voluntary role and make a positive difference to a child's life. Volunteers receive training and paid travel expenses.

Contact Friends of the Family to find out more:

Call **01962 864466**

Email **volunteer@fotfwinchester.org**



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## Volunteer Play Workers needed



- Do you have some spare time one or two mornings a week?
- Would you like to become a Volunteer Play Worker and make a real difference to young children?

Friends of the Family's 'Mums and Under 5s Group' need volunteers to support children, aged 0 to 5, on Tuesday and Friday mornings, in Winchester, from 9.30am - 1pm.

If you are friendly, committed, open-minded and reliable and most importantly, want to make a positive impact on the families of children from 0 to 5 years, then we would love to hear from you!

Contact Friends of the Family today!

Call **01962 864466**

Email **under5s@fotfwinchester.org**

We'd be delighted to chat, answer your questions and make an appointment for you to visit!

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