

ff familyfriends

NEWSLETTER

December 2016

73 St Charles Square, London W10 6EJ. Registered charity number 1028214 **Tel:** 020 8960 9099
Email: info@familyfriends.uk.com **Website:** www.familyfriends.uk.com



Welcome to our 2016 newsletter. It has been another busy year; we have helped over 70 families, which has impacted on 228 individuals. We continue to offer services in Kensington & Chelsea and Hammersmith & Fulham and our programme in Brent has successfully expanded following our pilot there. In April, Family Friends was reaccredited with *Approved Provider* status, the prestigious national quality standard for mentoring and befriending. The extensive assessment by NCVO/ Mentoring and Befriending involved interviews with volunteers, families and staff as well as review of our policies and procedures. Family Friends demonstrated a high standard in every key area. Our project was described as having *very clear objectives*, being *safe and effective*, employing *robust monitoring*, *best practice* volunteer recruitment and *extensive and fit for purpose* volunteer training.

We carefully measure the impact that our services have on the families we work with, with 100% reporting positive improvements in at least one outcome category. We are also delighted to report that on an individual basis several of our families can report good news in 2016:

- Cleo started a new school after not attending school for months; Adam learnt to talk to his friend when he annoys him rather than hitting him; Tanya, Davide and Sarah can now stand up to bullies; Neil won two happy-Grams for helping other children at school; Kalim created a story book with his mentor to help him manage his moods and he won a good behaviour merit award.
- Arthur learnt to swim; Shane can swim half a pool with a swimming board; Charlie can now swim in the big pool.
- Katie achieved an A* for her photography piece; Tanya and Tezzi grew mint and tomato plants; Eduardo gained carpentry skills making a box for his football cards; Davide joined the Scouts.
- Ernest, Harry, Collin and Shane are now doing their homework each week; Collin moved up two levels at reading; Harry attends homework club; Corrie learnt how to go about revising for exams; Annie and Maria joined IntoUniversity; Leon joined his local library.
- Arthur and Ateena brush their teeth twice a day after creating a teeth cleaning chart with their mentors; Arthur, Jamie, Lulu, Mohammed, Abdul, Arnold and Abigail learnt how to cook a healthy meal.
- Carina enrolled and began attending her local college; Nora's Dad won a residency order for her in court; Sally passed her Life in UK test; Michele gained a permanent job at the place she has been volunteering. Katrina secured places for her twins in her first choice of school; Milly improved her English and joined a sewing class and library, while she and Jamila are more confident taking public transport by themselves.
- Sally moved into permanent accommodation with her toddler; Carina received a grant for a washing machine, a desk and beds for the children; Davide's family won a grant for new beds, bedding, toys and books, and he helped his mother and mentor decorate his room; Gary improved his relationship with his stepdad and they now do activities together. Tanya, her sister and mother are benefitting from attending counselling.



Samiah's Christmas Tree

Happy 2017 from the staff team: Flora, Dani, Natalie, Graham & Daniel.



NOTICEBOARD

1

The Victoria and Albert Museum. Seek out 12 Christmas objects around the museum through a playful paper origami trail created for all ages. Free and available from the Grand Entrance and Exhibition Road information desks. This event runs daily from Saturday 3rd December to Friday 6th January. The museum is open daily from 10am to 5.45pm except the 24th, 25th, 26th December 2016, when it will be closed. For more information, please visit www.vam.ac.uk

2

Ice Skate at London Designer's Outlet, Brent. To celebrate the festive tradition of ice skating, LDO's sparkling ice rink will be open until 2nd January 2017. Based at Wembley Park, novices and experts alike have the chance to skate next to the iconic arch of Wembley Stadium. Pre-book your preferred slot and skate. Off-peak tickets are just £5 for both children and adults; peak tickets are £7.50 per child and £12.50 per adult. Hourly sessions start at 11am and last session is at 8pm, 7 days a week. For more information, please visit www.londondesigneroutlet.com

3

WWT London Wetland Centre. This Christmas, Lego will bring families closer to nature at the London Wetland Centre. The Giant Lego Brick animal trail will take place from 17th December until 28th January. Visitors will be able to enjoy the trail of eleven individually designed 1.5m Lego brick animals, some inspired by real species at London Wetland Centre. Included are the world's rarest goose, an otter, a frog and a kingfisher. On 17th, 18th, 22nd, 23rd and 24th December, 1st and 2nd January, for a fee of £5, you will be able to make your very own Lego brick Frog and Fly to take home. For more information visit www.wwt.org.uk

4

The Natural History Museum. A pop-up ice rink is open until 8th January 2017. Experience the thrill of skating surrounded by fairy lights nestled in frost-covered trees. Tickets from £8.80 per child. For children aged four to eight looking to perfect their skating skills - the Penguin Skate Club will be running lessons on Saturday mornings. These 30 minute sessions will start 9am and 10am until the 31st December 2016. The cost for these sessions is £8.50 per child. Each lesson has a limit of 15 children. For more information and tickets visit www.nhm.ac.uk. It is best to book your tickets in advance.

Banana Snowmen

From www.onehandedcooks.com.au

Makes: 6 Snowmen
Prep time: 15 minutes
Ready in: 15 minutes

Ingredients:

2 bananas
¼ carrot
Handful of chopped
currents or sultanas
3 strawberries
6 grapes

Method:

- Cut each banana into 9 thick slices.
- Peel the carrot and cut into small triangular slithers for a pointy nose.
- Trim the stem from the strawberries and then cut in half.
- Cut the grapes in half, using only the smooth half.
- To assemble, thread three slices of banana on to each skewer followed by a strawberry hat and grape. Gently press the currents into the banana slices to create the eyes and buttons on the body. Add the carrot nose.
- Serve immediately.

Note: Always supervise children when eating with skewers. Use your judgement when serving sharp skewers to young children.





A Parent's Experience

I am a mother of two beautiful children Enzo and Daniella. We moved from North London to Kensington and Chelsea due to domestic violence. Family Friends was contacted as part of a support team along with others to help me and my children to be safe, happy and fit within the new community. I was allocated Apu for moral support, advice, and help. Apu would visit me once a week for two hours. We did so many amazing things. We took the kids to the park, we registered the kids at play groups, cooked together and exercised together, filled applications for college and found a nursery for Daniella. Family Friends helped me buy a bed and a washing machine. The kids were delighted to have their own beds. I am back at college (full time), Daniella is now in nursery, we are eating healthier now, I have made friends, and I feel more confident to go out and feel safe. Having this kind of help to offer vulnerable people like me and my kids is the best help I can say I have had. Our visits have now come to an end (which is sad, but I'm happy that I have had a miraculous outcome from this help). I would recommend Family Friends to friends and families who, like myself, had a struggle to get back on their feet. A big thank you, to the Family Friends Team and Apu (an amazing woman), for your kindness and loyalty to your community. Stay Blessed.

Chanel

A Child's Experience

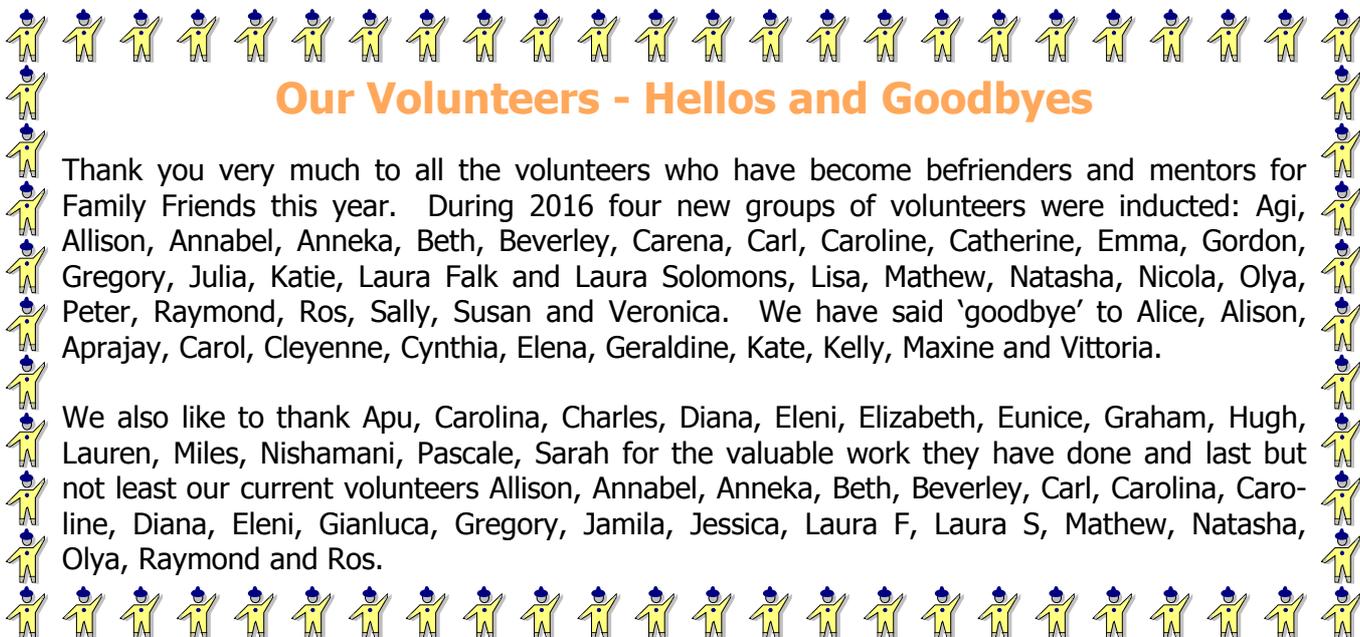
My Family Friend is Diana. She is fun, helpful and caring. We meet every week and we go to lots of fun places like Bramley's, animal farms, museums, funfair and we also do lots of activities together like school art projects, healthy cooking, teeth chart etc.. We made together our own jewellery and we took 3 months to build a big puzzle vanity box. My favourite activity was when we went climbing at Westway with all my family. Was really nice! Sometimes she helps me with my homework and always has healthy snacks. She has some rules about what we can eat but it's ok because we do other stuff. Since we started meeting I'm feeling always really excited and happy about our visits because I feel like a true princess as she calls me. I think I am lucky because my friend told me that he would like to have someone like Diana that could play with him and he doesn't. We have more 3 months but I wish we could have 3 more years...Thank you Family Friends.

Ateena

A Volunteer's Experience

My experience volunteering with Family Friends is drawing to an end and I can truly say it has been a rewarding experience and one that I would highly recommend. I have been befriending a mother with a son with special needs, who also looks after her elderly mother. I met Malika last December. One of our focuses was to improve her English as she had only been in the country for a year and a half. Throughout the year we have spent time studying English and accessing a variety of facilities that would allow her to improve her English and her son Waim's too. Highlights of our time together have been a visit to the Science Museum, discovering the local library, going for a healthy picnic at Kensington Gardens and sightseeing to explore new parts of London and to give Malika some time for herself, which is limited due to her taking care of her family. Language being a barrier has meant that going through correspondence and communicating with doctors and schools is a daily challenge for her. Volunteering with Family Friends has given me the opportunity to see how spending just a couple of hours weekly with a family can help them cope with the challenges of life. Malika is a wonderful lady with a big heart who approaches life with faith and positivity. I know that she will continue to learn and do all she can to take care of her family and she will make things work for them. I wish them well for the future.

Nishamani



Our Volunteers - Hellos and Goodbyes

Thank you very much to all the volunteers who have become befrienders and mentors for Family Friends this year. During 2016 four new groups of volunteers were inducted: Agi, Allison, Annabel, Anneka, Beth, Beverley, Carena, Carl, Caroline, Catherine, Emma, Gordon, Gregory, Julia, Katie, Laura Falk and Laura Solomons, Lisa, Mathew, Natasha, Nicola, Olya, Peter, Raymond, Ros, Sally, Susan and Veronica. We have said 'goodbye' to Alice, Alison, Aprajay, Carol, Cleyenne, Cynthia, Elena, Geraldine, Kate, Kelly, Maxine and Vittoria.

We also like to thank Apu, Carolina, Charles, Diana, Eleni, Elizabeth, Eunice, Graham, Hugh, Lauren, Miles, Nishamani, Pascale, Sarah for the valuable work they have done and last but not least our current volunteers Allison, Annabel, Anneka, Beth, Beverley, Carl, Carolina, Caroline, Diana, Eleni, Gianluca, Gregory, Jamila, Jessica, Laura F, Laura S, Mathew, Natasha, Olya, Raymond and Ros.

Thank You

As ever, thank you to our funders and referring agents, without whom our work would not be possible. In 2016 we were delighted to receive funding from the following organisations for the first time: Pembridge Hall School, Sainsbury's Local Heroes Project, Toni Sharpe's Book Sale and Mrs P. MacLeod. Special thanks go to; BBC Children in Need, The Big Lottery Reaching Communities Fund, Comic Relief, The Dischma Charitable Trust, The Douglas-Morris Charitable Trust, The Grove Trust, Hammersmith United Charities, John Lyon's Charity, Lloyds Bank Foundation, The London Borough of Brent, The Girdlers' Company Charitable Trust, The Goldsmiths' Company, The Hans and Julia Rausing Trust, The Hollick Family Charitable Trust, The John Armitage Charitable Trust, The Kensington & Chelsea Foundation in partnership with DMGT Plc and The John Armitage Charitable Trust, The Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea (Family & Children's Services and Public Health), Treebeard Trust, Sally Clifton-Brown and Judy Francis.

Many thanks to Buttle UK for giving grants to individual families we support. We are extremely grateful to Furnish for storing and delivering Christmas hampers, which were kindly donated by The Junior League of London with additional children's books from LAW Ltd. We are grateful to Lucille Brown of Incredible Years Parenting Programme, Emily Roome social worker for RBKC Family & Children Services and volunteer mentor Sarah Greenford for being guest speakers at the volunteer support group meetings held this year.

Finally, thank you to our Trustees for their support throughout the year: Elizabeth, Vix, Chris, Tina, Judy, Andrew, Clare, George and Abi.

Nathan's Christmas Collage

PLEASE NOTE:

The office will be closed from 5.30pm on 22 December 2016, until 9.30am on 3 January 2016.

For emergencies, contact Family & Children's Services on:

**020 7373 2227 (Kensington & Chelsea),
020 8748 8588 (Hammersmith & Fulham) and
020 8937 4300 (Brent).**

