

Home-Start West Berks Newsletter, October 2016

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News from the Office

Hello All,

The summer holidays are now a distant memory & although still mild, the leaves are falling from the trees & the nights are drawing in.....autumn has arrived!

On 1st September we welcomed our new Scheme Manager Grace Ryder who has been kept very busy since her arrival – Grace has introduced herself to those who have not already met her in an article below.

Here in the office the Christmas preparations have begun – invitations will be going out soon to the families for the family party on 8th December. Last year's traditional children's party including party tea was a great success so we are planning on doing the same this year. I am hoping that some of you lovely volunteers will be able to help out again so please let me know if you can – thank you!

The following week we will be at Mio Fiore for our Christmas meal. Again invitations will be on their way soon & it would be lovely if you were able to join us on the 14th December.

Many thanks for your continued help & support – Home Start would not exist without you!

Kind Regards – Clare

Hello,

I am very pleased to introduce myself as new Scheme Manager to those of you that I haven't met yet. I am gradually working my way through the Volunteer Annual Reviews and I have been impressed by the standard of volunteers that we have at Home-Start West Berkshire. It is heartening to know that our families in the area are so well supported by you all.

It has been a busy start for me since September 1st. I started by reporting back to the Big Lottery on all the fantastic achievements you and the team have all made in the last 12 months and applying for more funding from the NHS for our on-going work with families suffering from poor mental health. I am pleased to announce that we have secured the funding for our groups for the next 3 years thanks to a bid that Lynne started with Children in Need. This puts in a great position and enables us to expand and consolidate our group work.

One area which has concerned me since joining is our recruitment of volunteers. Figures show that we are 28% down on active volunteers compared to this time last year and we know this gap will widen in the coming year as we have only been able to recruit and train 6 volunteers over this period which will not be enough to cover the inevitable ebb and flow of volunteers in 2017. We were recently very lucky to be able to partner up with Vodafone for a Leadership Programme called Ideathon. They put 24 of their greatest minds together from all sectors of Vodafone to brainstorm this problem and they came up with lots of ideas to take forward. I'm looking to set up a working party to focus on this pressing issue so if anyone has any additional time (a few hours a month) to devote to this problem then please come forward and help us ensure the sustainability of our volunteering model.

Keep up the fantastic work,

Grace Ryder

Keeping children safe from button batteries



Button batteries and lithium coin batteries are the small, round batteries you find in lots of toys and everyday objects. They can be extremely dangerous for children if swallowed – especially lithium coin batteries –and can kill within hours.

Why are button batteries dangerous?

Most button batteries pass through the body without a problem. But if a button battery, particularly a lithium coin battery gets stuck in the throat or gullet, energy from the battery can make the body create caustic soda (the chemical used to unblock drains!).

This can burn a hole through the throat and lead to serious internal bleeding and death.

Lithium coin batteries are the most dangerous as the higher voltage means more energy is released, creating more caustic soda. The reaction can happen in as little as two hours.

All button batteries are very dangerous if they get stuck in a child's nose or ear.

Where can you find button batteries?

Button batteries are used in a wide range of toys, gadgets and other everyday objects you'll find around the house. Lots of these objects have buttons and surfaces that young children love to explore and play with. Many are brightly coloured or otherwise appealing to children. These include:

- small remote controls
- car key fobs
- calculators
- thermometers

- hearing aids
- digital scales
- musical cards
- novelty toys
- watches
- flameless candles and nightlights.



How can I keep children safe?

- Keep products with batteries well out of reach if the battery compartment isn't secured with a screw.
- Keep all spare batteries out of children's reach and sight, ideally in a high-up, lockable cupboard.
- Avoid toys from markets or temporary shops as they may not conform to safety regulations.
- Teach older children that button batteries are dangerous and not to play with them or give them to younger brothers and sisters.
- Remember that even used batteries can be dangerous, so recycle them safely.

If an accident happens

Unfortunately it may not be obvious that a battery is stuck in a child's throat. They may be breathing normally, or simply develop cold or flu-like symptoms.

If you suspect a child has swallowed a button battery, act FAST!

- Take them straight to A & E at your local hospital or call an ambulance
- Tell the doctor there that you think your child has swallowed a button battery
- Do not let your child eat or drink
- Do not make them sick
- Do not wait to see if any symptoms develop

Free Makaton Training

Join us for a 4 week Beginners Workshop to learn the basics.

Makaton is a language programme using signs and symbols to help people to communicate. It is designed to support spoken language and the signs and symbols are used with speech, in spoken word order.

**Tuesdays 8th, 15th, 22nd and 29th November,
10-1pm.**

Refreshments will be provided.

Swings & Smiles

Phoenix Resource Centre, Newbury RG14 7EB

01635 285170

laura@swingsandsmiles.co.uk

To book a space on this course please contact Laura Lewis – we ask that you commit to all 4 weeks of this course so that you get the maximum benefit from it.



AUTUMN ACTIVITIES

Are you lost for activities to do with your families now the weather is turning colder? Why not try some of these activities, guaranteed to help you enjoy the season:



- Go on a local nature walk, to take in the leaves changing colour on all of the trees
- Get cosy on the couch and read a new book together
- Create a treasure hunt or a scavenger hunt from a list of autumn finds
- Play hide and seek
- Build an indoor fort. You don't need a fancy building set for this, boxes, pillows, sheets and chairs will do just fine.
- Bake cakes
- Craft with leaves, gluing or printing
- Jump in puddles
- Lift up logs and stones to look for wildlife

Preparation Course

Our latest course started on 6th October & we are currently training four volunteers who we will have no problems finding a family for once they are ready!

The **Safeguarding** training will take place on **10th November** – if any of you feel that you would like a refresher or are due an update on this topic please contact Clare in the office to let her know you will be attending.



AGM

Our AGM took place on Thursday 29th September & we were pleased to welcome all who attended including the Mayors of Newbury & Thatcham & the Chairman of West Berkshire Council.

A huge thank you to our speaker – Dr Mac Heath Head of Children & Family Services who gave an interesting speech on his role as a Social Worker & also his involvement with Home-Start Medway before moving to West Berkshire.

Great South Run

Our very own Julie Kaesser took part in the Great South Run (10 miles!) on Sunday 23rd October to raise money for Home-Start West Berks. She completed it in a fantastic time – see below- & we are very proud of her wonderful achievement!

Firstly a big thank you to everyone who has supported me so far.

Wow, what a fantastic day at the Great South Run!! The atmosphere was amazing, 25000 people taking part and many many more thousands lining the streets.

I had a great run, breaking all my expectations and completing the race in 1hr 35mins! Didn't know I could run that fast.

The whole family came down to support me, which helped a lot during the race.

So far I've raised £295, but there's still time to donate via

www.gofundme.com/2rwy2uc

The money I raise I hope will be matched funded via Greenham Common Trust so my final total should be over £600!!

Julie



Big Hopes Big Future

Sam & Clare would like to offer you another opportunity to train in a school readiness programme to help 3-4 year old children with the transition to full time school.

Big Hopes Big Future is a targeted early learning programme that helps children fulfil their potential at school – and in later life. It is short term (4-6 months), solution focussed work with a family to improve school readiness skills. This work could include managing children's behaviour, establishing routines or promoting early literacy.

Dates for training are **Thursday 24th November & 1st December 9.30am - 2.30pm**. Please contact the office asap if you are interested.

Group News

We are delighted to announce that we have received funding from Children in Need to not only run our two existing groups for another three years but to set up a third!

We plan to run this group in the eastern area of West Berkshire & are currently looking at venues & deciding which day to hold the group. We will be looking for volunteers to help out at this new group & also have a space at our group which meets on a Tuesday morning in Thatcham so if you have a couple of hours to spare (term time only) please get in touch.

Children in Need appeal night this year is Friday 18th November – you may wish to watch & encourage all your friends to make a donation!



Volunteer Lunch 16th September

We were pleased to welcome Andrea King, Head of Service, Prevention & Building Community Resilience to speak on 16th September. Andrea is running a Building Community Together Programme which encourages residents to get involved in their local community & offer their skills & talents.

When local residents think about the simple things they can do that can make a difference to people who live nearby them, we can share responsibility for making a difference to improving lives in West Berkshire – it's a practical way of 'Helping People to Help Themselves.'

Little things can make a big difference. For example, offering to mow a neighbours' lawn or a community green area, do some DIY or fetch some shopping, especially if they're elderly, have limited mobility or are unwell. Just as important is taking the time to have a cup of tea with someone who's lonely and isolated and who rarely receives a visitor.

Please see the Building Community Together website for further information:

<http://community.westberks.gov.uk/>



West Berkshire
C O U N C I L

There is plenty of time to try this recipe before the Christmas turkey.....or a tasty way to use up the leftovers!

Quick Turkey Stir Fry with Egg Fried Spinach & Rice

Serves 4

Ingredients:

- 350g-450g British turkey breast, cut into 2cm strips
- 6 tbsp olive oil
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 2 x 250g packs microwavable brown basmati rice
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 50g baby leaf spinach
- Salt and pepper
- 4 tbsp reduced-salt soy sauce or tamari (if you want gluten free)
- 4 tbsp tomato ketchup
- 4 tbsp any vinegar

Method

Heat 2 tbsp of the oil in a wok or frying pan, then add the onion and cook for 3-4 minutes over a high-ish heat until the onion softens and takes on a little colour.

Heat the packs of rice for 2 minutes, then crush the bags slightly, to break up the rice and set aside.

Once the onions are cooked, spoon them out of the pan, set aside and heat 2 more tbsp of oil. Once hot pour in the beaten egg and stir very quickly, so the eggs cook and break up. Cook until dry. Add the spinach to the cooked egg, then return the cooked onions to the pan and warm through until the spinach wilts. Add the heated rice, stir together and season well with salt and pepper.

Meanwhile, heat the last 2 tbsp of oil and add the turkey. Cook over a high heat for 2 minutes. Add the soy sauce (or tamari), ketchup and vinegar and cook until the turkey is cooked through (take care not to overcook it). Season well with salt and pepper.

Spoon the egg rice into deep bowls and top with the turkey and sauce.

Party Time!

Invitations will be going out to all our current families for the Christmas party. You are all obviously invited to come along with your family, they may need a little encouragement to attend...Where necessary we will provide transport – if your family needs a taxi, please call the office and Clare will arrange.

Family Christmas Party

AT: Frank Hutchings Community Hall

Bradley-Moore Square Thatcham RG18 4QH

When: Thursday 8th December 2016

At: 11:00 -1:00



Volunteer Christmas Meal

This is our opportunity to say thanks to you all for your work during the year, so please do come along and enjoy the evening. I will be emailing invitations out shortly along with menu choices – hope to see you there!

Home-Start West Berkshire
Invites you to their

VOLUNTEER CHRISTMAS MEAL

Wednesday December 14th
7:30 p.m. @

Mio Fiore

5 Inches Yard Market St Newbury RG14 5DP



Christmas Opening

The office will be closed from Friday 23rd December and will re-open on Tuesday 3rd January 2017.



Dates for the Diary

- 10th November: Safeguarding Training
- 24th November: Big Hopes Big Future Training
- 1st December: Big Hopes Big Future Training
- 8th December: Family Christmas Party
- 14th December: Volunteer Christmas Meal