

eastparkpatter

Your newsletter for East Park



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Welcome to eastparkpatter

Patsy Douglas, East Park Board

Patsy Douglas joined the East Park Board in November 2012 and has taken up the role with great enthusiasm. "My son John, who is 13, joined the school in 2008 after his first placement wasn't successful" she explains, "He is profoundly autistic and his needs are very high and East Park is so forward thinking and supportive that it's ideal for him. I think it's very important to be involved in your child's school so when approached and asked if I'd consider joining the board I didn't hesitate."

She is very well aware of developments not just within the organisation but beyond and is very approachable, making her the ideal first port of call for parents struggling to cope with a diagnosis as well as life beyond the diagnosis.

"It's a difficult situation because you can't help but feel that a diagnosis will bring some sort of resolution but some families undoubtedly feel they're cut loose once that has happened," she says, "They turn to the internet, desperate for information, but what they find can be so disjointed or irrelevant that it can even make things worse. The internet isn't policed and keeping your objectivity at a very emotional time isn't easy."

She is now taking it a step further and ensuring she's as accessible to as many parents as possible by providing a monthly update on the East Park website. This is due to start later this month and will highlight various support available, providing a welcome research shortcut for many.

"Looking after children with additional support needs can be very isolating and the support and sense of community I get from being involved with East Park is invaluable," says Patsy, "It's easy to retreat inside yourself in that situation but I simply won't let that happen, which is also why I want to reach out to other parents through my work with the board and the update on the website."

Her time commitment to the board is one afternoon ten times a year and she clearly feels it's time well spent. "I look at how far my family has come in the past four years and they are happy and loved and surrounded by a lot of laughter – we've turned our lives around."

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Travelling Birds

Earlier this year we were approached by Emily Carr-Martin and invited to participate in a creative music project. Emily is a community musician who specialises in working with people with Additional Support Needs focusing particularly on facilitating communication through music. Emily had been awarded funding for the project from

the Celebrate Fund. The project, titled "Travelling Birds", was a collaborative production involving young people from East Park, Rachel House in Fife and Aurrida House in Orkney. The objectives were for the young people to create an original piece of music around the theme of migratory birds and to explore a variety of musical

cultures through soundscapes, improvisation, textures and rhythms. The sessions started in February and culminated in performances at the

...to create an original piece of music around the theme of migratory birds...

CEL CIS conference in June 2014 and later at the Glad Café, Glasgow as part of the Commonwealth Games celebrations in July. A DVD

was also produced which includes film clips from the music sessions and sound recordings. The young people from East Park who took part were John, Yvonne, Marcus, Cameron, Malcolm and Gavin. We were so impressed at how well they coped with being in the limelight during the public events. We would also like to thank Emily and her team for giving us this opportunity to participate.

If you would like to know more about Emily's work you can check out the Hear My Music website at www.hearmymusic.org.uk

Liam joins the fire brigade!



Liam carrying out checks with Group 5 Watch, Maryhill Fire Station

Liam was invited by Maryhill Fire station to spend a day with them learning about how the station operates and learning to use some equipment.

emergency information from the office, work the blue lights, use the rescue equipment such as the axe and spreaders, and use the monitoring system

They taught him to use the hose, collect the emergency information from the office, work the blue lights, use the rescue equipment...

He has always been very interested in this area and was delighted to take them up on the offer.

Liam was met by Group 5 Watch. They taught him to use the hose, collect the

when a fireman is in a burning building. He joined group 5 for their tea break and lunch, got to wear the uniform and even got to look around the sleeping quarters. He came home really enthusiastic about

his visit and told everyone about what he had learned. A few days later the leader of Group 5 Watch phoned to say that they were so impressed by Liam's enthusiasm and willingness to learn that they have decided to make him an Honorary Member of Group 5 Watch at Maryhill Fire Station. The firemen now come up and visit Liam at Bilsland Drive and he goes down to the fire station to keep in touch with his group. Liam is really proud of what he achieved and is now in



Liam with fire fighters at Maryhill Fire Station

charge of fire safety in Bilsland Drive, carrying out daily checks to make sure everyone is safe. Well done Liam!

HELP IS AVAILABLE FROM THE FAMILY FUND

If you have a seriously ill or disabled child and are on a low income, then The Family Fund, a UK charity, can help you. They give assistance with everything from buying specialist equipment or household appliances such as washing machines, microwaves or even televisions, to funding holidays for the family. Last year they helped families with over £33 million in grants, receiving almost 79,000

applications. They can respond quickly and 2,300 families were helped within 48 hours through their urgent referrer process. If you'd like to find out more, visit www.familyfund.org.uk or call them on 01904 621 115.



Happy Retirement to Linda Gray



operating in 1996. In direct response to national need, Linda led on moving East Park from a school in a dated hospital setting, to a vibrant educational community providing 24 hour

She always had time to listen to and support parents, many of whom can feel isolated at times

learning opportunities for young people with highly complex support needs.

In the 1990s, Linda changed the educational direction of East Park. To provide specialist support for the growing population of young people with autism spectrum disorder, her

inspiration was to provide training to upskill all staff to meet the young people's complex needs. East Park enrolled onto the National Autistic Society's Autism Accreditation Programme, and all staff, Education and Care alike, are now trained to a high standard in Autism friendly strategies and skills, updated regularly through our

rolling programme of training.

Linda was often found helping young people through difficulties and they were encouraged to communicate with her about any issues. She guided teaching colleagues with Behaviour Support Plans and Autism Profiles and led staff to develop consistent strategies

of support. She always had time to listen to and support parents, many of whom can feel isolated at times. She tailored resources to help young people with strategies to use at home. Linda also encouraged parents to take up the role of parent representative on the Board of Directors thus seeking to involve families in the strategic direction of East Park. She set up a Student Council and supported the young people in making quarterly presentations to the Board. Linda consistently sought to build and maintain relationships across the wider educational community. Over the years she developed strong relationships with a number of mainstream and special schools.

Linda will be missed across the wide community of East Park, and we wish her a long and happy retirement.

Linda Gray, Head of Education, with East Park since 1997 retired in October. Linda was pivotal in many of the developments which have led the organisation to where it is now. The East Park of today is unrecognisable from the organisation that was

Having your say!



express where he wanted to stay and what he wanted to do with his spare time - things that are extremely important to him. Jordan then showed his plan to his social worker and at social work meetings. It was then that people really sat up and listened – he helped them re-think how they were approaching the decisions they were making. He was able to confidently tell social workers "This is my decision and you need to keep asking me if it's alright. It's my future". Now Jordan is fully involved and has really shaped his own future. Jordan is an example to any young person about making an impact on their own future, making people sit up and listen.

Karen from East Park says "I am really proud of Jordan and what he has achieved. He is making sure his future is bright and not allowing for second best. He has pride in himself and he wants to shape his own future. It has

Jordan is getting ready to move to adult services and earlier in the year he felt really anxious that he wasn't being included in big decisions about his future. On learning that there were plans to visit places without him, Jordan asked his keyworkers to help him express his wants, needs and aspirations about the future, on the computer, so that he could print it out and give it to his social worker and his advocate. He was able to

A VISITOR FROM BELIZE!



During the Commonwealth Games East Park was delighted to host a visit from Yolanda Fonseca, the Secretary General of the Belize Olympic

& Commonwealth Games Association.

Ms Fonseca visited one of the houses, Avenuepark Street, and brought gifts of t-shirts and caps with the Belize national emblem. She then popped into EP School, where she also met Liam, who has a special interest in national flags and so when she returned to the Commonwealth Village she arranged to have a Flag of Belize brought over for him. Liam was delighted when the flag was delivered a couple of days later.

taken a long time for Jordan to be confident and believe in himself. When he produced this plan with his keyworkers and spoke about it at meetings I felt a real sense of pride and achievement (both for Jordan and the committed staff that have supported him through his time at East Park). Jordan

came to East Park a young boy who lacked confidence and self-worth, but he is leaving East Park a young man who can hold his head up high and believe in himself. Of course we will miss him but we are all excited to see what he achieves, because there are no limits for Jordan."



Fundraising & Volunteers

A colourful week FOR EAST PARK



A huge thank you to all at Threesixty Architecture for taking part in Rainbow Week for East Park. Employees at Threesixty were tasked with the challenge of wearing different coloured clothes every day to help fundraise and they made an incredible

£775! As you can see from the picture above, they went all out with different themes and colour combinations.

Everyone at East Park is very appreciative of the time and effort Threesixty put into this colourful fundraising venture.

DOORS OPEN DAY

Over the weekend of 20th and 21st September, East Park's doors were open to the public. People were free to wander the classrooms and we also had tours going on for those keen to know a bit more about East Park. It

was great to see lots of new faces in East Park and we hope everyone who visited enjoyed learning more about us!



WEDDING FAVOURS!

Many thanks to the Hughes family for their generous donation to East Park in lieu of wedding favours.

Congratulations to Kathleen & David on their marriage in July!

Christmas cards for sale!

This year East Park will be selling Christmas Cards designed by our very own pupils! The cards will be on sale towards the end of November. If you would like to buy some cards, please contact the Fundraising Team on 0141 946 2050 or email fundraising@eastpark.org.uk.



HARD WORKING VOLUNTEERS



Staff from Tesco Bank Edinburgh joined us for a couple of days to paint three of our classrooms; paint the hallway of one of our houses and weed the patio and gardens where

our children and young people live and play. A big thank you on behalf of everyone at East Park to the Tesco Bank Edinburgh staff for their fantastic support and hard work!

Corporate support

Staff from Foster Wheeler Energy and National Australia Bank nominated East Park to receive a generous donation from each of their companies. Thank you for thinking of us! East Park was awarded

£1,000 as the Scottish charity finalist in the Great British Switch campaign by comparethemarket.com. Thank you to everyone who took part in the campaign and voted for East Park.

FUN & GAMES



To kick off a memorable season of sporting, Sainsbury's invited our young people to the Sainsbury's Glasgow Grand Prix at Hampden Stadium. Thanks to a number of generous donors our young people had the opportunity to attend and enjoy many of the sporting events at the Commonwealth Games.

Our charity of the year partner, Shell Business Services, organised their own sports day which our young people attended. East Park Team Leader Karen Ferguson said, "The Shell team went out of their way to make us feel welcome and include our young people in all the activities, thank you."