



## Children's Mental Health East Park

**Allie Davie, Principal Teacher**



As Children's Mental Health Week took place in February, I have been thinking about what we do at East Park to support our children and young people to understand and look after their mental health.

It is known that there is a higher prevalence of mental health difficulties for autistic people. And when you consider the differences that autistic people experience in terms of emotional understanding and sensory processing, is it any wonder?

Autistic people, including most of our children and young people, often find it hard to recognise emotions, facial expressions, and other emotional cues like tone of voice and body language. Because of this they can find it hard to show and manage their own emotions, and to understand and respond to other people's emotions. Think of how some of our young people laugh and appear to enjoy it when

one of their peers gets upset. It makes more sense if we realise that they don't understand the emotions behind the behaviour. Without being able to regulate their emotional state, how can we expect our children and young people to engage in learning and communication?

Alongside this we are aware that our children and

**We work together to try and understand the sensory profiles of our children and young people, to try and create an environment for them that doesn't assault their senses and provide tools for them to be able to manage in the community.**

young people process sensory experiences differently, with each person's sensory profile being different.

*My earliest, my most powerful memories are sensory. Of things feeling chaotic. Of being terrified of loud noises. Of being terrified of a lot of food. ...Sensory sensitivities can mean that I have the same reaction*

*to eating spaghetti as you do to, say (hypothetically) eating raw chicken. We feel a physical repulsion. Our bodies react as if the food is harmful. Sensory Trauma – Autism, Sensory differences, and the experience of fear. Dr R Fulton et al.*

Anxiety is commonly reported by autistic people, many describing a constant feeling of fight or flight as their body responds to their struggles to identify what is safe. No one can concentrate, remember, problem solve, or behave as we would want them to whilst their body is responding to adrenaline and cortisol being released, telling them they are in danger.

There is evidence now that many autistic people have PTSD. Their brain has become maladaptive, constantly hyper-aroused and 'stuck' on fight or flight, due to the way their body processes sensory information.

So, what can we do?...

### In this issue...

**Supporting East Park**

**Choo! Choo!**

**The Hive**

**A fairy tale in Arran House**

**D.I.S.C.O.**

**East Park**

1092 Maryhill Road

Glasgow G20 9TD

T. (0141) 946 2050

Scottish Charity No SC012838



LOTTERY FUNDED



## Children's Mental Health East Park

At East Park we practice trauma informed, Positive Behaviour Support. This means that when our children and young people are behaving in a way that is challenging, we understand it is their best or only means of communicating something with us. And it is our job to figure out what they are communicating and to help them fix the problem, or to teach a better way for them to communicate it to us.

We remember that if people have experienced trauma, it can change the way they respond to things – a smell or a sound can trigger in the brain a powerful trauma memory that takes that person right back, as if they were experiencing the traumatic experience all over again. Big behaviours can start to make more sense when looked at through a trauma lens.

We work together to try and understand the sensory profiles of our children and young people, to try and create an environment for them that doesn't assault their senses and provide tools for them to be able to manage in the community.

It is our job to help them develop their emotional literacy. We use Emotion Works to teach lessons and use words and symbols to model and label emotion words and body sensations. We use social stories to help our children and young people understand that it is ok to feel angry, to feel all your muscles tense and your skin



feel hot, but that it is not ok to hit other people.

We help them to de-escalate. And often the most important part of that is for staff to keep their amygdala under check, and be a calm, safe presence so that our children and young people can co-regulate with them. We can teach them how to breathe to start to take control back over their body. We can teach them to go for a walk, bounce on a ball, go to a safe place, or whatever is the best regulatory activity for them, and we can practice it with them, over and over again.

And lastly, as it says in *The Promise*, Scotland must place trust in its workforce to develop and nurture relationships, enable their capacity to care and love and provide support to make this part of daily life. It is relationships that are at the foundation of it all. We care, and they know we do, they can feel it from us. As Urie Bronfenbrenner so wonderfully said, every child needs at least one adult who is irrationally crazy about him or her.

## Glasgow Film Theatre

Written by **Shannon Stewart** Support Worker

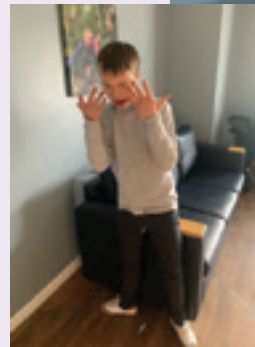
**GLASGOW  
FILM**

**GLASGOW  
FILM THEATRE  
TAKE 2 ACCESS**

East Park are delighted to be working in partnership with the Glasgow Film Theatre and their Take 2 Access Programme. Take 2 Access is a monthly neurodivergent family friendly screening. At Take 2 Access every child under the age of 14 will receive a free ticket, and one free ticket per two accompanying adults. For every additional adult there will be a £6 ticket fee which is discounted from the standard full adult price (£10.90). At Take 2 Access screenings the house lights are up, volume turned down and freedom of movement for families attending. East Park have helped the team at the GFT make the experience for those visiting the Take 2 Access screenings as stress free and enjoyable as possible. On Saturday the 29th of January some of our day pupils and their families, as

well as some of our residents and staff, went along to the first screening after the pandemic. Here is Alexander's experience...

Alexander was collected by a taxi which was organised and funded by the Glasgow Film Theatre as part of our partnership. Alexander and both of his support workers arrived at the GFT to see *The Lion King* and were greeted by a bubbly staff member as they walked through the doors. The group were introduced to lovely Rebecca who took Alexander's name and showed him the way to the screen. All of the GFT staff were very accommodating, and also gave Alexander's support workers enough space to push him through the doors without crowding him. Alexander had a reserved aisle seat which allowed support workers



Signing LION



In the taxi on the way

to get Alexander into the movie and seated comfortably. Alexander had a little bag of snacks with him, which once the movie began he got tucked into. Throughout the movie it was obvious that Alexander was enjoying himself; he was concentrating and engaged with the movie and made happy vocalisations and some 'roars'! After about an hour of great engagement from Alexander, he began to show staff some indication he was ready to head back home. Staff asked Alexander "Is the movie finished?" Alexander signed

"Finished!" Staff asked, "Does Alexander want to go home?" Alexander then signed "Bus and Home". Alexander like many of the young people is starting to build up his wider world again, since the restrictions have ended. Things are different again and are over stimulating for everyone, but especially our young people. However, this was a really positive and engaging outing for Alexander, and he coped really well. Well done to Alexander and thank you to the GFT for our new partnership, we are so excited for the future.

# GO WORKMATES!

Written by Michelle Devlin, Support Worker



Some of our Workmates students – Mia, Amber, Dionne and John are lucky enough to attend a fantastic dance class each week called 'Inspire' which is based in Clydebank. Workmates have been attending this class for the last 7 years with various young people.

Every year students are invited to perform at 'Go Dance' in the Theatre Royal.

This is a fantastic and magical opportunity for the young people to perform on stage in front of a live audience.

Inspire is only one of two groups which have dancers with learning disabilities that perform on the week of Go Dance along with another 50 dance schools throughout Glasgow and Edinburgh.

When I asked the students who took part how did they

feel about performing on stage this was their reactions ...

"I felt good that we done the show. I was buzzing, really happy that I was part of it , I can't wait until the next one." John

Dionne put her hand in the air, rocked her chair from side to side and shouted yeha !

Mia just laughed her head off when asked how she liked it, and Amber gave me the biggest smile ever whilst clapping her hands.

Not only did the young people enjoy it but myself, Tom and Jemma had a fantastic time supporting the young people, as did Mia's mum, Julie, who supported Mia.

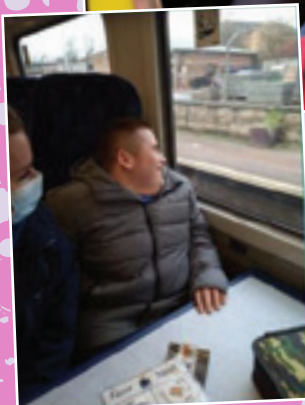
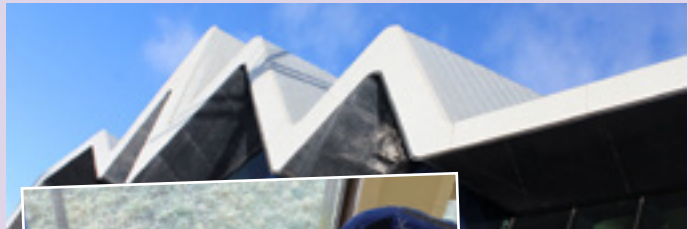


# Choo! Choo!

Written by Clara Bellinfante-Garcia, Oak class teacher

In Oak class, our current topic is transport. We have been looking at different modes of transport and the young people's favourite is definitely trains. Our class visited the Riverside Transport Museum which was a great afternoon out, and lots of learning and fun was had. After our successful trip, Oak class staff team decided to go on a real train therefore it was time to prepare the young people for this amazing adventure. The first thing was to contact our fundraising department who were able to get tickets kindly donated which allowed us to go on our train journey. The second thing was to arrange one of our school bus drivers to follow us on our adventure as we didn't know how the children will cope. And finally, we told the young people through a social story that they were going to experience a train ride.

On Friday the 11th of February, Oak class took a bus to Maryhill Train Station. We waited 5 minutes for the train to arrive and in the meantime the young people were excited to see which way the train would arrive. Once the train arrived, we all climbed aboard with lots of smiling faces. We sat on the train for two stops until we arrived at Anniesland. On arrival in Anniesland we walked to Morrisons where the pupils got a lovely snack from the cafe. The school bus was waiting for us there to take us to the park to end a fun afternoon. The outing was successful and the young people enjoyed it very much so much so that we are planning to go for a longer trip in a few weeks and our goal by the end of this term is to go to the beach on the train. We can do it!



# The Hive



During development

One consequence of the pandemic was the need to re-evaluate our communal spaces to create safe and varied indoor environments for learning, playing and socialising. With much greater use made of our cafeteria space, over lockdown previously known as 'Tuckers', we realised that we could make better, more flexible use of the space with some key adaptations.

We were delighted to be able to refurbish the space to make it more autism friendly. Ceiling panels were added to absorb sound, improve the acoustics and to soften lighting, inaccessible cupboards were removed, and booth-seating was installed, all helping to establish a cosy, multipurpose setting for PE, Fischy Music sing-a-longs, meetings and training. Children, young people and staff were asked to suggest names, and a



The finished look

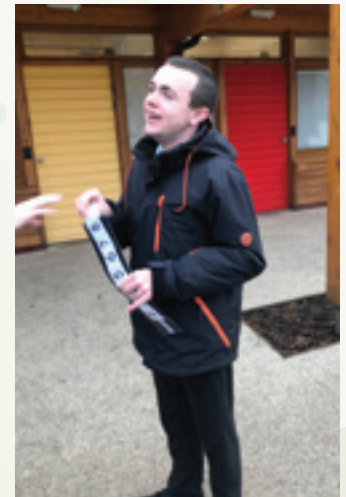
shortlist was drawn up and everyone got to vote for their favourite – The Hive was a clear favourite and it really suits our fantastic new multi-purpose space. We are already using The Hive for all sorts of events and activities – during the day, learners use it for sensory circuits and Fischy Music, it hosted our Fair Trade stall during Fair Trade Fortnight, and staff and parent meetings are also held in this soothing setting. Families came in during February to make felted bees to celebrate completion of the project once restrictions allowed, and we can't wait to hold lots of special events here in the years ahead.



Wonderful bees made at our parent forum

## Keeping Fit

Calum has been working hard on taking part in the Daily Mile initiative each day at school. To begin with, Calum was not keen to walk round the garden, but after much encouragement, patience and hard work from his teacher, Peter, and key education worker Aileen, Calum started to walk round the garden. Aileen and Calum worked hard on this activity every day and Calum was eventually able to increase the activity to walking round the garden to 4 times, the following week 5 and so on up until 8 times round the garden! This is a huge achievement for Calum and he even walked round 25 times one day! A sequence strip with numbers was introduced to help Calum understand where he is within his activity and now after each lap Calum removes the corresponding number and places it on the back of the strip. Calum has



Calum is doing great on his daily mile round the garden and we would like to share the good news

further developed this activity and can now complete the sequence strip independently. Pine class team are totally amazed and so proud with Calum's progress. Well done, Calum!

Check out our new  
**FRIENDS & FAMILY**  
page on our  
website

PARENT CLUB

USEFUL LINKS

# Autumn & Winter at East Park



# A fairy tale in Arran House

Written by Sarah O'Hanlon, Deputy team leader

One of our residents, Fiona, has a real passion for books and loves to spend time relaxing with her support workers reading to her. This inspired the Arran House staff team to look into creating the idea of an in-house library.

All our young people in Arran House own books but do not often choose these as an engaging activity. We felt that the idea of an

in-house library would help promote the engagement between young people and their support staff whilst encouraging imaginative play and influencing creativity. Additionally, we also wanted to create more spaces within Arran House that the young people could go to to play, relax, feel comforted and safe. We were lucky enough to be able to create this space thanks to the generosity of donations to East Park.

When enough money was raised, our staff team worked with our young people where they each chose a selection of books to go into the library. Sensory books and audio books were also purchased for everyone to enjoy - we were even able to purchase some musical instruments



to make story time even more fun. One of the most popular parts of the library is the reading canopy. We have seen some amazing interactions with our children who are sharing the

space well. Our favourites are silly stories, fairy tales and stories of adventure.

As Dr Seuss says-“you can find magic wherever you look. Sit back and relax, all you need is a book”.



## THE MOST PRECIOUS GIFT



**SUPPORTING EAST PARK WITH A GIFT IN YOUR WILL IS ONE OF THE MOST PRECIOUS GIFTS YOU CAN GIVE.**

The vision of our founder, William Mitchell LLD, was itself the legacy of a remarkable man. Inspired, he formed 'East Park' in 1874, an organisation that would provide children and young people with vital residential nursing care, education, nourishment and fresh country air away from the smoky city, insanitary conditions and unfortunate family circumstances in which they lived. Whilst our work may have changed dramatically over the last 140 years, the need for your support is as great today as it was then.

Our supporters have left us legacies since East Park first began and these gifts fund some of our most vital work. We understand that there is so much to consider when preparing your will and we simply ask that once your friends and family are taken care of, you consider leaving a percentage of whatever is left to support our work.

Writing a will can seem like a complex process and we always advise you that you speak with a solicitor about it. However, if you have any questions in relation to leaving East Park a gift in your will, please contact 0141 946 2050 or by e-mail at [fundraising@eastpark.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@eastpark.org.uk)

## SPREADING HIS WINGS

Jay has made a great start to his new adventure at West College Scotland. He has so far attended two taster sessions which included art and drama classes and has started attending full time every Tuesday. Jay is taking part in drama classes in the morning and computing profiling in the afternoons.

Jay said that although he was a bit nervous, he was very excited and that he enjoyed doing art and was looking forward to be taking part in the drama class. He also met some old friends from his previous school and joined them for lunch which was lovely to witness. Jay said



Jay loving life!

going to the cafe with his friends and choosing his own lunch was brilliant!

Jay is looking forward meeting new friends and becoming more independent.

Well done, Jay!

## The Forge Market



Last November we were lucky enough to use the community stall at The Forge Market for a weekend. We set up a tombola that proved popular with visitors, over the 3 days we spoke to lots of people about East Park, spread awareness and heard some lovely stories from the public about

their links to East Park. We were delighted to have raised £843 over the weekend.

We are looking forward to going back from 6th – 8th May; please pop along to see us if you are out and about!

## Supporting East Park

Did you know that there are many ways to support East Park's children and young people?

### AmazonSmile

Amazon Smile is a website operated by Amazon. It features the same products at the same prices as the standard Amazon site. The only difference is, when you shop on Amazon Smile, the Amazon Smile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the cost of all eligible products to your chosen charity. There are millions of eligible items available – look out for 'Eligible for smile.amazon.co.uk' on the product's details page. To sign up for Amazon Smile, visit [www.smile.amazon.co.uk](http://www.smile.amazon.co.uk). If you've already got an Amazon account, simply log in to your account and search East Park in the 'pick your own charity' search bar on the right-hand side of the screen. Click to accept us as your chosen charity and you're ready to start shopping!

### Co-op

We are Co-op's Local Charity of the Year. The more Co-op members that choose East Park and shop with (any) Co-op the more funds East Park will raise. To support us, please log on to your co-op online account or call the number on your membership card and selected East Park. When you have done this, every time that you scan your membership card at the checkout until October 2022 you will be supporting East Park. Please support East Park as your local Co-op Community Cause!



Support Glasgow Community Lottery. Win up to £25,000

### Yaldi Lottery

Glasgow Community Lottery is a lottery where 50p of every £1 ticket sold comes to our children and young people at East Park. There are lots of prizes to be won weekly with the jackpot being £25,000. To sign up visit - <https://www.glasgowlottery.scot/support/east-park>



### Easyfundraising

Did you know that whenever you buy anything online, you could be raising a free donation for East Park? There are over 6,000 retailers including John Lewis & Partners, Argos, Uswitch, eBay, M&S, Just Eat, Now TV, Domino's Pizza and Audible ready to give a free donation every time you shop online via easyfundraising. It only takes 2 minutes to sign up. Plus, if you sign up and raise £5 in donations, easyfundraising will give us a bonus £5 donation. Sign up at [www.easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk)

## MOVEMBER in East Park

by Liam Feeney



One of our amazing support workers Steven Scott, suggested that himself and a group of staff could raise funds for our young people at East Park by participating in Movember. Despite our initial reservations and the fear of looking ridiculous, Darek Zakrzewski, David Traynor, Peter McDonald, Tom O'Hara, Martin Donnelly, Martin McElroy, Franky Young, Lee Boyle, Ethan Milne and I undertook what would be a more competitive process than we first envisaged. We can't thank everyone who donated enough for contributing (and not laughing too hard at our efforts!) The strange looks we got in the local community when we were out with our young people turned out to be worth it as we managed to raise £1700 from our family and friends. Our fundraising team will make sure that it is well spent on behalf of our young people and some of the funds have already been used to purchase a Christmas sensory grotto which can be used each year on the grounds of East Park. Thanks again, we really appreciate all those donations and social media shares.

# Welcome, Ewan!

We would like to wish Ewan a massive welcome to East Park. Ewan is settling into Harris House very well and we are excited to welcome him to East Park School very soon. We look forward to future adventures together. Good luck from all at Harris House and East Park.



Ewan enjoyed some bolognese and garlic bread for dinner.

# EXCITING TIMES!

We are delighted to announce that we have been selected as the Grosvenor Hotel on Byres Road's charity partner. Kim Pollock, fundraiser says - "We are super excited to be working in partnership with the Grosvenor Hotel. The opportunities that this will provide not only for our children and young people but for our families as well is heart-warming. We feel so lucky to have such a special hotel want to support us and work alongside us. We are very excited for the future



and appreciate the support immensely. Thank you." Keep your eyes peeled for exciting opportunities coming soon!

# WOW! WOW! WOW!

One highlight of the year for our children and young people is GlasGLOW. This is an event created by Itison which lights up Glasgow's Botanic Gardens spectacularly in an array of colours. GlasGLOW 2021 was an extra special year for our children and young people as not only were they able to spot the creative pumpkins that they decorated for the pumpkin patch but there was a whole area dedicated to raising funds for the refurbishment of our sensory room! This area was called the Charitree and visitors were given the option to be able to light up a large grass area with loads of love heart lights by donating either £3 or £5 to East Park. An OUTSTANDING £15,000 was raised allowing us to refurbish our sensory room. A HUGE thank you to Oli, Lisa, everyone at Itison and of course the amazing community who donated. Every single penny counts, and we are very humbled by the community's support. Watch this space!



# D.I.S.C.O.

On 26th January we were over the moon to welcome back DJ Gill, from 'Ya Silent Dancer', to our garden for a Silent Disco. We enjoyed the December one so much we couldn't wait for Gill to come back for more! For our lovely readers who don't know what a silent disco is, in short, a silent disco has great music and dancing, but no loudspeakers.

Dancers are each provided with a wireless headset and a choice of up to 3 playlists is



transmitted directly to the headsets – this allows dancers pick a preferred playlist.

A unique kind of social event, silent discos are fantastic fun, and a real spectacle too.

East Park pupils put forward

their requests and we danced the afternoon away to songs by Ed Sheeran, Queen, Katy Perry and Coldplay to name but a few. Even the winter weather couldn't stop our fun. We cannot wait to welcome DJ Gill back to East Park one day again soon. (for more

information on Ya Dancer Silent Discos please visit <https://www.yadancer.co.uk/>)



# Happy for us to keep in touch?

East Park would love to continue to share the achievements and learning of our children and young people by sending you our quarterly East Park Patter. However, if you would rather not receive this newsletter please complete this tear off slip and return to Fundraising, East Park, 1092 Maryhill Road, Glasgow, G20 9TD.

I would **not** like to receive the East Park Patter anymore

NAME: .....

ADDRESS: .....

POST CODE: .....