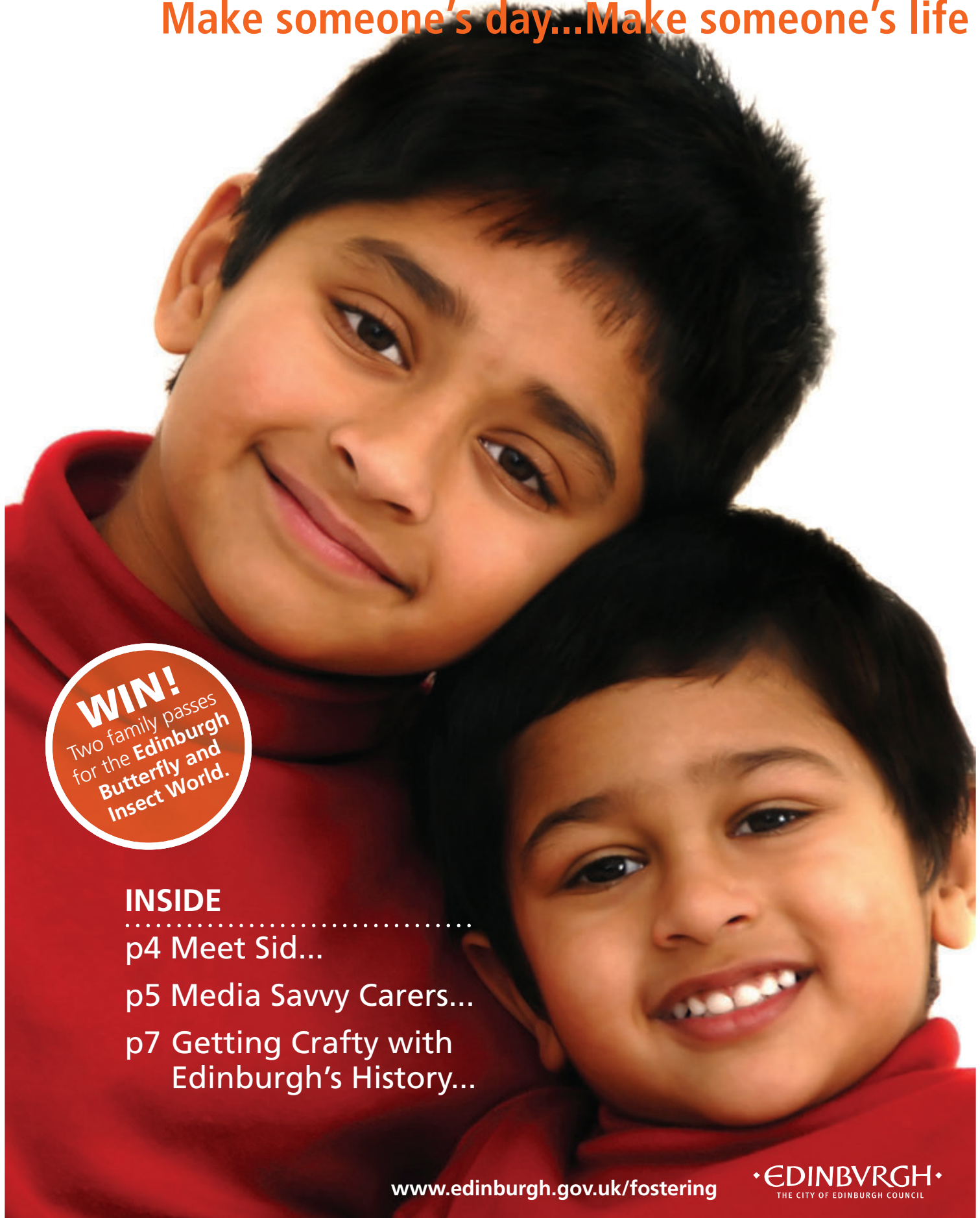


Caring for our Children

Quarterly newsletter for family based carers in Edinburgh

Make someone's day...Make someone's life



WIN!
Two family passes
for the **Edinburgh
Butterfly and
Insect World.**

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Kirstie's column



Family Based Care has recently become part of a wider section of the department called Looked After and Accommodated Children. There has been some debate about the title as children in day care and some children placed for adoption are not looked after and accommodated. However, no one could come up with a better title that was not incredibly long.

The reorganisation means that a wide range of services that mainly cater for looked after and accommodated children have been brought together under one service manager. This includes residential and secure units, the accommodated children's review team and children's rights team, the through care and after care team and the educational support team as well as ourselves. This should mean closer working relationships and shared training opportunities with staff in these teams. It should also allow better planning to ensure we can meet the needs of looked after and accommodated children, whose numbers continue to increase.

However, it is also essential that we look beyond our new title and grouping of services so that we do not overlook the very significant contribution of day carers and adopters to the support and well being of children in need in Edinburgh. I am confident that we can work well together in our new section to improve the lives of a wide range of children, whether they are looked after or not.

I need to know if we are falling down on this aim in any way - please let me know by writing to this Newsletter, by discussion with your liaison worker or by contacting me directly if you consider there are serious shortcomings.

Kirstie Maclean

Service Manager - Looked After and Accommodated Children

Carer Recruitment Update

We've been busy with recruitment activities over the last few months and will continue to be over the summer as we try to attract more people to become carers for Edinburgh's children.

The launch of our Vulnerable Babies DVD in March resulted in a significant amount of enquiries and in May we had a successful drop-in evening for prospective permanent foster carers and adopters. Then in June, we were focusing on finding foster carers for teenagers.

In July and August we'll be targeting our efforts into recruiting carers from black and minority ethnic or mixed ethnic backgrounds. As part of this, staff in the recruitment team will be attending local events and will be on hand at the Mela Festival on 8 and 9 August.

As always, we know from the enquiries we get that word of mouth is very important and that lots of people come to us because they know someone who's already caring. So, at any time of the year, whether you can see adverts out and about or not, please be assured that there is always a need for more carers.

If you know anyone who's interested and who has the qualities necessary to make a difference to a child's life, encourage them to take the next step and get in touch by visiting www.edinburgh.gov.uk/fostering or calling 0800 174 833.

Caring for our Children
Teenagers need families too

We urgently need foster carers for young people aged 12-16 who would benefit from a supportive family home. Some of them come into foster care when they can no longer live in their own homes, others want to move out of residential care.

If you're patient, committed, able to deal with challenging behaviour and enjoy the frustrations and fun of the teenage years, this could be just the job for you!

You'll receive a fee for your work and a maintenance allowance for the young person. You'll also benefit from preparation, ongoing training and support.

Take the next step... get in touch to find out more.

EDINBURGH THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL **0800 174 833**
www.edinburgh.gov.uk/fostering

Involving People

The Care Commission is committed to involving people who use care services and their carers in all areas of their work. One of the ways they do this is through their Involving People Group. Elaine Cranston tells us more:

"We meet about four times per year in various locations. We also run short life working groups. So far, we've influenced how inspection reports are written to make them more meaningful and easier to read for service users and their carers, as well as influencing presentations to providers in best practice in how to involve people, what are the barriers to getting involved and how to remove these.

We are also working with Care Commission staff to design an involving people policy and producing a DVD on "How to get involved".

Due to the ongoing success of the group we are currently recruiting for more members. If you would like to get involved we would love to hear from you."

If you're interested in getting involved, email: elaine.cranston@carecommission.com



Staff News

Goodbye

We've recently said farewell to the following staff...

Sarah Somerville:

Social Worker for the Permanence Team.
Sarah's now off on a temporary secondment.

Val Davidson:

Student Social Worker in the Permanence Team.
Val's placement recently ended.

Sheilagh Gillies:

Social Worker in the Initial Family Placement Team.

Joanne MacDougall:

Communications Officer for Family Based Care and editor of this newsletter. Joanne is now off on maternity leave.

Hello

We've recently welcomed the following staff to Family Based Care...

Sarah Shepherd

Senior Support Assistant / Adoption and Permanence Panel Administrator at Claremont House.

Katie Macaskill

Support Assistant at Claremont House.

CARER ID CARDS

In the Winter 2008 issue of the Caring for our Children Newsletter, we let you know about Carer ID cards - cards being issued to all carers that will help you avoid encountering difficulties in proving identity and gaining access to children in certain situations e.g. in hospital wards where you may be picking up a baby you're looking after.

The uptake of ID cards has been good, but it's still ongoing so don't think you've missed your opportunity! Your Liaison Social Worker will be able to give you all the info you need to arrange for your card.

Feel the Benefit



Did you know that as a carer with the City of Edinburgh Council you're entitled to a Council Staff Benefits Card?

If not, you're missing out on a range of discounts and offers from businesses across Edinburgh, from clothes shops and restaurants, to joiners and estate agents. This card will allow you to save money on those necessary purchases, but also make those the special treats affordable! New booklets are released every six months outlining the benefits available with your card and there's also a website with up to date and last minute offers which you can view online at: www.edinburghstaffbenefits.com

Here's just a taster of some of the benefits you're entitled to with your card:

At Home

- Tackle those home improvements with 10% off Liberton Joinery, 15% off Bomar carpets and 5% off Sterling Furniture.
- Take advantage of at least 25% off estate agent fees with Leslie Deans and Co., Elmslies and Neilsons.

Out and about

- Receive discounts on family days out in Edinburgh with 20% off Edinburgh Zoo, Edinburgh Castle, the Royal Yacht Britannia and Mary King's Close.
- Treat the family to a meal, with a wide range of restaurants offering discounts, from 25% off Bella Italia and La Tasca, to 20% off food and a free bottle of house wine at Channings, the Howard and the Bonham.
- Get away from it all with discounts on holidays such as breaks to Butlins, or 10% off a cruise, flight, city break or worldwide holiday with Barrhead Travel.

Treat Yourself

- Get pampered with up to 40% off Pride Hair and Beauty and Hannah McLure Hairdressing.
- Indulge in some retail therapy with discounts from Jenners and Macintyres wholesale jewellers.
- Get active with great offers on gym membership from Edinburgh Leisure, David Lloyds, Greens and Westwoods.

How to get your card

So you don't miss out on the discounts available, get your card now. Just get in touch with Christine Love by calling 0131 313 6716 or e-mailing: Christine.love@edinburgh.gov.uk



Enjoy the Outdoors



Bangholm Outdoor Centre has once again organised a summer programme designed to give young people from S1 – S6 in Edinburgh a safe and enjoyable introduction to an exciting range of outdoor activities...from Mountain Biking to Bouldering and Mountain Boarding to Rock Climbing. All of the sessions will be run to the highest possible safety standards using some of the most experienced and qualified instructors in the city. Each day will begin at the newly opened Bangholm Outdoor Centre in north Edinburgh. The teams will then venture out to venues close to the city and return at the end of the day tired, but happy. With prices starting at as little as £10 per day, these days out are fantastic value for money. Places are expected to be snapped up quickly and with booking being done on a first-come-first served basis you'll need to be quick. For more information visit: http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/internet/Leisure/Children_and_young_people_s_activities/Bangholm-summer-activities or call Cliff Smith on 0131 551 4368.

Meet Sid...

... He's from out of town. Actually he's from the heads of some young people who all agree that living in care can be like living on another planet. No planet's perfect and being a teenager is never easy wherever you live but we all have the right to a happy life.

This new website – www.meetsid.co.uk – is about the National Care Standards for Young People in Care - in other words stuff to help you feel like you're actually on planet earth. The Care Standards are simply about protecting your right to dignity, privacy, choice, keeping you safe, helping you to reach your potential and respecting equality and diversity. If you're a young person in care, visit the website to find out more!



Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007: The Facts of the Act

Did you know that the adoption and child care law in Scotland is changing?

Between 2003 and 2005 the Scottish Executive's Adoption Policy Review Group reviewed the adoption and fostering law in Scotland. This resulted in a complete re-write of the adoption law from which the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007 emerged. The new Act is expected to come into force on 28 September 2009.

The Act is about Adoption and a lot more. Some of the changes as a result of the new Act include the widening of the range of people who can adopt, the introduction of Adoption Support Plans and significantly it's goodbye to Freeing and Parental Responsibilities Orders and hello to Permanence Orders. The government has also taken the opportunity to make some major changes to the Looked After Children Regulations and previous fostering regulations will be incorporated into the Looked After Children Regulations.

What does this mean for carers?

The introduction of 'Permanence Orders' is something completely new. The Permanence Order will enable children who require permanent care to be legally secured within their permanent placement with a difference. The previous Parental Responsibility Order gave all parental rights and responsibilities to the local authority. Permanence Orders enable some parental rights and responsibilities to be given to others, including, carers.

The local authority will have the mandatory role of regulating the child's residence and providing guidance. But other roles can be attached which could be given to carers. These could include, for instance, making passport applications, giving permission for the child to go on holiday or to have medical treatment, or whatever is considered necessary to safeguard and promote the best interests of the child.

What does it mean for children and young people?

Young people have reported that they found it difficult and frustrating when they had to wait until their parents tried to be located or a discussion with their social worker or a meeting had to take place before a decision could be made regarding them going on a school trip or staying over with friends. The ambition is that decision making can be more efficient and effective for children and young people.

The overarching aims and principles of the Permanence Orders is to support children and young people to achieve a permanent, stable and secure family life that is as similar as possible to that which their peers enjoy.

What changes will there be to Fostering Regulations?

The Regulations are still in draft but it's likely that the law stopping two adults of the same gender being approved as foster carers will be removed and also that the frequency of foster carer reviews will be reduced to every three years once the initial review has taken place after a year.

Want to know more?

We'll be keeping you up to date with changes that affect you but in the meantime your Liaison Social Worker should be able to help you if you need more information.



MEDIA SAVVY Carers

Our carers are very important in spreading the message about the need for more people to come forward to care for Edinburgh's children and many of you often help out with recruitment activities. Part of this can sometimes mean being interviewed by the media about your work and because this can be a daunting experience, when the Fostering Network was running a media training day recently, we encouraged our carers to get involved. Three carers from Edinburgh took part and here, Stewart Duncan, tells us about his experience...

"Having been to London weekend conferences and trekked across Peru with The Fostering Network, why on earth should I bother with a one day training seminar being held a couple of hundred yards down the road? Hang on a minute! Media Training? Lights, Cameras, Action??? Bring me my interview jacket!!!

The Storytelling Centre on our own Royal Mile provided the perfect backdrop for a one day media seminar hosted by Henrietta Bond of The Talk Consultancy and facilitated by Sarah Crangle of The Fostering Network. Five foster carers, from the Highlands to the Lowlands came together somewhat warily and all initially wearing the same badge 'What me? being interviewed...oh no!' Fifteen minutes later after an introductory ice-breaker and it was every man (or woman) for himself - where's the microphone?

Henrietta led a vibrant and very funny training day, guiding us through firstly preparing ourselves and what we wanted to be heard or read, then inviting us to participate in simulated radio, newspaper and finally, yes - television interviews. There really is something magnetic about having a microphone thrust in front of your face or being told to smile for the camera, although to date I have consistently played second fiddle to Julie Coghill who appears regularly (yawn!) on radio and DVD, although denies being the singularly most effective recruitment tool for the Foster Care Fortnight promo!

However, following on from the hints and tips given to me from Henrietta I fully expect to crack the 'small screen' any day now!"

The Fostering Network occasionally run these free sessions and ask us to volunteer carers to attend. If you'd like to be considered for the next time, just get in touch (contact details are on the back page).



Stewart Duncan



Farewell Kath

Kath Tannock retired on 30 January 2009 after more than 30 years working for the Department. For the past nine years she was a Senior Social Worker in Family Based Care, first in South East Resource Team then East Resource Team and latterly for the Disability Team.

She had a passionate interest in providing services for disabled children and their families and played a significant role in the expansion and development of the Specialist Disability Carers Scheme.

Before joining Family Based Care, Kath was the Manager of Gilmerton Children and Families Centre for nearly 18 years - a job she clearly enjoyed!

Many colleagues and friends, old and new, gathered for a farewell lunch at Claremont House on her last day and went on for a lovely meal in the evening.

We caught up with Kath a few months into retirement and this is what she had to say: "Having worked in the department for 32 years, my fond and happy memories are about people; colleagues, staff, carers and service users. I do miss my contacts but the good side is I have made many friends and my contact with them continues. I am thoroughly enjoying my new found freedom and doing the things that I haven't had time to do for a long-time as well as making plans for the winter months. Certainly no time for boredom!".

Kath's Manager, Morag Cosford says: "We all have many good memories of working with Kath - her enthusiasm for our work and her lively sense of humour are missed but we believe she is adjusting well to her new life. We wish her well for a long and happy retirement."



Kath Tannock

"...her enthusiasm for our work and her lively sense of humour are missed..."

**5
minute**

interview



Kids Corner



Well summer is here, and so are the summer holidays. Here are some links for ideas, fun and stuff to keep you going during those boring rainy days ...

What's going on in Edinburgh over the summer: www.kidsedinburgh.com or www.edinburghleisure.co.uk

Looking for a job, career or fun? www.youngscotinfoonline.org

Fancy your chances as a film maker or director? www.filmstreet.co.uk

Find out more about your health: www.kidshealth.org/kid

Do you like nature? www.pbs.org/wnet/nature

Interested in photography? <http://ypa.rspca.org.uk>

Find out what's going on in the world of sport: www.kids.yahoo.com/sports

What is a biome? How many are there in the world? www.mbgnet.net

Who is your hero? Create a web page about them: www.myhero.com/myhero

What do you do for the environment? Have you taken up the Breathing Space challenge yet? www.bbc.co.uk/breathingplaces

Interested in science and nature? www.bbc.co.uk/sn/prehistoric_life

Specialist sites for Disabilities...

Games, entertainment, and news: www.thedisabilityhub.co.uk

Information directory for kids: www.special-needs-kids.co.uk

Dyslexia: www.dyslexiacentre.co.uk

Strictly on wheels coming next year! Find out about this and other fun stuff. Check out the latest gossip for all on www.bbc.co.uk/ouch

Marion Boyle

IT Development Officer marion.boyle@edinburgh.gov.uk

The City of Edinburgh Council is not responsible for the content of external websites.

In each newsletter we feature someone in a five minute interview and in this edition it's the turn of Katie McKenzie – a specialist disability foster carer with the Council.

Q What do you do?

A. I'm a specialist foster carer and at present, we care for three children on a full-time basis and one child on a respite basis.

Q What is the most enjoyable part of what you do?

A. Caring for the children on a daily basis and watching them progress. Often to us the progress can be very little and slow but to the children, they have climbed mountains to achieve many of their progressions. Getting a smile and eye contact from the children is very rewarding.

Q If you weren't in your current job, what would you do?

A. Working with children - either as a Support Assistant in a School, a Child Minder, or working in a children's residential unit.

Q Specialist disability foster care – What does it mean to you?

A. Caring for children with disabilities, special needs, medical needs and those who require additional support. You need to be fully committed, flexible, patient, understanding, honest, non judgemental and promote anti-discriminatory practice at all times. You also need to be organised and forward thinking, with good communication skills to assist with communicating with social workers, parents of the children, carers, professionals such as school teachers and hospital consultants.

Q What was the last film you saw?

A. Slumdog Millionaire.

Q What was the last book you read?

A. Yours Faithfully by Sheila O'Flanagan.

Q What's your earliest memory?

A. Mum topping and tailing me in the kitchen sink!!!!

Q What is your favourite Holiday destination?

A. The Greek Islands.

If you would like to take part in the five minute interview or know of someone who could make a good contribution please contact Catriona McKenna on 0131 529 4427.

HEAR

BOOM

WORD LADDER

Word ladder is an easy puzzle to play:

- Move the first word on the ladder to the last, using the exact number of rungs on the word ladder.
- You must only change one letter of a word at a time. For example you can move from MEAT to BEAT, but not from MEAT to BELT as that has two letter changes to it.

In the last issue of the Caring for our Children newsletter, we gave away family passes to Edinburgh Dungeon. Ariann Gilmour, who is almost seven years old, wrote in to win so that her and her foster brother could scare Mum and Dad. Their names were drawn and they enjoyed a day out at the Dungeon. They wrote to us afterwards to say thanks...



"We had a fab day out at the Edinburgh Dungeon and we got lots of frights!! My Daddy even screamed when a curtain blew at him - ha-ha. We got a creepy photo of us all and some goodies from the gift shop. Thank-you for a great day." The Gilmour family

Check out the back page for details of this issue's giveaway to the Edinburgh Butterfly and Insect World.

Getting Crafty

with Edinburgh's exciting History



An exciting new children's learning space at the Museum of Edinburgh (Huntly House - Royal Mile) was launched last month. The City of Edinburgh Museums and Edinburgh World Heritage have been working together to develop the new facility, which has been created so that primary school children can explore their city's history through art and activities.

The new learning space will allow children to have fun and learn about the Old and New Towns of the city. They will be able to handle replica objects, dress up in costumes and gowns from the 18th and 19th centuries, join our family activity trail and take part in an array of art activities. If you're interested in getting the kids involved, the family and school activity area will be open to family and schools Monday – Saturday 10am – 5pm and Sundays (during August only) 12noon – 5pm.

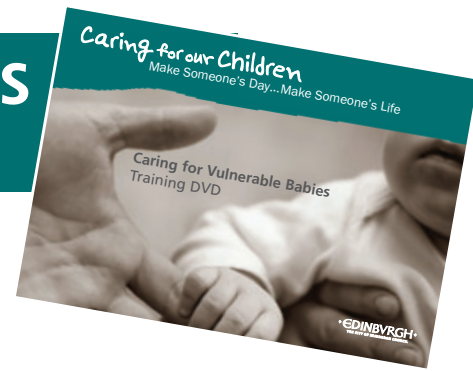
Admission is free.



Museum of Edinburgh
(Huntly House - Royal Mile)

Vulnerable Babies DVD

In the last issue of the Caring for our Children newsletter, we told you about the Caring for Vulnerable Babies DVD that we've produced with the help of our carers and NHS healthcare professionals.



The DVD uses the experience of our foster carers to help those involved in the care of vulnerable babies and will be used by us for training, as well as being sold on to other organisations or local authorities who could benefit from our experience. At the launch of the DVD in March, hundreds of people, many of whom were involved in the making of the DVD, turned up to see the big screen debut of our very own foster carers Linda Bevis, Audrey Lamb and Julie Coghill. A huge thank you goes to all three carers for sharing their experiences on camera.

Julie Coghill said: "Looking after these babies is a really taxing job, but it's so rewarding. When caring for vulnerable babies you can often feel like you're doing a bad job and getting nowhere because you're not getting the usual response you'd get from a baby. But it's great when they come through something so traumatic and you can say 'I got you there'. I hope by sharing my experience, this DVD helps other carers and professionals."

And thank you also to carer Ruth Robertson, who in addition to Julie, helped out with media interviews following the launch. Through the publicity we received, we attracted more enquiries about caring for babies, so this is a fantastic result. If you're interested in seeing the DVD or accessing training in relation to caring for vulnerable babies, please speak to your Liaison Social Worker.

Best Carer Award

For the second year running, the Edinburgh Evening News has honoured a Council carer as 'Best Carer' in its annual Community Awards.



The awards celebrate some of the community spirited individuals whose tireless dedication make the Capital such a great place to live. Nominations were up 50 percent on last year and Edinburgh New Opportunities Foster Carer, **Mike Perry**, was recognised recently at an award ceremony at the newspaper's Holyrood office.

It was only after a long career with BT that Mike decided to retrain and devote his time to helping others. He was introduced to his first foster child eight years ago and since then has looked after three youngsters with diverse, complex issues.

Mike, who lives in The Inch, said he was "genuinely very surprised" to win the award, and added: "I never in my life thought I'd end up doing this, but it's fantastic. It's very challenging – every day's an experience, but it's very rewarding. Just to see a child happy, that's what it's all about."

He was nominated by daughter Angela Perry, who said: "I just felt he deserved some recognition for what he does. It's a really tough job – where he gets the patience I don't know. It's not something the faint-hearted could do."

Congratulations Mike!

Upcoming Events

The Sky's the Limit, National Gallery of Scotland, Chambers Street

27-31 July www.nms.ac.uk

Drop-in for this free family event in the museum's Connect Gallery where the Royal Observatory has a week of events to celebrate the International Year of Astronomy. Make a rocket, handle a meteorite or have your photo taken with an infrared camera.

Edinburgh Mela Festival

7-9 August – Pilrig Park www.edinburgh-mela.co.uk

This is Scotland's leading celebration of cultural diversity through the arts. In Edinburgh each year, some of the country's finest talent, as well as UK and international artists take part in this vibrant and exciting festival. There are interactive opportunities for children and families and a food and craft market. And our Family Based Care Recruitment Team will have a stall there on 8 and 9 August - so pop along and visit!

Edinburgh Fringe Festival

7-31 August Call: 0131 226 0000 or visit: www.edfringe.com

The biggest arts festival in the world is on your doorstep, with something for everyone: theatre, comedy, music, dance, exhibitions and much, much more. The Fringe caters for the biggest names in showbiz to the performers in the street and covers all sorts of art forms such as theatre, comedy, children's shows, dance, physical theatre, musicals, operas, all genres of music, exhibitions, and events.

Warlocks and Witches in a Dance Exhibition, The Writers' Museum, Royal Mile

Now until 9 January 2010 www.edinburgh.gov.uk/museums

Entry is free to this exhibition of artwork by young blind people who have drawn inspiration from the works of Robert Burns. 'Warlocks and Witches in a Dance' is a joint venture between the Writers' Museum, the Royal Blind School and Pentland Art Club. The exhibition, which is one of Edinburgh's 'Homecoming' events, will display works by 12 adults from the Pentland Art Club and 12 children from the Royal Blind School.

Brass Rubbing, Edinburgh Brass Rubbing Centre, Royal Mile

Ongoing Call 0131 556 4364 or visit: www.edinburgh.gov.uk/museums

Unleash the artist inside you and your family and head for the Brass Rubbing Centre tucked away in Chalmers Close, just off the Royal Mile (opposite the Museum of Childhood). There's an array of brasses to choose from, so every member of the family should be able to find something which appeals: Celtic designs, medieval knights and roaring lions are waiting for you in this former Gothic Trinity Church. And if you're new to this activity our friendly staff will help to get you started. Entry is free and rubbings start from £1.50.

Lauriston Castle, Davidson's Mains

Ongoing Call 0131 336 2060 or visit: www.edinburgh.gov.uk/lauriston

Visited by 40,000 people per year and set within 30 acres of woodland, the Castle's annual events programme has now kicked off. There's something suitable for the whole family, from guided walks and tours, to workshops where the children can get creative to produce fairy sparkle bags or mosaic birdhouses!

Butterfly & Insect World

It's a jungle in here!

giveaway

We have two family passes (each for two adults and up to four children) to giveaway for the Edinburgh Butterfly and Insect World.

Discover what a tropical rainstorm is like first hand, feed the fish, or get the chance to handle tarantulas, snakes and millipedes. And there's lots of other daily activities, including the **Leaf Cutter Ant Parade, Glowing Scorpion Display, Working Honey Bee Hives (Seasonal), Beady Eyed Iguana and Tropical Gardens.** As well as seeing incredible creatures and having an unforgettable time, you'll also be helping to support the conservation of threatened species and habitats throughout the world.

All you have to do to be in with a chance of winning is get in touch with your name and contact details by Friday 14 August 2009. You can e-mail catriona.mckenna@edinburgh.gov.uk or write to us at the address below. The first two names drawn at random after this date will win!



HAVE YOUR SAY

Let us know what you think about Caring for our Children and any ideas you have about what you'd like to see in the next edition. If you want to contribute, please contact the editor with your story, review or idea by August 2009.

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