

# Caring for our Children

Quarterly newsletter for family based carers in Edinburgh

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

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Happy  
New Year!

# Tricia's column



I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas and very best wishes for 2012!

Last year seemed to fly by - it's true about time passing quicker as you get older. Our Family Based Care teams were busy with more children than ever needing to be accommodated. I know that lots of you have offered additional placements over the year, which in many cases meant that children did not have to move outwith Edinburgh. So, thank you.

You may have seen in the press that the Council are keen to assist carers in taking more children by offering larger council houses to those of you with current council tenancies. If you are in a council, or a Housing Association tenancy, and would wish to foster more children but would need a bigger property, please discuss in the first instance with your FBC social worker.

One particular highlight of last year was the carer event in the City Chambers, held on 3 November. It was a really enjoyable evening; carers, FBC staff and some of our senior managers had an opportunity to meet socially. The City Chambers is a wonderful venue and the buffet was lovely! Grant Stott had us all in stitches.

I would really like to hear directly from carers more often than I do currently, so please give me a ring or e-mail me. I like to hear the good news as well as the areas that are causing you concern.

Tricia Rosa Team Manager

Looked After and Accommodated Children  
tricia.rosa@edinburgh.gov.uk

## Staff News



We welcome the following people to Family Based Care:

### Faye Harding Hill

Social worker, has joined the Family Support and Disability teams and will work half a week in each team.

### Alison Simpson

Statutory meeting administrator, has joined Business Support.

## Congratulations

### Maria Perez

Presently on maternity leave, has had a baby girl called Isabella.



**Debra Goddard** Has married and is now known as Debra Paterson (with one t).

## New libraries

Morningside library opens on 15 December after a refit and it's all new! Drumbrae library hub will have a library, adult day care, Police Safer Neighbourhood team, access to frontline council services for example paying council bills, reporting local faults and housing advice. And more importantly a café and its all under one roof. It opens from 31 January. Both facilities will have free computers with WiFi and games consoles, so a great place to hang out.



## Edinburgh is ready for winter

While we are all hoping to avoid another winter like the last two, the Council is prepared to deal with whatever the weather brings. We are urging residents and businesses to be prepared too.

During severe winter weather, we will give you advance information on which roads and pavements we will salt (grit) and when. We will also tell you about disruption to rubbish and recycling services and, as early as possible, if your school or nursery is to close. This way you can make other arrangements for travel, work or childcare. You will know where you can dispose of your rubbish if normal services are affected. For updates go to [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/winterweather](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/winterweather) or listen to Radio Forth.

## A sad goodbye to the carer's website

As of Christmas, we will be closing down the carer's website. This decision has been taken out of our hands as the company hosting it is no longer in business. We also need to look at whether this is the right way to give you the information you need.

## and a brighter future of the fostering site

However, the good news is that we are giving the foster care website ([www.edinburgh.gov.uk/fostering](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/fostering)) a face lift. With over half of our potential carers using the site to find out information about us, our website needs to be easy to use with clearer navigation. All information on the carer's site will be transferring onto here and will sit under a new area called 'Already a carer?' We are aiming for this to be ready by March.

## Pedal power

Pedal power has helped raise funds to fight leprosy after a foster child and his carer saddled up for a gruelling cycle ride from Edinburgh to St Andrews. Despite the day-long downpour, Jake (13) and Yvette from Edinburgh completed the 63 mile annual event in aid of the charity, LEPRO Health in Action.



## From forces to fostering

Three of our foster carers have recently helped us to promote their important work to a wider audience. Brian Herron, Angie and Colin Cunningham and Walter 'Hutch' Hutchison told their stories to *Pathfinder*, a magazine aimed at people leaving the armed forces. It is hoped that their stories will inspire people looking for a new profession on leaving the armed forces. It will be out in the New Year.

## Someone else's child

Vanessa Orr was recently featured on a BBC Radio Scotland called *Someone Else's Child* (18 October). Presented by Lorraine Kelly, Vanessa did a fantastic job, which was echoed by the producer who commented that she "... is a truly remarkable, inspirational individual ... and I hope that by other people listening to her story, it will make them stop and think about their own lives and perhaps what they could offer to a child in need".

## Early Learning Centre Discount

Remember you can get a ten per cent 'Playgroup Discount Card' to use all year round in any ELC store. Again, simply bring along proof that you are a foster carer (eg your ID card or letter from us), fill out the application form and you can use the discount straight away.

Don't forget to sign up for the 'Big Birthday Club', another 20 per cent discount voucher which you receive in advance of the child's birthday. You need to pre-register at least eight weeks in advance of the birthday for this one to avoid disappointment.

## Fun at Edinburgh Zoo

Our foster carer, Vanessa Smith, tells us about the fun she had at Edinburgh Zoo in October as part of an annual free outing for the city's foster carers and their children.

"We all met up at 10am and it was straight to the education centre to meet and pet some unusual creatures including a snake, giant snail and hissing cockroach. My personal highlight was when Dylan the armadillo scurried around the floor chasing his keeper's feet. The children made some zoo animals and drew some pictures. Then off to see penguins, monkeys, apes, big cats, bears, followed by a picnic.

"A fun packed day but eventually little legs got tired from climbing hills, running around and testing out every playpark passed so it was off to the shop to buy a little treat to remember the day. A big thank you to the Department for a great day out."

## Bulgarian trip...

Carer Anita Baggs recently returned from a life-changing trip to help Bulgarian orphans. Lecturer Anita, one of our disability carers, accompanied her ten Jewel and Esk College social care students on the two week mission to renovate an orphanage near the country's capital, Sofia.

As part of the college's Living and Learning Abroad project, the group took on maintenance tasks at the orphanage, as well as helping care for the 50 children who live there, most of whom have suffered from abandonment or neglect.

Organised through the Bhagavat Educational Trust, a Bulgarian charity established to relieve poverty in different countries, the trip took the students and two members of staff 1600 miles to Eastern Europe.

While there they helped paint bedrooms and social areas and cleared outdoor spaces to provide the children with somewhere safe to play. Anita said: "This has been a fantastic experience for the students. They have the opportunity to really engage with the children, some have been able to recognise the signs of neglect or abuse and have been able to put their learning into practice.

"There have been some laughs and tears along the way but all of the students would agree that it has been a very worthwhile experience that has changed their outlook on life.

"As a carer the trip gave me a real-life opportunity to gain a deeper understanding on the effects living in a large residential unit can have on children and the huge benefits fostering can bring to children in a family home."



## JADE AND BILLY

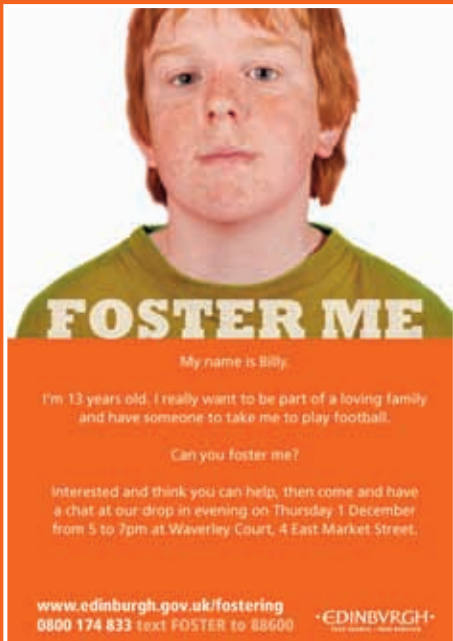
### Foster Me Foster Us

campaigns using Jade and Billy to promote New Opportunities and 12-18 respectively proved really successful.



We've had a large increase in new callers over the last few months. This is great news for New Opportunities which is traditionally one of the harder schemes to recruit for, with many potential foster carers possibly daunted by the 'challenging behaviour' presented by the children, who are generally older children. Those who care for New Opportunities children come from a variety of backgrounds, from new carers with no children to experienced carers looking for a new challenge. If you are interested in learning more about what the New Opportunities scheme offers please contact Alma Cope on 0131 529 2544.

Billy was the new face asking people to attend a drop in evening at the Council's HQ. It was a successful evening with 13 units or groups of people showing interest in fostering or adoption. This was the first time in awhile that we looked at campaigning for 12-18s so this is a really positive response.



**Congratulations to the carers who received Long Service Awards:**

- Janice and Jay Aubeeluck
- Heather Doig
- Beverley and Francis Donaghue
- Jackie Hunter
- Susan Inglis
- Elaine King
- Helen and Des Robinson
- Margaret Wakely
- Dawn Walker
- Toni and Paddy Welsh
- Angela and Dennis Wilson
- Susan Liesham
- Lorna and Bill Taylor



**Congratulations to the carers who received Continued Professional Development Awards**

- Anita and James Baggs
- Margaret Conlin
- Morag Kinghorn
- Ann Leonard
- Lesley Levy
- Kate McKenzie
- Jane Murray



## Jamie Barkley

**A picture in his pocket gave Jamie Barkley the power to realise his dream. The inspiration which saw the 22-year-old graduate from Strathclyde University this year was provided by his foster carers.**



Jamie was initially disinterested in school work, but all that changed when he met his respite foster carer, Colin.

"Colin had his own marketing company, which he eventually sold to take up foster caring full time," Jamie said. "He told me when he was younger, he had a picture of a Lotus sports car in his wallet to keep him focused until he made enough money to buy the car. I decided to do a marketing degree at Strathclyde, which is the best university for this subject. Like Colin, I kept the university logo in my pocket to remind me of my ambition."

With the help of his foster carers Toni and Paddy, who provided tutors to help him through his highers, Jamie got into the university. He then threw himself into academic life, becoming president of numerous societies and even travelling to Chicago via a worldwide sales competition. Jamie now works in sales for Lloyds TSB in Glasgow and has just been promoted.

"My teachers told my carers I would never get the grades for university, but my carers never told me that. They believed in me and their support helped me to believe in myself. This sums up the difference a foster carer can make to a child's life. I am very grateful to them."

# Carers' evening

There was a great turnout of carers for the appreciation evening last November. Judging by the smiley faces, it looks like a great night was had by all. Grant Stott played the role of MC for the evening and kept our speakers Councillor Marilyne MacLaren, Alistair Gaw, Head of Support to Children and Young People and Scott Dunbar, Service Manager for Looked After and Accommodated Children in order and on time! We were also really lucky to have people from BAAF, Edinburgh Connect and Fostering Network attend the evening.

As Scott said on the night, the role you play in young people's lives is so important, we want to show our appreciation by having a similar event every year. If you have any suggestions how we can build on last year's event please drop a line to [michelle.donegan@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:michelle.donegan@edinburgh.gov.uk) or call 0131 469 5226.



## Julie Coghill

Providing a safe start for some of the capital's most vulnerable babies has officially made Julie Coghill the Pride of Britain.

Julie, one of our carers from Edinburgh, has fostered more than 40 babies over the past 15 years, most of them suffering from withdrawal due to their mothers' drugs or alcohol use. At a star-studded event in London last year, Julie's services to fostering were recognised with a Daily Mirror Pride of Britain Award – handed to her by the cast of Downton Abbey.

"I was absolutely blown away," Julie admitted: "When I found out I had been nominated I was waiting for someone to knock on my door and tell me it was all a joke! I am very honoured to have received the award, but it is also important recognition of the work that each and every carer does to improve the lives of young people."





# Interview with **Alistair Gaw** Head of Support to Children and Young People



resource for some but the majority of children thrive in a family-based setting. And wherever possible we want to look after our children in Edinburgh near their local communities.

The City of Edinburgh foster carers also represent the best value for money. If we achieve our target of 400 placements by the end of 2013 we can make significant savings which will protect our services in a very tough financial climate.

## **Concerns have been raised nationally about the local authority recruitment process taking too long and being too selective. Why is the process so rigorous and can anything be done to speed it up?**

One of our priorities is to accelerate the recruitment, assessment and approval process for fostering and adoption. However, the most important consideration will always be the best interests of our children. For this reason, the recruitment process must remain rigorous.

## **Use three words to describe yourself**

Aspirational, energetic, forgiving.

## **What is your background?**

I was brought up in the west end of Glasgow and left aged 18 to do a politics degree at Edinburgh University. I've been in the capital ever since.

## **What got you interested in this area of work?**

I was working for a bank but wanted to work with people. I trained in social work after volunteering with Edinburgh's Canongate Youth Project, which was a fantastic experience. The project is still doing great things today.

## **What is the best advice you have ever been given?**

I was working in Inspection which was a great job but I realised I was becoming adrift from direct work and the reasons why I went into social work in the first place. The Chief Inspector, Alexis Jay suggested I go back into operational social work management which I did, joining the service at Fife Council before coming to Edinburgh. It was definitely the right decision for me.

## **The Council needs to recruit 50 new carers next year.**

### **Why is this role so vital and what difference can it make to a child's life?**

The demands on our services to provide care for our most vulnerable children continue to rise and we want the very best outcomes for all Edinburgh's children. The quality of care they receive will determine their life chances. For most children who cannot live with their own family foster care is the best option. Residential care is definitely the right

## **What benefits/rewards will the carer bring/take from fostering and adoption?**

Caring is a fantastic job - it is both professional and vocational. It's 24/7 and is extremely demanding, but the rewards are enormous. You can literally turn the life of a child around and give them life chances they would never have had.

You can see that child blossom, mature and embark on adulthood. I don't know what could be more satisfying than that.

## **What do you hope to achieve as Head of Support to Children and Young People in the next five years?**

All children in Edinburgh should achieve their potential and I would want to make sure that those with high levels of need have those needs met.

Across all SCYP services we have staff with strong values and tremendous commitment. Our social workers often have to take the decisions that other people do not want to take. I want to make sure they are supported and equipped to make these judgements.

## **From this interview and trying to find a time to interview you, it sounds like your job here is very full on so how do you relax?**

I like to socialise and to get fresh air and exercise. I'm part of a hill-walking team. Every year we compete in the Four Inns Challenge. It sounds like a pub crawl but we only get to the pub after a very long day on the hills!

My other big interest is music - of all kinds. I used to play in a band which paid the bills when I was younger. I'm out of practice so nowadays if I play it's for my pleasure and everyone else's pain.



# Kid's cyber corner

Hi folks,  
Brrrr ... cold weather, dark nights, how do you get a little sunshine into your day? Hope these websites will add that sparkle to your day with fun things to do ...

**First of all remember to keep yourself SAFE ONLINE!**

Games, horoscopes, ecards, fashion and gossip. <http://kids.yahoo.com/>

The Yuckiest site on the Internet. <http://yucky.discovery.com/flash/>

Puzzles, games, fun, ask questions, science can be fun. <http://kids.discovery.com/>

Fancy being a wildlife explorer? Then you can join the largest children and young people environmental club with the RSPB! Different clubs for ages 12 and up.

<http://www.rspb.org.uk/ourwork/teaching/scotland/wildlifeexplorers.aspx>

And for the wee kids. <http://www.rspb.org.uk/youth/index.aspx>

While we are on the subject of nature, if you fancy a day out try. <http://www.theecologycentre.org/>

The human body, what happens to your body when you are growing up?

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/science/humanbody/body/interactives/lifecycle/teenagers/>

Vote for your hero at the Teen Awards. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio1/teenawards/2011/>

Find out what's on in Edinburgh? <http://www.kidsedinburgh.com/>

Do you fancy having a go at making your own music? Check out the Jam Studio online and have a go.

<http://www.jamstudio.com/Studio/index.htm>

Don't know about notes or just for the younger ones, you can have loads of fun making your own music by just dragging and dropping the notes and hey presto you could have a great tune!

<http://www.classicsforkids.com/games/compose/compose.html>

Do you like art? Interactive art online is fun and you can be creative!

<http://www.nga.gov/kids/zone/zone.htm>

For wee kids, colouring in, draw pictures, sticker and picture games and spin art.

<http://www.nickjr.com/kids-create/>

Lots of activities for the younger ones online and can be printed off at CBBC.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/thingstodo>

Don't forget Safer Internet Day, 7 February 2012! It is interactive, fun and you could learn loads so why not help your carer or brothers and sisters learn about how to stay safe online with Safer Internet Day.

<http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/safer-internet-day>

Look at [www.kiddingaroundedinburgh.co.uk](http://www.kiddingaroundedinburgh.co.uk) or

[www.kidsedinburgh.com/events](http://www.kidsedinburgh.com/events) for ideas on exciting things to see and do.

IT Development Officer: [marion.boyle@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:marion.boyle@edinburgh.gov.uk)

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# Reviews

Dr Book has chosen two seasonal books from well loved authors for your reading enjoyment. Find them both at your local library along with many other books with a wintry setting.

Have you read a book, listened to music or seen a film and think it's great?

Then send your review into us here at [sarah.duguid@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.duguid@edinburgh.gov.uk)



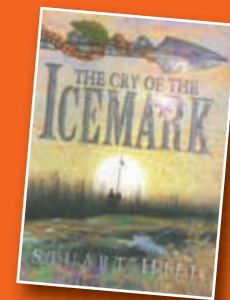
## When the snow comes

by Jonathan Allen

The cold weather is coming, and Little Yak is excited about seeing snow for the very first time. All of his friends are busy preparing for winter - Pika gathers grass to feed him through the cold months, Blue Thrush flies away to a warmer home and Brown Bear has a long winter sleep.

But what do little yaks do when winter comes? A new title from this popular author/illustrator.

For 4 to 7 and all the family



## The cry of the Ice mark

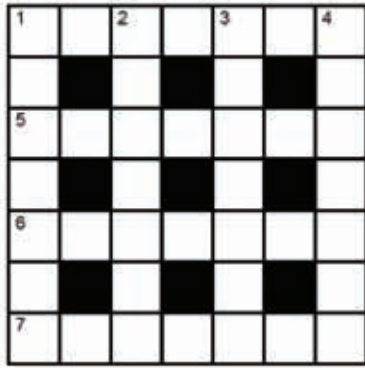
by Stuart Hill

When her father dies in battle, 14-year-old Thirrin becomes Queen of the Ice mark. Not only must she win the respect of her people, but she must also raise an army to protect them from the most formidable threat of invasion her nation has ever known - and do so before the end of the winter snows.

An epic tale of magical fantasy involving amongst others vampires, wolf-folk and giant snow leopards.

For 8 to 11 and all the family

# Cool Crossword



Across

1. Angry
5. Segment
6. Occurring at the beginning
7. No longer in existence

Down

1. Merry
2. Mark or stamp as paid
3. Belief or sentiment
4. Vest

For the solution go to: <http://www.puzzlechoice.com/cw/Mini12solx.html>

## Top tips time...

Look at these top tips to see if you can save yourself some money this year ... (savings shown are each year).

1. Turn out the lights, replace lightbulbs with energy saving models - save £200. Energy saving bulbs last for six to eight years, ten times longer than normal ones, and an average household has 23 lightbulbs, so the savings will soon add up.
2. Don't overfill your kettle - save £20. We tend to boil twice as much as we use so only boil as much water as you need.
3. But do fill your dishwasher, washing machine - save £75. With the average UK washing machine churning out a whopping 274 loads a year, save £40 a year by simply turning down the heat from 40°C to 30°C.
4. Turn your thermostat down - save £30. Average UK heating bill is £300, so by adjusting your thermostat by as little as 1°, you can save up to 10 per cent.

## 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 2 March 2012.

**Sarah Duguid**  
**Communications Officer**  
**Communication Services**  
**Waverley Court, Level 2.1, 4 East Market Street**  
**Edinburgh EH8 8BG**  
**e-mail: [sarah.duguid@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.duguid@edinburgh.gov.uk)**  
**tel: 0131 529 4386**

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# Upcoming Events

## Burns' Family Festival Day - Scottish Storytelling Centre

Saturday 28 January 10.30am - 4.30pm Some events free, others £3-£6  
 A fun-packed day for all the family! Interactive stories, music, song and laughter all inspired by Robert Burns.

## Tiny Puppet People - Museum of Childhood

Saturday 28 January 10.30am - 12.30pm or 1.30pm - 3.30pm

No booking Free 5+

Make your own finger puppets, creating your own characters, then act out your play for all to see. Children may not be left unattended.

## Swallows and Amazons - Edinburgh Festival Theatre

Tuesday 31 January - Saturday 4 February, Matinees 2pm or Evenings 7pm

£17 to £24, children go half price 8+

The Children's Touring Partnership presents a new musical play following Captain John and his able crew as they set sail to Wildcat Island on an exotic adventure.

## Decorative Printing - Museum of Edinburgh

Saturday 4 February Either 10.30am - 12.30pm or 1.30pm - 3.30pm Free

Drawing inspiration from all the patterns in the collection, create your own relief prints using styrofoam.

## Fascinating Mummies - National Museum of Scotland

Saturday 11 February - Sunday 27 May 10am - 5pm Members free, family £26, adult £9, child £6 5+

Fascinating Mummies is an unmissable exhibition of treasures from the world-famous Egyptology collections from the Netherlands. Booking advised call 0300 123 6789.

## Free Valentine's fun for all the family

Seafield Community Recycling Centre, Fillyside Road

Tuesday 14 February 11am - 3pm

Make Valentines cards and presents for your loved ones, meet the bugs and beasties that love to live in the compost heap and have a fun-packed day of competitions, prizes and freebies. For more information contact 0131 469 5070 or e-mail [wasteaction@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:wasteaction@edinburgh.gov.uk)

## Sail the seven seas model boats - Museum of Edinburgh

Saturday 3 March. Either 10.30am - 12.30pm or 1.30pm - 3.30pm Free

Make a fantastic model sailing boat inspired by the trade routes that supplied Edinburgh, and fill it with cargo from around the world.

## Camera Obscura and World of Illusions

Come and play! We have a huge range of amazing illusions, puzzles and special effects.

## Win tickets!

Until 31 March 2012 bring along this advert and 2 children will be admitted free with each full paying adult.

[www.camera-obscura.co.uk](http://www.camera-obscura.co.uk)

Castlehill, Royal Mile, Edinburgh. Open every day except Christmas Day