



IMPACT

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An Easter Editorial

by Trevor Birtle

Recent news has rightly been dominated by the devastation of Ukraine and the displacement of multiple millions of men, women and children. Man's inhumanity to man seems to know no limits but thankfully this is also true of man's courage, kindness and generosity in the face of such large scale loss. Many people throughout Europe and beyond are considering their response to the resulting high level of need and we all as individuals, families, towns, cities and nations are included. PACTNE as a charity is also exploring our response and this is outlined in this newsletter.

Despite the widescale destruction we have witnessed from afar, we stand amazed at the unfolding beauty of spring and the emergence of new life. Lambs are bleating in the fields, trees are bursting into leaf, the grass is shooting up, and the colours of winter are giving way to vibrant blues, greens, yellows and reds. Perhaps spring, and Easter time in particular, has the potentiation of helping us to believe that "where there is life there is hope".



Although the Covid-19 pandemic is still with us, the demands of multiple lockdowns, and accompanying restrictions, seem to be relegated to a thing of the past. PACTNE is beginning to rebuild on multiple fronts, having experienced significant change as several of our resident families have successfully transitioned into homes in the community .

The long awaited Family Centre is almost complete and has already hosted our April trustees meeting. We still need to secure funds to complete the outside space around the Centre. We are really grateful to the individuals, families and foundations that have contributed to meeting the cost of the building work which only exceeded the budget of £78,000 by around 6%. This is largely due to the careful management of the project by our builder Mr Paul Brown who we are very thankful for.

Thank you too, for reading this edition of IMPACT the newsletter of Parent and Child Together North East. Please feel free to get in touch with your comments and suggestions.

We wish you and those you love a very joyous Easter.



The Family Centre Picture Gallery



A Safe Place To Be

One of our ambitions from when PACTNE was formed as a supported housing charity, was to allocate one of our six lodges for refugee and asylum seeker families. To date our finances haven't made this possible, but we really do want to respond positively to the current humanitarian crisis.

Our financial reserve has reduced over recent months to just less than two months running costs, but despite this our trustees have taken the bold decision to make space available for a refugee family to live at Eagle House. Our new Family Centre could also become a much needed meeting hub for refugees living in Darlington and the surrounding area, because we understand how important it is for people to support one another and live in community. **Not all of us are in a position to host a refugee family but it might be that you could commit an amount of money each month to make it possible for PACTNE to do just that.** Please let us know if this is you! At the moment we just need your commitment to give support when a family arrives with us.

Bouncing Back from Covid 19

In our Christmas newsletter we let you know that our Bounce Back Loan was covered by donations until March 2022. Now having started the new financial year we are asking individuals, groups or companies to cover just one payment of £500 in 2022. **This is a big ask but such a donation will help us to rebuild as we bounce back from the Covid-19 pandemic.** Please contact our office if you would like to know more.



Well Done Dean!



Dean outside Stockton Riverside College

As a charity we benefit tremendously from volunteers. Some are a regular presence, whilst others come as and when they can. Some are retired and yet others are much younger and would very much like to gain paid employment. One of our aspirations at PACTNE is where appropriate to assist volunteers to position themselves to secure employment. This is something that is about to happen with Dean Oakshott who has been volunteering with us for almost a year. He has committed to come to Eagle House for two afternoons each week and on occasions he has volunteered for a third day. He has been prepared to do anything that has been asked of him which has included digging ditches, erecting flat packed

furniture, tree planting, cutting the grass and assisting with lots of trips to the local recycling centre.

Dean has been on several courses over the past year including safeguarding, but his most recent two week course at Stockton Riverside College led to a successful interview with the NHS. When his safe recruitment is complete he will be a hospital porter, a role which he seems ideally suited for. Dean commented, *"PACTNE is a project that makes a difference in the lives of vulnerable families. When families are in difficulty and get help early on they have a chance to stay together and that matters to me. The work that I've done over the past few months has been physically challenging but I am really satisfied with my contribution, which was appreciated by the team. There was always a mug of coffee on offer. It helped me to develop a strong work ethic and get into a routine. I had been long term unemployed and this has been a stepping stone into getting a job"*.

We will miss Dean at Eagle House and wish him every success in his new role.

If you would like to volunteer for PACTNE, even if it is just for a few hours each week, then we would love to hear from you. Email the office at pactne@gmail.com or ring/text [07535977188](tel:07535977188) for an application form. There is always plenty to do all year round, inside and out.

Welcoming Additional Family Support

Given that Rachel, our Senior Family Support Worker, is still on maternity leave we have been aware that staffing the project during sickness and holiday could be challenging. Three new excellent family support workers, Victoria, Linsey and Becci have now been safely recruited and inducted and are in post. Each person is willing to work flexibly and this is much appreciated by the charity and the whole team. In future newsletters we will be introducing these ladies in more detail.



Money Really Does Matter!

Like many small charities finance can feel like a bit of a roller coaster ride. At times we have been surprised and thrilled but in other moments we have been frustrated and concerned. The true cost of the Covid 19 pandemic is still being calculated in so many ways but we are aware of the impact on our reserves. The trustees have found it necessary to put a hold on development works unless they are funded through grants and donations. We are delighted to share with you two such high points.



Firstly, we have been concerned that our log cabin French doors are lacking in terms of security and energy performance. We replaced the door set on our accessible cabin which has been used as a Covid-19 safe meeting space for some time. The UPVC replacement doors, with a wooden grain effect, have been a great upgrade at a cost of £1,200 including installation. Replacing the remaining five doors seemed like a

financial step too far, and so we set about applying for a grant to cover the cost. Thanks to the Screwfix Foundation we have been awarded £5,000 for this purpose. The doors will be on order soon and we look forward to reducing our heating costs in the colder weather.

Secondly, we are developing the outside space around the Family Centre. Our hope is to create a large patio with a pre school childrens play area and attractive raised flower beds. The cost of paving slabs was prohibitive but Marshalls have once again stepped in. We have received 26 packs of grey slabs which will provide nearly 150 m² of multi-use space, even when the grounds at Eagle House are wet. The retail cost for the slabs would be tens of thousands of pounds but we only needed to pay for the transport from Halifax. How amazing is that! Thank you to Marshalls for their generosity in supporting PACTNE.



Having started our new financial year the trustees had agreed a budget for the period 6th April 2022 to 5th April 2023. We are projecting a loss of just under £7,000 but most of this represents repayments of the Bounce Back Loan. The budget requires us to generate £20,000 in grant funding, as well as securing around £12,000 in donations. We believe this is ambitious but achievable.

If you would like to make a donation of any size please contact the office for our bank details. Alternatively cut and paste the link below into your browser to visit our “Local Giving” page. Thank you once again for your encouragement and support.

<https://localgiving.org/charity/pact-north-east/>

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