



IMPACT

Issue16

Summer 2023



A Summer of Firsts

by Trevor Birtle

We are delighted to share that for the very first time since the Charity began all six family cabins have been fully occupied. This has two major benefits; we can do more of what we love to do in terms of supporting families, and our income is maximised allowing us to reach a level of sustainability. In our Business Plan we aim to achieve 80% occupancy overall, which means we need, on average, five out of our six cabins to be in use. The very nature of supported housing is that we will experience fluctuations as we say goodbye to one family and wait to welcome the next. It is likely that we will see several of our resident families move on over the coming months and we do sincerely hope that these moves will be as positive as they can be.

Other “firsts” have been markers in terms of our site development. The patio to the front of our Family Centre is now complete and we have finished a lovely 4m x 15m play area for our smaller residents and visitors. It has been a year since the Family Centre was completed and the use of the Centre is growing. One highlight was hosting a sumptuous afternoon tea on 8th May to celebrate the King’s Coronation. Over forty people came, and we want to thank the many people who worked hard to make this possible, particularly Val Wilkinson and Diane Griffiths.

Our hope is to develop the uses of Family Centre further for both our residents and the local community. More recently we have hosted supervised contacts or “family time” for a resident family, and we understand our indoor and outdoor space may well be attractive to some Local Authorities as a family friendly venue to do more of this in the future.



Another notable first has been the involvement of Darlington College as a group of tutors and young people came to lay paving blocks at the back of our raised bed area (please see photo). The newly paved area will be home to picnic benches very soon. Thank you to all who took part and thank you to Victoria for coordinating this volunteering. We hope to develop our relationships with education providers to give more students

opportunities to develop their skills.

As ever we would love to hear your comments and questions, so please keep in touch.

Family Assessments at PACTNE

Many resident families have needed to be assessed during their stays with us at Eagle House. These are usually done by external services. We have considered the possibility of developing our own Independent Assessment Team whilst maintaining the required high level of independence for our families.

We were convinced that our family support staff who already contribute to Local Authority assessments, needed to focus on their primary role of interacting closely with families and at times acting as advocates. This year we took the decision to safely recruit a team who could carry out assessments without being involved in day-to-day family support. Interviews identified three ladies: Pam Birtle who is already a Trustee and has recently retired as CEO of Cornerstone Fostering and Adoption Service, Sue Leighton who has recently retired from her role as a senior nurse department Lead at North Tees Hospital,



Sue Ormerod, Sue Leighton and Pam Birtle (from left to right)

and Sue Ormerod who was formerly a social worker with Safe Families for Children. Sue Leighton will be the Team Lead and will coordinate with Mick Sutcliffe, our General Manager. The three ladies have already taken part in training with Lisa, a Social Worker and experienced Independent Assessor from Essex who has agreed to be an external consultant for the team. The new PACTNE Independent Assessment Team will be active from the Autumn and will initially only be available for families accommodated and supported at Eagle House. Soon a new tab will appear on our website to advise Local Authorities of this new Independent Assessment Team.

The cost of paying for a dedicated computer, assessment software, and initial team training was met by a single donation from a very kind supporter. Thank you so much!

Above and Beyond the Call of Duty

PACTNE has a small number of safely recruited regular volunteers who do some amazing work to develop and maintain the site at Eagle House, but we also host volunteering days from time to time and this helps us to address seasonal tasks that might not otherwise be completed. Monday 8th May was such a volunteering day and was part of the Big Help Out which marked the King's Coronation weekend and attracted around six million volunteers around the country. The day started with grey clouds and torrential rain hardly stopped until after the volunteering was finished. The assembled team however performed above and beyond the call of



duty and some fantastic work was done. Whether you were making tea, planting seeds, digging raised beds, planting trees or clearing large areas of ground we want to thank you. Well done!

The Volunteering Day Photo Gallery



Upcoming Events: The seaside special

Most of us enjoy a trip to the seaside but our events committee have decided to bring the seaside to Eagle House. On Saturday 2nd September we will be hosting a relaxing family event on our Family Centre Patio/beach. This will include live music, singing for the little ones, seaside picnic food and much more. All you will need to do is let us know you are coming and be there! Tickets are £8 for an adult and £5 for a child (4 to 15 years old). The maximum a family will pay is £20.



Money Matters!

Due to our high occupancy rate this year our financial position has improved. We have benefitted from several grants and donations, and we will continue to make applications to grant making trusts to contribute to core funding. Our superior Landlord for Eagle House has committed another rent-free year for 23-24 and this will underwrite continued site development.

Grant Funding



If you shop at Tesco in Darlington Town Centre, you might have been given a blue chip to vote on causes you would like to support. The good news is that our pitch for preschool equipment gained the maximum number of votes and so we were awarded £1,500 earlier in the year. The play equipment for our new play area at the front of the Family Centre patio includes a wooden slide and swing set, a ball pool, a sand pit, a tepee, and a trampoline. The area is an attractive and bright space with synthetic grass and colourful sails to provide sun shade. Further grant funding applications have been submitted recently and we are awaiting the outcomes over the next few months.



Residents Support Fund

We are currently seeking to grow a small fund to underwrite resident group activities and away days. This will include trips to the seaside and visits to small animal petting farms. Our belief is that when families spend fun time together in a variety of interesting settings, this builds their resilience and confidence and improves their wellbeing. It's also fun!

If you would like to make a donation of any size, please contact the PACTNE 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/>

Many thanks to the following organisations for their support and generosity:



Parent and Child Together North East

Eagle House, Neasham Road
Hurworth Moor, Darlington DL2 1QE
Email: pactne@gmail.com Mob: 07535977188
Website: <http://www.pactne.co.uk>
Charity number: 1169484



Parent and Child Together North East

PACT
NORTH EAST