



## APPAWS FOR AUTISM INFORMATION & SUPPORT SERVICE

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## APPAWS NEWSLETTER – AUTUMN 2017

**This is our first newsletter from the new APPAWS TEAM so firstly a big hello to everyone from all the Directors. We want to keep you informed of what's been happening at APPAWS and to let you know what we have planned for the coming months.**

### MOVE TO TEMPORARY BASE

You may be aware that we recently moved out of Unit 2 at Woodend Business Centre and we are currently searching for new premises which are slightly smaller and less expensive to run but still allow us to have sufficient space indoors and access to a suitable outdoor area. We are working with Fife Council and Fife Voluntary Action to develop partnerships and investigate funding available.

In the meantime, as from **FRIDAY 4TH AUGUST 2017** we are running a limited service at **'WHAT'S YOUR BEATH' HUB** which is situated in the High Street of Cowdenbeath. Unfortunately, the space available there means we will have to limit our numbers and **PRE-BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL** for our **SATURDAY KIDS FUN CLUB** which will be on a **FIRST COME FIRST SERVED** basis. Once we have found suitable alternative premises, we will again be able to run our other clubs and activities for children/adults/carers.

### NEW DIRECTORS

We are pleased to announce the addition of 3 new Directors to Appaws for Autism. Details of all our current Directors are as follows:-

Carol Chisholm	Original Founder and Managing Director
Niel Chisholm	Director of Finance & IT
Lisa Marie Harvey	Director of Adult Services
Julie Marshall	Director of Events and Fundraising
Marcelle Merrigan	Director of Media and Marketing
Linda Wilson	Director of Information & Children's services
Jo Gowie	Head of the Appaws Branch- Aberdeen/Aberdeenshire
Lesley Vogie	Trustee for Home Schooling Information

We are all looking forward to working together to support the autism community within the Fife area and will endeavour to bring you the much needed services to help you in your journey with autism.

### CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES

#### KIDS FUN CLUB

Despite operating within a temporary base which has limited space, we are still managing to operate our **KIDS FUN CLUB** on a **SATURDAY** from 12-3pm. This is a free play session where children can take part in any of the activities available ie **ARTS & CRAFTS, VIDEO GAMES, SENSORY SESSIONS, BOARD GAMES, ACTION FIGURES, OUTDOOR AREA.**

Children can do as much or as little as they wish and there is a Sensory Area available for calm down time if it all gets too much. Activities change every week and we are always willing to

introduce new ones requested by centre users.

Parents are required to stay with their child and are responsible for them throughout the 3 hour session. Costs are £3.50 per accompanying adult, £1 per child. This includes Tea or Coffee for adults and juice and a snack for child. The club is open to the whole family including siblings, mums, dads, grans and grandads or any other carer/guardian.

**We hope to have other clubs, workshops and sessions for children and teenagers if there is a demand for them and we have suitable premises.**

### **KIDS HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES**

We organised a variety of activities and sessions during the first two weeks of April which included an Easter Fayre, Easter Crafts, Wii Games, Film Day, Sand Art, Lego Day and an Easter Egg Hunt and Nature Walk. Everyone who participated enjoyed themselves and we hope to develop future programmes of holiday activities.

During May we held a very successful **MINECRAFT DAY**. This included playing Minecraft Games; Building Minecraft Themed Lego, Baking Minecraft Cake/Biscuits; Minecraft Art & Craft Activities. If the numbers make it viable, then we would like to do many more events like this.

### **ADULT ACTIVITIES**

We had some regular adult sessions taking place earlier this year. This included Relaxation to Music, Arts and Crafts, Baking, Life Skills and Walking Group.

We can offer various sessions for Adults in a group or one to one activities although our programme is restricted at present.

**Contact Lisa Harvey, our Director of Adult Services for further details.**

### **PARENTS/CARERS SESSIONS**

We have Cuppa and Chat Sessions, Drop in Advice Sessions and are planning Relaxation/Wellbeing Sessions and Support for Dads Group in the future.

### **Parent Led Training Group**

This group has been set up to get the views of parents within our group who have children at nursery and/or school with additional support needs and diagnosed/undiagnosed autism.

It is a forum for discussion about the various issues parents and children encounter with the education authority and other agencies. A report will be produced which highlights the experiences of our parents, both positive and negative, and recommendations of ways in which the partnerships between parents and schools might be improved. We hope to eventually produce a Guidance Document for the Fife Area to help families know who to contact and what services are available for their child.

### **VOLUNTEERS**

We have opportunities for adults and young people with or without autism who may wish to gain some work experience or participate in a community group, with various roles available.

**Contact Carol Chisholm for further details.**

### **SPECIAL EVENTS**

In June, we had a **DOG BITE PREVENTION WORKSHOP** organized for Friday 30<sup>th</sup> June at

6pm. This was a really useful workshop run by Doggone Safe who have a flagship programme called "Be a Tree". It was for adults and children and helped make you aware of dogs and their behavior and how to act when around a familiar or strange dog. There were no real dogs at the session. The instructors used a soft toy dog and the emphasis was on fun and interaction. £10 for adults, Children Free. For those who came along, it was a great way to start off the school holidays and help our child to feel more confident around dogs. If your school or organization would like us to provide a workshop for you, please contact the Appaws office or **Carol Anderson at** [s.s.c.t@outlook.com](mailto:s.s.c.t@outlook.com)

A very successful **Fundraising and Social GREASE Night** took place on 19<sup>th</sup> August at Methilhill Bowling Club. This was organized by **Julie Marshall**, our Events & Fundraising Director. This allowed people in the group to get to know each other better and have a fun social evening with Singing, Dancing, American Diner Buffet, auction, competitions and raffle as well as raise funds for the charity.

Next event to be organized is a Day Trip to **Cupar Deer Centre** for official group members.

### **PUBLICITY DISPLAYS/MARKETING**

Our publicity team have attended several events over the past few months.

BURNSFEST in Ayr

Dunfermline Fresh Air Festival in Public Park on Sat 27<sup>th</sup> May

Dunfermline Children's Gala Day on Sat 24<sup>th</sup> June

BURNS DOGS DAY OUT at Glamis Castle Grounds on Sun 30<sup>th</sup> July

**Future events we are attending include:-**

**KIDZ SCOTLAND at Royal Ingliston Centre, Edinburgh on THURSDAY 14<sup>th</sup> September at Stand D11.**

**Independent Living Scotland at SECC on 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> October at stand F37 within the new autism awareness area.**

### **Attendance at Conferences/Membership of Groups/Training**

To become a valued member of Appaws for Autism on an official basis is completely **FREE**. All details are provided on our newly formatted website. If you would like to fill in a form please do this Online or contact our office and we will send one to you.

There are new and stricter guidelines for Facebook members and these will be drawn up in the next few weeks. The page is a Closed group and rules and regulations are put in place for a reason.

Throughout the year our staff maintain a high level of training in house and out at conferences and workshops. This is so we can better support our families and offer support to the autism community. We have all varied skills and experience and we have to make sure that we keep up to date with new methods of training and/or publishing's. We take training very seriously and because none of us are infallible, we know the importance of learning, knowledge and extra training. 'Every day is a school day'.

For each of the Directors' skill set and job descriptions, these will be available shortly on the

updated website.

## **APPAWS ADVOCACY SERVICE**

We have provided support to a number of families over the past few months. A lot of our cases have been referred from Scottish Autism and involve difficulties parents are having getting the correct support and placement for their child at school or support for families from health and social care services. Carol and Linda are our two advocacy workers who can help with a number of areas including:

Educational plans I.E. IEP, CSP, attend meetings with you, help with referrals and tribunals, Behavior Support Plans.

Assessments, DLA/PIP forms and support at tribunals. Help with applying for mobility car or blue badge scheme.

We can provide 1-1 home visits. First visit is free then should you require ongoing support either at home, with school or healthcare then it is a yearly subscription of £60.

**24/7 Support Service** – Online/Face-to-Face/Text/Email.

If a new referral is taken by Appaws by way of an organization or service, i.e.. Social work or Quarriers, there will be a one off cost of £25 per adult plus the weekly activity price. (Ranging from £2.50-£5.00, depending on the activity).

## **TRAINING & WORKSHOPS**

Autism Awareness  
Sensory Processing  
Help your Child manage their Anxiety  
Siblings and Autism  
PECS making and Social Stories  
Toilet Training  
Picky Eaters  
Sleep Problems  
BE A TREE Dog Bite Prevention Workshop  
16+ Workshops – Career, Employment, Life Skills  
Teenage Talk sessions

## **THERAPY DOGS & ASSISTANCE DOGS TRAINING PROGRAMME UPDATE!**

Due to significant problems we experienced with a Dog Training Centre which was based in England, we have had to remove this aspect of our business. On reflection due to the recent devastating occurrences we can no longer provide this service. We will continue with the 'Be A Tree' programme and will work alongside exemplary dog trainer, Carol Anderson @ Stand Sure Canine Training in introducing this to schools, organizations and communities throughout Scotland.

2 fabulous dogs were successful in completing the Autism Specific Assistance Dog Training through APPAWS for Autism between March 2016 through to March 2017. It should be noted however that although some of the dogs who started training through APPAWS they moved on to another organization to complete their training. We were very sad to lose the dogs. This has been a heart-breaking experience but many lessons have been learned. Trainers for Autism Assistance Dogs are very difficult to source, especially in Scotland, and the whole process needs to be reviewed and properly regulated to

protect charities and families for the future. If you would like some recommendations for a reputable trainer or organization please contact us on [appawsforautism@gmail.com](mailto:appawsforautism@gmail.com)

We do have 2 or 3 families that we will continue to work with as they were in the middle of training for their dogs. We have consulted with the family and reassured them we will continue supporting them until their dog is trained. In retrospect we feel we should have had stricter guidelines in place and to always maintain a professional organization whoever we are working with.

Our logo for APPAWS identifies the importance of our Assistance/Therapy Dog Training Programme within the overall aims of our organization. We are confident that our new partnership with STAND SURE CANINE TRAINING will be professional and effective and enable us to deliver a high quality of service to families within the autism community

### **APPAWS AUTISM FRIENDLY COMMUNITY AWARDS**

This is a criteria and nomination based award for services, retailers and local authorities who are Autism Friendly. It will be a **PAWS** system, similar to star ratings indicators. IE

4 PAWS

3 PAWS

2 PAWS

1 PAW

We will endeavor to encourage our local community to become more autism friendly, starting with Cowdenbeath.

We will provide training, support and information sessions for services across the community to help them become eligible for the APPAWS AUTISM FRIENDLY COMMUNITY AWARD scheme.

This will help raise awareness of autism within the local area and hopefully improve the services available locally to the autism community.

We will see you all again with updates in the Winter with news of days out with Santa and the children's Christmas party, with a very special guest.

Many thanks from all of us at Appaws. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all our loyal members old and new, and we hope we can continue to provide you with not only a great service but also an effective one.