

Spring 2018

New look for Equal Futures Coming Soon

Welcome to Equal Futures Spring newsletter. You may notice some changes over the coming months with a new look logo, newsletter and website. We have also added some bold new colours. The new branding will also appear on all of our paperwork. All will be revealed at our AGM on the 11th of June.

There are many exciting new things happening at Equal Futures and we hope that the new branding reflects on the vision we have for the future.

We would be very interested in your ideas about the type of things you would like to see in the newsletter and on the website. This is a great opportunity to let people know what your circles are doing and to share ideas and good practice. So please speak to your circles and families and let us know if you have any thoughts.

We are also looking for creative content; we know there are a lot of creative people involved with Equal Futures as we have seen from previous newsletters. So please send us your poems and artwork and we'll be happy to publish them for you.

Please send all content to Kenny Walker – kenny@equalfutures.org.uk



New Logo and Colours Coming Soon

East Glasgow Project Update

Hi everyone, there have been many developments since our last newsletter in December, in the East End of Glasgow project. As outlined in the previous newsletter this project will be supporting children, young people and adults with autism and their families who live within the East End of Glasgow.

At the beginning of the New Year the project focused on meeting and interviewing Volunteer Circle Facilitators and increasing the referrals to the project. We have successfully recruited three wonderful volunteers who have participated in training in the middle of February on Autism awareness, Circles of Support and Planning Tools.

We are currently in the process of meeting and matching our Volunteer Circle Facilitators with Focus People, with the project having four referrals at present. It is anticipated that within the next few weeks our new circles will begin to meet and establish.

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Over the coming months, we will be continuing to work on recruiting further volunteers and referrals to the project, with it anticipated that we will have our next training at the end of May/beginning of June for Volunteer Circle Facilitators. The East End Carers Centre have also identified other individuals who could benefit from the project therefore we will be looking to establish these referrals.

We would also like to wish Cathie Kelly and Elizabeth MacIntosh a warm farewell and wish them both the best in their retirement, we are very grateful for all the help they provided us in the initial developments of the project. Cathie and Elizabeth have now handed over to Val Corcoran and Kaye Ramage.

If anyone would like to find out more about the project, please get in touch with Ekta at ekta@equalfutures.org.uk or Sarah at sarah@equalfutures.org.uk

Thanks Ekta (*Project Coordinator*) and Sarah (*Family Link Worker*)

Cumnock Academy Update

We have been working with staff and pupils at Cumnock Academy to set up and deliver an exciting new project based on Equal Futures' vision that everyone should have the opportunities and support if needed to live a "Good Life".

This project is aimed at young people who receive additional support and are in the transition stage of leaving school and moving into adult life. These young people and their families will have many things to think about such as employment, further education, finances and independent living.

It is our aim to develop a short term circle while the young person is still at school which will enable us to work with the pupils, teachers and support staff and get a real understanding of the individual's dreams and aspirations. And when the time comes to move on from school, the circle will move with them and continue to provide support and encouragement and tap into the knowledge that circle members have of what's going on their local area.

We have 4 pupil referrals at the moment and have met up with some volunteers through the Me2U project run by Cumnock Academy which works with local people who are seeking employment and are looking at learning new skills and getting involved with community activities.

If you would like to find out more about this project please contact Kenny Walker at kenny@equalfutures.org.uk

We are always looking for new and interesting articles about your circles and what's going on in your area, so please send let us know if you have anything you would like to include in our next newsletter. Contact kenny@equalfutres.org.uk

A Wee Poem By Abaigeal

Abaigeal O'Reilly sent us this lovely poem about her freckles. Abaigeal has Asperger's and decided to write the poem with her mum Sarah after eating some Nutella Chocolate spread and realizing that when she got some on her face it looked very much like her freckles.



Little Chocolate Freckles

There was once a girl,
 Made out of gingerbread,
 Her hair was all a curl,
 On her little head
 She had currants for eyes,
 With little tiny speckles,
 And on the rest of her face lies,
 Little chocolate freckles
 And she laughed when she heard it,
 Her new nickname Freckles,
 But deep down, it felt like she'd been bit,
 And little did she know, she grew little
 worry speckles
 "My little chocolate freckles," she thought,
 "are what make me,"
 And then when her trouble was fought,
 She laughed aloud and cried in glee
 There once was a girl,
 With little chocolate freckles,
 And everyday she'd be happy and twirl,
 Because she wouldn't have any more
 worry speckles

Lauren's Big Night Out



In February Lauren and her Circle were joined by her extended family for a very fun Special Night out at the Corn Exchange bowling alley followed by a tasty burger and catch up with Lauren and each other.

Being Lauren's Community Connector has always been very enjoyable and rewarding, her recent Special Night showed how much Lauren has grown up and her Circle has evolved with her needs and interests. I first met Lauren and her mum Monica just before her 9th birthday and felt they were surrounded by a lot of people who loved and cared about them, and this has grown. Nearly 9 years on, Lauren has a very close core group of family and friends in her Circle and as she becomes an adult, they are there to support her and help her through the transition.

In the last 2 years Lauren has become even more involved in managing her Circle with me and her amazing mum Monica. Lauren has been the driving force, coming up with lots and lots of fantastic ways to spend time with her Circle. Developing how she spends time with her Circle, from seeing them in her own home to having Circle gatherings at her Circle member's homes, picnic and games on Portobello beach, lunch out at the Rosehip on Rose Street and supporting her performing at the annual Awfey Huge Variety shows at the Festival Theatre. We are all looking forward to the next Special Night when we will be celebrating her 18th Birthday in April and what exciting plans she has for her Circle.

Clodagh Harris-Toner

NAC Award Nomination for EEC



Adrienne Cunningham, Cathie Kelly, Doreen Hogg and Elizabeth MacIntosh

Ekta and Sarah nominated Glasgow East Carers Centre for an award with the National Autistic Society. They made it to the final 3. The Centre is very dynamic and provides a great place for carers to meet and share experiences. The charity provides a Home Care Service that operates as a social enterprise and a Carers Hub. The new Carers Hub evolved out of an original Carers Centre in the area established in 1991. The Hub was launched in May 2016.

The current staff team comprises 2 full time and 2 part time staff. The ASD Parent Carers Project was set up in October 2016 to provide a range of services and support to parent carers including: A unique ASD Parents Buddying Project; Support Groups and Information Sessions; Bespoke training courses and access to the Hub's Support and Advice Service offering help with benefit applications and appeals, grant applications and support to attend meetings. All our services are informed and directed by parents. Our aim is to bring parents together to build a strong, supportive community of ASD parents/carers in the East End of Glasgow. The Project is delivered by a designated part-time Project Manager. This year we are applying for additional funding to develop a Family Support Service that will provide a range of activities for individuals with autism and their families.

Imaginarium 2018 Art Competition

Morisons Solicitors are delighted to announce the launch of their annual Imaginarium art competition for 2018 aimed at people living with a physical or learning disability.

The theme for this year's competition is 'Nature'. Participants are invited to capture the theme through any art media including drawings, collages, pottery, photography or digital design. There are a number of different categories and artwork can be submitted individually or through a group with a range of prizes on offer including the opportunity to spend a day's workshop with a leading artist.

To find out more details on how to take part please visit www.morisonsllp.com and follow the instructions. The deadline for submissions is Friday 29 June 2018.

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Save the Date

**Equal Future's
AGM**

will take place on
**Monday the 11th of
June in Edinburgh**
more details to
follow

