



East Sussex Foster Care Association

NEWSLETTER



ESFCA

Inside this issue:

	2
Events	3
Events	4
Events	5
Intuitive Horse	6
Advocacy Support	7
Meet the Trustees	8

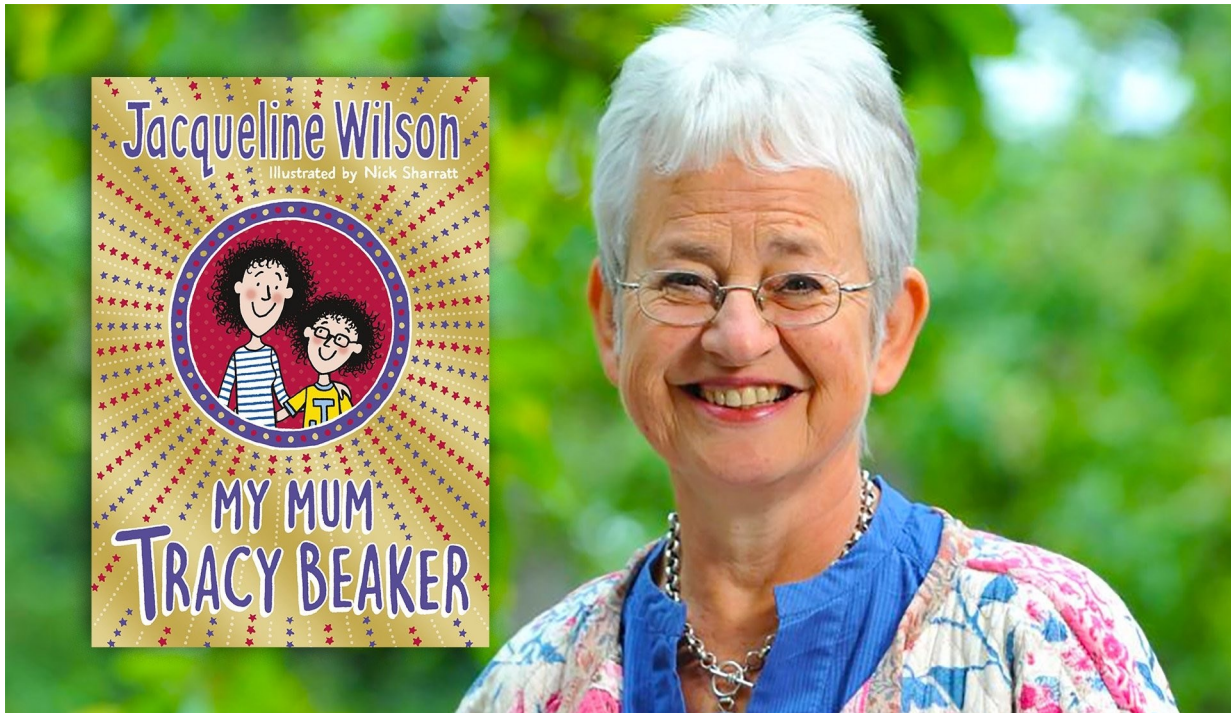
The East Sussex Foster Care Association reached 25 years of supporting the fostering community of East Sussex this year.

The shape of the ESFCA has constantly changed over the years and this year has been no exception with a whole new level of events, fund-raising activities and engagement with our community partnerships.

The ESFCA is often confused with the ESCC. In fact, we are an independent charitable entity which was started 25 years ago by foster carers to support their peers in every way possible. From extending the arm of friendship, offering advice and advocacy to many meaningful activities. Again, although we are supported by the council, our activities are all undertaken from the funds we raise and carried out by volunteers.

The ESFCA committee meet at 7.30pm on the second Monday of each month at Dunbar Drive Children's Centre. You are welcome to attend and we are always looking out for new committee members to support and assist with the work that we do.

Please let us know if you would like to attend: ESFCA.Admin@eastsussex.gov.uk



We are extremely happy to welcome Dame Jacqueline Wilson to our Charity as a patron, where she joins Jayne Torvill OBE, who has been with us since 2012. They have both been supporting the ESFCA by helping raise our profile throughout East Sussex by attending various events throughout the year.

Dame Jacqueline Wilson (DBE,FRSL) has written more than 80 books over the course of her career. Four of her books appear in the BBC's "The Big Read" poll and she was the Poet Laureate between 2005 and 2007.

Dame Jacqueline says

"I'm so pleased and proud to be involved with the East Sussex Foster Care Association. I met up with Susanne and her colleagues by chance on a bluebell walk and we got on tremendously well. I've been involved with foster care associations ever since I wrote my book *The Story of Tracy Beaker* and I'm always impressed by the care and dedication of foster carers, but I think everyone at ESFCA are the absolute best. I love the sound of the residential breaks, the thoughtful provision of new luggage, the arts project, the library and the day trips - and what a brilliant idea to take the children to the X Factor Live Tour. I met a lot of the children at the Barn Dance - and what a delightful well-behaved bunch they are too. I've also met my fellow Patron Jayne Torvill - and can even boast I've danced with her (though not on ice!)."

"All power to ESFCA"



ESFCA are so very grateful to our esteemed patron Dame Jacqueline Wilson, the proprietors of **Much Ado Books** in Alfriston, Cate and Nash for their generosity. We were informed that proceeds from the book signing "*My Mum Tracy Beaker*" will come to the ESFCA to support the work that our children and families continue to benefit from.

Do pay a visit to this wonderful book treasury, you won't be disappointed.

During the summer children, of all abilities and disabilities had the chance to experience the physical and emotional benefits of horse riding . They gained confidence, learned new skills and made friends.

This opportunity was made available through Plumpton College, where the children were introduced to their fellow equine camp mates, took a tour of the yard, then met and greeted the horses. A tutor demonstrated the correct procedure for catching and tying up a horse and grooming it. Following this, they were allocated their own horse and supervised as made friends with and groomed their horse. After a mid- session break they were assisted with tacking up their horse for a half -hour riding lesson. As the finale of session they all had a picnic and talked about their adventure.



On the 6th of July the ESFCA celebrated 25 years in style by holding a Barn Dance at Blackstock Farm. The theme was the wild west and everybody dressed appropriately for dancing and a fantastic evening of merriment, and good 'ole fashioned fun!

Both of our patrons attended and joined in with the activities and the entertainment was provided by the fabulous Spinning Jenny Band, a local nine-piece ceilidh band and dance caller.

Our charity was delighted to have been approved by Mousetrap Theatre Projects to participate in their Family First Nights (FFN) programme during the summer.

Family First Nights is a unique opportunity for families, with limited resources to enjoy a great London theatre production for just £6.00 per ticket. Family First Nights aims to introduce the theatre to groups who may not otherwise have the opportunity to engage with it. Notably for us, that includes looked after children (LAC).



Once again as part of the Sibling Sunshine Project we took a group of families to Chessington Zoo courtesy of the Merlin Magic Wand foundation. Trips like this, (we also visit Thorpe Park and LEGOLAND on different trips) allow siblings that have been separated to join up again for the day and enjoy the park attractions as a family.

The Sibling Sunshine Project is one of the key activities for the ESFCA and truly projects the values the association holds close to its heart. For some children these trips are the only contact they will have with their siblings, and if you have ever been on one of these trips you will have already witnessed the magic they work on giving all the children some fantastic memories.

Another part of the Sibling Sunshine Project is the three-day day residential stay at Butlin's. This is funded by the National Lottery program Awards for All who also helps fund the theme park trips .

The aim of this project is to bring together siblings who have been separated in the care system and to give them the opportunity to spend quality time with their siblings to create positive childhood memories that they can carry and share into their adult life. We welcome this project being supported by social workers and foster carers who can attend the events with the LAC to support them.





During 2018, the ESFCA are providing 3 PGL residential trips.

We took 57 LAC to either Windmill Hill or Little Canada on the Isle of Wight. Many social workers and managers joined us and this allowed the social workers and senior managers the opportunity to spend quality time with their LAC. Some of the highlights were the water fights were. The LAC and staff were able to soak their social workers, and Peter Richards and Ade Sewell, also came in for some great shots with the water cannons and balloons. (Well done kids).

Then in October, ESFCA re-introduced our PGL for Children who Foster. We took 25 children and young people to Windmill Hill, and foster carers and the fostering team supported this. The aim was to say THANK YOU and to acknowledge the support that our own birth, adopted and SGO children offer to the fostering service.

This has been made possible with the funding from Children In Need.



ESFCA had their 2nd charity golf day on Friday 12th October 2018. It was a huge success with over 60 people playing. This year the weather was sunny, which just added to the fantastic atmosphere created by Hannah, Ray and Mike along with all the competitors.

The day started at 8am with bacon butties and hot drinks, followed by a round of 9 holes. For lunch it was ham, egg and chips, then golfers were back out in the afternoon playing another 9 holes. There was a presentation, prizes and a trophy for the winning team followed with a raffle in the early evening.

The Golf Course was generously donated for the day by the owner of Lottbridge Golf Club, Ray Cruttenden, and the food was very kindly donated, prepared and served by Mike Jackson, owner of Dizzy Pig Catering. The association would like to say thank you for the co-operation and support to all of the staff at the Lottbridge Golf Club.





After a fantastic two years working with the Arndale Centre Sainsbury's, the ESFCA was thrilled to find out it had been voted the Hampden Park Sainsbury's and the Seaside Local Sainsbury's Charity of the year. This means the partnership with Sainsbury's will continue for another year.

The Hampden Park Sainsbury's has already generously donated welcome packs to all of the families going on the Butlin's trip this October (supplying tea, coffee and biscuits) as well as a very large supply of Lego trading cards and collector albums to be distributed to the children on activities throughout the year. They also held an awareness weekend where members of the ESFCA manned an information desk and raised money by holding a tombola where the general public could win signed copies of Dame Jacqueline Wilson's book "My Mum Tracy Beaker".

The Seaside Local also held an awareness weekend and again the ESFCA manned an information desk and joined in the fund raising by dressing up with a Halloween theme.



On the 27th of October the East Sussex Foster Care Association were privileged to be marshalling the 10K Beachy Head run alongside the marathon runners. Although so cold up on the Downs, the atmosphere was electric with the community spirit of the runners and spectators.

Many thanks to the ESFCA volunteers. Maybe next year we should run.....(maybe not).



Stable connections through Intuitive Horses

ESFCA was delighted to receive National Lottery funding for our new “Stable Connections” Project. This project was intended for young people in care. The experience of building relationships with horses may help them with friendships and other social skills as well as potentially helping them in areas such as impulse control, empathy, calming skills and recognizing and working with feeling states. Carers were involved in the project and attended each session with the young person to help reinforce the work in-between sessions as well develop their bond together.



Like every child, looked-after children need and deserve to feel loved, cared for, and supported, and children entering the care system are no exception. At the very least these children and young people will be feeling the effects of emotional trauma. Many will have experienced some kind of neglect or abuse in its many guises and are very likely to be dealing with the aftermath of witnessing domestic violence. Unsurprisingly, these children often also feel a sense of abandonment and carry the burden of low self-esteem, which makes fitting in with their more fortunate peer group a struggle.



Alongside the importance of stability and building consistent and trusted relationships comes the important question of how best to reach these children. The East Sussex Foster Care Association want Looked-after Children to know that they can recover from past trauma and develop every talent, attitude, quality and characteristic needed to reach their potential, succeed in life and build an incredible future.

By working with the Intuitive Horse program young people and their carers have been astounded at just how effective it can be for a young person (watched by their carer) to develop an emotional connection to one of these beautiful animals. To others it may come naturally, but when young people have been hurt they can become fearful of making relationships and can struggle to be around others. Many foster carers reported that it was as if the horse understood the vulnerability of the young person and was drawn to them quite ‘intuitively’ as the name of this marvellous project suggests. Creating a bond over time with the horse has enabled many young people involved in this project to get in touch with their own feelings and start to rebuild their own self-worth as they begin to see the horse as a friend who accepts them unconditionally.



Susanne Beesley

Chair to East Sussex Foster Care Association

ALLEGATIONS AND ADVOCACY SUPPORT

If you are a foster carer who is registered to ESCC and is subject to an allegation or a standard of care issue, this is just a reminder that ESFCA is here to help.

We have put together an information pack which should be given to you by your SSW at the point you are told about an allegation or a standard of care issue. If you don't receive this, please ask the fostering team to get a pack to you. It contains lots of information about the process and can point you toward support.

In addition, ESFCA has funds that can be used to provide foster carers with independent support whilst they are going through this difficult process. The support is free and completely confidential.

If you are subject to an allegation or a standard of care complaint, please contact ESFCA anytime on 01323 747045. If we don't answer the phone, please leave a message and we will get back to you asap. We will put you in touch with an organisation that can provide you with free, independent support. This service is completely confidential.

	'independent support'	
	free independent legal advice	

**THIS SHOULD
NEVER BE
A CHILD'S
SUITCASE.**



No child (especially a foster child) should have to face the distressing sight of having their belongings packed into black plastic bags when being moved either from their birth family or to new foster placements. Black plastic bags are designed for rubbish and not for children's personal belongings.

We have a stock of luggage available to social workers and assessment teams and have already distributed over 200 suitcases to children that have had to be moved on an emergency or respite basis.

Committee Meetings

All members are welcome to our committee meetings on the second Monday of each month at Dunbar Drive, Hailsham. We offer a warm welcome to everyone. It's a great way to become involved and meet your fellow foster carers. Please let us know if you would like to attend.

If you'd like to hold a sponsored event, make a donation in lieu of presents, or if you are involved with a group who'd like to support a small local charity, please do let us know.

East Sussex Foster Care Association is grateful for all the funds we receive and every amount – no matter how small – helps us continue our work. As a registered charity we rely on fundraising to put on all the events we run.



8 of the Trustees (left –right) Lysette (Treasurer), Jane, Anja, Tina, Susanne (Chair), Mark (vice Chair), Ann (MBE) and Ru



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