



The Queen's Award  
for Voluntary Service



East Sussex Foster Care Association

# Annual Report 2018 to 2019



*All kids need is a  
little help, a little  
hope, and somebody  
who believes in  
them.*

**Registered Charity No. 1092668**

**Company No. 04216137**

**Company Offices:**

**4<sup>th</sup> Floor,**

**St Marks House,**

**14 Upperton Road,**

**Eastbourne,**

**East Sussex.**

**BN21 1EP**

**Phone: 01323 747045**

**[admin@esfca.co.uk](mailto:admin@esfca.co.uk)**



# Contents

<b>Aims &amp; Objectives</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Letter from the Chairman</b>	<b>6 &amp; 7</b>
<b>Meet the Trustees</b>	<b>8 &amp; 9</b>
<b>Our Patrons</b>	<b>10 &amp; 11</b>
<b>25 Years of the ESFCA</b>	<b>12 &amp; 13</b>
<b>Children in Care Council- Audioactive</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Suitcases &amp; Luggage</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Children in Care Council- Rucksacks</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Make it Reel</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Unite the Beat</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Inspire</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>PGL</b>	<b>18 &amp; 19</b>
<b>Young People Who Foster- PGL</b>	<b>20 &amp; 21</b>
<b>Bluebell Walk</b>	<b>22 &amp; 23</b>
<b>Equine Day Camp</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Horse Riding for Foster Family's</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Mousetrap Theatre Projects</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Charity Golf Day</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Sainsburys &amp; ESFCA</b>	<b>26 &amp; 27</b>
<b>Sibling Sunshine Day</b>	<b>28 &amp; 29</b>
<b>Conference</b>	<b>30 &amp; 31</b>
<b>Baby &amp; Toddler Group</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Beachy Head Marathon</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>The Children's Reflexology Programme</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Reflect, Recharge &amp; Relax</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Christmas Party</b>	<b>34 &amp; 35</b>
<b>Pantomime</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Care Team- Trip to Thorpe Park</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Financial Review</b>	<b>38 &amp; 39</b>
<b>Thank You</b>	<b>40 &amp; 41</b>

# Aims and objectives of East Sussex Foster Care Association

The objectives of East Sussex Foster Care Association as set out in the Memorandum of Association are, to promote all or any charitable purposes for the benefit of the community mainly but not exclusively within the County of East Sussex and in particular the advancement of the education of the public in matters relating to substitute care. In particular the education, training and support of foster carers and their families, the relief of Looked After Children, their Carers and their Carers' families by providing facilities and services in the interests of social welfare with a view to improving their conditions of life.

The Association is to support East Sussex Foster Carers and their families in their efforts to achieve the best possible outcomes for the children in their care by working in partnership with all appropriate statutory and voluntary agencies. It undertakes this task by offering a range of events, advocacy, training and support for the both the families and the children they care for. Its membership is comprised of East Sussex Local Authority registered Foster Carers and elected Trustees/Directors' from within that membership forms the managing group is formed by elected Trustees/Directors' from within that membership.





# Letter From the Chair Susanne Beesley

## **Dear Carers and Friends of East Sussex Foster Care Association (ESFCA)**

What a privilege it has been to have worked with such a talented and enthusiastic group of people. When taking on the role of Chairperson back in 2015 I did so with a certain amount of apprehension, most likely to have been attributed to the need to make some essential changes to our working model. Although I had my eyes wide open about the scale of the challenges before us, I also had a strong sense of fundamental optimism about what we could achieve as a charity. This optimism was fuelled and kept alight by the trustees and friends of ESFCA.

These people passionately believe in our mission and most importantly were willing to put in the time and tireless effort needed to make the changes necessary to ensure we raised the profile of ESFCA and increased our capacity to deliver a multitude of services and events to our children and families.

I want to acknowledge the Local Authorities continued belief in our activities and direction; their financial support enables us to develop our administration and fundraising efforts, which supports the trustees to improve on the delivery and wide variety of events held throughout the year.

Although ESFCA holds an independent status, we have a mutually beneficial relationship with our Local authority (LA) who are willing to listen and to take action at

times on the feedback we have provided by talking to our fellow carers. I also want to acknowledge my appreciation to the LA who have supported us at times to identify some of the challenges and maximise our opportunities which has enabled us to make ESFCA a fruitful organisation.

My sincere gratitude goes to Jayne Torvill OBE who despite her very busy timetable has shown us a very generous commitment of 7 years as Patron. Jayne has tirelessly stood for photos, attended East Sussex County Council (ESCC) events as well as our own and even taken some of our children ice-skating. Furthermore, Jayne has allowed use her picture in our publications and local press.

How delighted I am to welcome Dame Jacqueline Wilson as a second patron to our organisation this year. Jaqueline has already attended many events and the children and families have been thrilled to meet and chat with her as well as have their books signed. Perhaps the highlight of this years was watching our two patrons Jayne and Jacqueline dancing together at our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary barn dance where we celebrated 25 years since our launch.

As we look back over the last 25 years of supporting the fostering community in East Sussex, we also enter a new chapter in our story. Considering the success of our reshaped business model we will continue to drive forward in our quest to look for investment, not only to continue offering support with project delivery but also in an increased drive to develop the capacity and skills of our foster carers. In this way children and families will be better supported to seek solutions to every-day problems and we will



continue to produce positive, long-term results, ensuring we continue to grow and deliver the much-needed support to children and carers across East Sussex.

My absolute appreciation goes to our many varied funders, and thanks to them we have consistently delivered and increased the effectiveness of our programs, has advanced our mission to make a real difference to the lives of looked after children and the families who care for them. All donations however large or small make a real difference to our young people.

Not forgetting our history, we have a great deal to thank our previous committees and members of staff who have given us the foundations upon which to build what has become a strong and healthy organisation. This year we said goodbye to staff members Hannah and Mandie. We remain grateful to their contribution to our team and wish them well in their new positions.

In this financial year we have achieved so much thanks to the hard work and dedication of our trustees, committee members, friends of the Association, our newest administrator Nigel Berry, Foster Carers who have generously donated their time and resources, ESCC and the Fostering Management team, Children's Services and the Social Workers who support many of our structured activities.

I would like to reach out to you all with a heartfelt plea to all foster carers - and those connected to the fostering world - this is your foster care association. Please do get in touch with us to share your ideas or if you can offer a few hours of your time to volunteer. You can call our office at any time on 01323 747045 and speak to Nigel or one of the trustees.

Do you have any amazing ideas that we could help develop or contacts we could work in partnership with in East Sussex or ideas about other activities we might pursue or do you just want to find out more about what

you could do in a voluntary capacity to support the work we do?

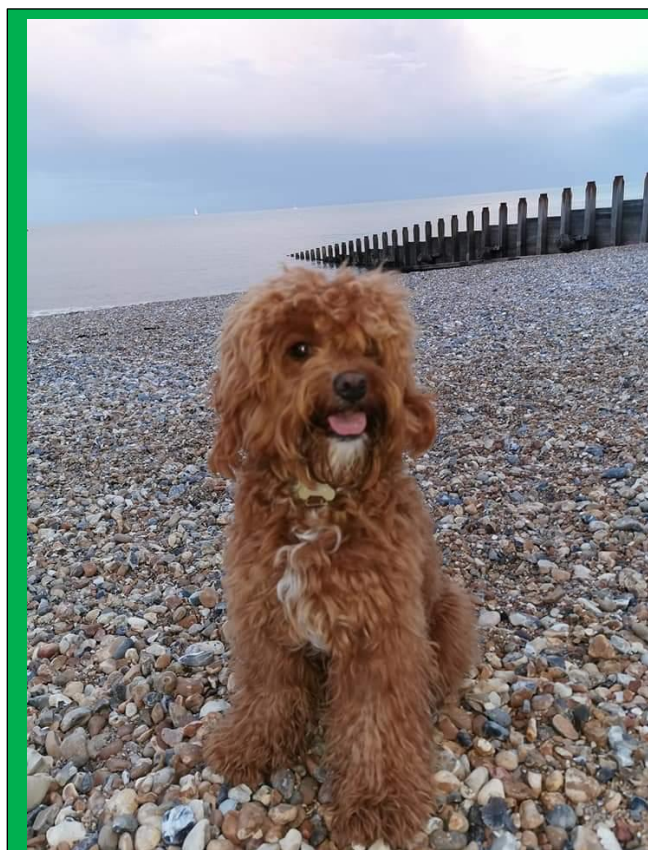
Please let me know by dropping an email to [admin@esfca.co.uk](mailto:admin@esfca.co.uk)

ESFCA always welcomes new interest and values all contributions. Please come and help us to make a positive difference for our members and young people. We welcome visitors and new committee members to our monthly meetings held at 7.30 pm at Dunbar Drive Hailsham on the second Monday of every month.

Yours faithfully

*Susanne Beesley*

**ESFCA CHAIR**



**Above: Willow, the ESFCA Mascot, look out for her appearances at future ESFCA events**

# Meet our Trustees



## **Chairperson- Susanne Beesley**

My family and I have been fostering 28 years, our second son was only a few months old when we began, and our third son was born some years into our fostering journey. Our family grew through the adoption of our 2 daughters and long-term fostering. Our goal has always been to provide longer term stability to the children we have fostered, and we are always delighted to be able to keep in touch with these young people and see them as extended members of our family today.

**[Susanne.beesley@esfca.co.uk](mailto:Susanne.beesley@esfca.co.uk)**

## **Vice Chairman- Mark Thornborough**

Mark and his wife Andrea have been fostering for many years, Mark is very active in ESFCA as he runs the very successful PGL trips with Tina and the team of dedicated volunteers. Mark also takes an active part in the administration of ESFCA and manages the staff and office to ensure things run smoothly.

**[Mark.thornborough@esfca.co.uk](mailto:Mark.thornborough@esfca.co.uk)**



## **Treasurer- Lysette Grosvenor**

Myself and my Husband Gary have been Foster Carers for nearly 5 years. We have looked after about 25 children. We do this full time together. We have done short term care, respite cover, emergency placements and more recently long-term fostering.

Every child is different, and it is so rewarding when they learn and develop new skills and accomplishments like reading, swimming and riding a bike. I also enjoy helping them become independent with skills like shopping, saving money and cooking.

**[Lysette.grosvenor@esfca.co.uk](mailto:Lysette.grosvenor@esfca.co.uk)**



## Founder Trustee- Tina Henderson

Hi, my name is Tina Henderson and my family, and I have been foster carers for 27 years. We are also adoptive parents to our wonderful son. My start in life was not the best and I use this experience to try and help other children. We can offer long- and short-term home for children and also enjoy doing assessment placements and respite.



## Founder Trustee- Ann Holder

My family and I have been fostering since 1975 (with a short break when my daughter was born) and we also became adoptive parents. We mainly care for babies which I really enjoy. I also actively get involved with pre-adoptive work and working with families. I received the MBE for services to fostering in 2007.

## Trustee- Ru-Petratis-Williams

Ok, my name is Ru, my husband Kevin and our daughter Blue have been fostering for almost 12 years. Our life has become so very fulfilled and It's a fantastic journey in so many levels. We have the privilege to have children coming into our home and share the challenges we face and achievements we conquer. The children who come into care are so resilient teaching us so much in how we can appreciate life in general. We foster children between the ages of 5 to 15 years old and being foster carers is the most rewarding thing we do.



## Trustee- Anja Leeves

Anja & Nick (Anja's husband) have been offering foster families respite for over 5 years and Anja has also been an active participant in ESFCA. The Baby & toddler meet ups are arranged between Anja & Ann and Anja also leads the way in foster carer wellbeing by running the Relax, Recharge and Reflect.

## Trustee- Sandra Maylam

Sandra has been instrumental in offering all-round support and is an asset our team. Sandra takes an active role on the Inspire Project and when she isn't with us she is enjoying a well-deserved break living the dream along the canals in her narrowboat.



For general enquiries please contact [admin@esfca.co.uk](mailto:admin@esfca.co.uk) or phone 01323 747045

# PATRONS



## Jayne Torvill OBE

Once again, we would like to thank Jayne Torvill OBE for her continued support and Patronage. Jayne has been a Patron for ESFCA since 2012 and has taken part in many events and fundraising activities. Jayne is a strong advocate of ESFCA and feels passionate about making a difference in young people's lives.

Jayne has certainly helped raise ESFCA profile and there is always a sense of excitement when she appears at one of the activities.

Jayne Torvill OBE won the Gold medal at the 1984 Winter Olympics with Christopher Dean and the Bronze medal at the 1994 Winter Olympics.

In 2006 Jayne began starring in ITV's Dancing on Ice which runs between January and March and then goes onto arena tours in the UK.

***“I feel passionate about making a positive difference to the lives of children. The opportunity to work with a local charity that offers opportunities to move children forward in their lives is incredibly important. I am looking forward to contributing to their experiences and helping to create special memories”.***

**Jayne Torvill OBE**

## Dame Jacqueline Wilson

We are very proud to welcome Dame Jacqueline Wilson DBE, FRSL (Fellowship of the Royal Society of Literature) to ESFCA joining Jayne Torvill OBE as one of our Patrons.

Jacqueline visited ESFCA at this years Bluebell walk and met some of the trustees, where she happily agreed to join ESFCA and represent the association as a patron. During her first year Jacqueline has held a book signing for her new book "MY MUM" Tracy Beaker at Much Ado Books in Alfriston raising funds and made a guest appearance at the Christmas Party.

Dame Jacqueline Wilson DBE, FRSL is a novelist who writes children's literature and 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 Children's Laureate between 2005 and 2007.



*"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"***

***Dame Jacqueline Wilson DBE, FRSL***



# 25 Years of East Sussex Foster Care Association



In March 1993 a small support group of foster carers in Uckfield started to meet regularly in a back room at a retirement home in Hailsham. It was created in response to the needs of the children and young people in the care of East Sussex County Council (ESCC) and the demands this placed on foster families.

ESFCA aim was to 'build brighter futures' for children in care and to support foster families in their role including recognising the contribution our own children make (children who foster). This continues to be done through active fundraising so that we can deliver a number of activities and services.

Over the last 25 years ESFCA has grown from the Uckfield support group to an association covering the whole of East Sussex and over 260 foster families.

The first AGM ESFCA held was at a school in Polegate (where the committee had to talk louder than the children playing outside). From that meeting more carers joined and the association started to grow.

At this stage the relationship with the East Sussex County Council did not have the strong synergy it does now. The association started looking at the relationship carers had with the child services department and social workers and started to build bridges between the two.

ESFCA has always remained proudly independent of the ESCC, but it is also very proud of the very special relationship it has created with the department and social workers. The association started and continues to run surgeries for foster carers to attend and work through issues with the department and is often asked to provide feedback for policies and practices. Social workers take part and join the children on the PGL residential trips and volunteer to help on some of the activities the association run throughout each year.

Another area that ESFCA feels strongly about is training and education. The association has always put the foster families first and that includes providing training seminars and conferences for the carers, social workers and the various different child services across East Sussex.

The conferences have been running bi-annually over the 25 years and have had a myriad of guest speakers including the likes of Nancy Thomas, Holly van Gould (whose love of dogs meant she compared them to children), and Dan Hughes, Terry Levy, Michael Orleans and Margot Sunderland.

These conferences are extremely popular and always sell out.

ESFCA has one goal that grabs the imagination of all foster carers and volunteers and that is to allow the children to create their own happy memories by having fun and taking on activities

by bringing them out of their comfort zone.

Over the years there have been trips to Legoland, Chessington World of Adventures, Thorpe Park, ice skating (with Jayne Torvill), picnics, horse riding, London theatre trips, and many other fun packed parks. However, one of the most popular trips has been to see the X-factor in Brighton with help of Heart radio and Simon Cowells TV production company (Psycho TV).

The ESFCA went with a mission, and that was to show the children that 6 months ago these artists that were topping the charts were just like them and they achieved their dreams. Simon Cowells Company were amazing and allowed access backstage to meet all the stars. There were social workers with the children and one said they got kissed by one of the stars and they would never wash their face again.

***"I remember a particular story,***

***We took the children when one of the winners was Leona Lewis and one of her hit songs was about being struck by lightning. We saw her at this show and about 3 months later one of the looked after children was in Eastbourne and was actually struck by lightning and they were rushed to intensive care in a hospital in London.***

***Leona Lewis happened to hear about it and she actually went to visit them in intensive care and sang to them, that was a really magical moment."***

TH (Founder Trustee)

As well as the ever popular PGL residential trip, ESFCA also runs a project called Sibling sunshine. This project brings brothers and sisters that have been separated together for a short break.

***"I remember I went on Sibling sunshine project to Butlin's last year and there was a large group of 9 children and three of the foster carers had got together to take them (12 in total).***

***To see all 9 children sitting around a table sharing breakfast, sharing an evening meal***

***together, laughing and giggling was quite incredible.***

***I also remember one of my foster children going to Butlin's with their siblings (5 siblings in total) and they had never had a holiday together. They had never played silly games together or built camps, so even though we had a lovely three-bedroom apartment, they made camps in the lounge so they could all sleep together which was again all very magical."*** TH

These activities along with the Christmas party, pantomime and PGL residential trips allow the looked after children to suspend the reality of their situation, laugh out loud and play while new happy memories are being made.

For 25 years thousands of looked after children have had a brighter future as a direct result of the East Sussex Foster Care Association and the foster families it has supported and the association is continuing to grow.

The trustees and members are looking towards the next 25 years and are ready to raise to every challenge and grab every opportunity that will keep building the brighter futures' for the looked after children of East Sussex.



Left Back: Lysette Grosvenor, Jane Hollobone, Tina Henderson, Mark Thornborough, Ru-petratis-Williams.

Front Left: Anja Leeves, Susanne Beesley, Ann Holder MBE



## Room to Rant



# Children in Care Council

SUPPORTED BY EAST SUSSEX FOSTER CARE ASSOCIATION

**Room to Rant** was inspired by the work of Lemn Sissay and his drive to allow children in care to express themselves through poetry and performance. ESFCA were delighted to work with the Children in Care Council (CICC) to financially support them in the development of putting together two workshops where they had the opportunity to write and perform a rap song. This performance focuses on their feelings of being in care as well as loss and separation. ESFCA wanted to empower young people in care to develop their own ideas, especially when these projects support positive mental health.

The CICC identified 'AudioActive' based in Brighton, who tailors the aims of the workshops to encourage good participation, courage and creativity to overcome adversity.

AudioActive (patron: Rag "n" Bone Man) is a ground-breaking music organisation, working with young people at the meeting point of technology and contemporary urban culture. For us, music is an end in itself as well as a tool for social change, education and personal development.

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



## Suitcases & Luggage

Supported by Tripp Luggage

One of the many issues a child has to face when they are removed from their family is having to move quickly and sometimes without their belongings. The situation a child faces entering the care system means they might not be able to take their things or may end up transporting their things in a bin/ rubbish bag.

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

ESFCA are proud to 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 as an emergency or travelling to respite.

This was made possible by the amazing generosity from **Tripp Luggage** who has continued to support ESFCA over the last 5 years.

# Children in Care Council

SUPPORTED BY EAST SUSSEX FOSTER CARE ASSOCIATION



ESFCA are delighted to be able to support the Children in Care Council (CICC) with their ambition of trying to reach children when they first enter the care system. This amazing group of children and young people had an idea that they wanted to give every child, who came into foster care within East Sussex, a Rucksack which would be gender and age appropriate. The CICC did some research into what was needed in each rucksack and came up with many ideas such as;

- Toothbrush/ paste
- Socks
- Teddy/ Soft toy
- Hair brush
- Pen & Notepad
- Newsletter

ESFCA was delighted to be able to give them the funding to purchase and put together the first 40 Rucksacks.



## MAKE IT REEL PROJECT

Most families have Grandparents who spoil and make the children feel special by providing the little extras however looked after children often miss out on this influence. ESFCA recognise this and with a very generous donation from the **Reel Poster Company** (becoming the fairy godparent) has stepped in to fill this role. ESFCA recognises that the East Sussex County Council has the responsibility to provide the needs of its LAC (looked after children) and the "Make it Reel Project" can only be accessed via a foster child's social worker.

ESFCA would like to thank the Reel Poster Company for their support and below are some examples of how a small amount of money can make a real difference.

- Purchasing Weighted Blankets to aid with anxiety
- Spending money for a 14-year-old teenager who lives in a residential home, who went on her very first holiday with an old foster family she had remained in contact with.
- Football Coaching.
- A necklace for a 16-year-old who was attending her Prom.
- Attendance at a Science club for 10 weeks.
- Providing a birthday present for a teenager who had just been received into care and she had been abandoned by her birth family.



On Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> April ESFCA worked with “UNITE THE BEAT” to run two, 2-hour family workshops taking the families outside to use nature to create music and film projects.

Unite The Beat *are* Musicians who use their art-form to promote community, connection and curiosity.

The workshops took place at Quarry Farm in Bodiam and the aim of the workshop was to “build relationships and promote resilience within foster families whilst capturing footage and sounds that were transformed into film”.

The workshops consisted off:

Guided blindfold walk: following a rope course through the trees with a blindfold on and experiencing the environment in a totally unique way

Hammock/yoga mat time: Having time to relax in the woods and home in on the sounds that can be heard.

Rhythm games: Workshops for children that use a range of adapted games like Simon says, to help make them become curious in the sounds that they can make from the objects around them.

Using onomatopoeia to teach rhythm: Everybody came up with a few phrases that meant something to their group and that were used to teach a few rhythms. These rhythms were taken into the woods and the children had to start foraging for sounds, unleashing their curiosity and remembering how to play. Think rusting leaves, splashing in ponds,

drumming on trees.

This was followed by an all-natural woodland musical jam. The children were called back together to play rhythms on their found objects and enjoyed a musical celebration. Each child received a memory stick with their own film and rhythm’s as a personal keepsake of the day.

**'Spending time in nature has been shown to lower levels of stress'**

**Judith Heerwagon,**

**Environmental Scientist**

**Huff Post**





# INSPIRE

During August 2018 and February half term 2019 ESFCA ran its highly successful arts programme “INSPIRE”. The 5 days included music, dance, drama and singing and culminate with a performance on the final afternoon. No previous experience or skills was necessary, and the emphasis was to have fun. The programme is inclusive and an interactive opportunity for the children to gain confidence and make new friends.

The workshops are led by two experienced and motivational drama/dance teachers; experts in performing arts.

During the half term sessions ten young motivated 5 – 14-year olds had an action packed, fun filled and inclusive 5 day workshop.

During this period, they learnt a dance routine, sung songs and performed three songs from “The Greatest Showman” to foster carers. All of the ten individuals bought their own skills to the workshop and received a certificate for their fantastic efforts.

It was wonderful to watch a group of young people of different ages learn new skills, gain so much confidence and make new friends. It



really showed how far they had come at their final performance.

The feedback from all the young people was so positive and some of them had already planned play dates and swapped address to become pen pal friends. There were comments such as “I had a fabulous time and enjoyed every moment of it. I hope I can come back next year!”

We will definitely be continuing more Inspire projects in the future for various ages at different locations for all to join in.





ESFCA would like to thank “**Children in Need**” for their continued support and funding for the PGL residential trips.



During 2018 ESFCA provided 3 PGL residential trips.

One for younger (7-11) looked after children,

One for older (11-18) looked after children,

One for Young people that foster,

ESFCA took 57 children and young adults to two of the PGL residential centers. These trips have become a firm favourite with the children and the adults (social workers, volunteers) and thanks to funding from “**Children in Need**” a major highlight in ESFCA’s calendar.

The residential weekends provide the children a chance to experience a number of different activities including Jacobs ladder, giant swing, abseiling, raft building and evening entertainment in the form of wacky races. These activities test the children to their limits and



beyond as they face their phobias and go far out of their comfort zone. The child that emerges throughout the weekend is confident, proud and growing in resilience

There are three aims of the PGL trips; the first is to build the children’s self-esteem and confidence. The second aim is to create positive childhood memories. The third aim is for the social workers to be able to build a stronger relationship with the children, by sharing in the activities and helping each other survive the death-defying activities the team from PGL creates.

The social workers also witness the personal growth each child goes through and this in turn develops a level of trust

The days are full of surprises as friendships are made, fears are conquered, and jokes are shared throughout the group. Though there is one impromptu activity that everybody looks forward to and also dreads, the **water fight**.





Everybody knows there will be one, but only Tina & Mark know when. The water fight involves water balloons, water pistols and the infamous cannon (attached to the hose). Ade Sewell and Peter Richards from ESCC got drenched this year as they became a great target for the children and social workers/ volunteers.

The PGL trips play an important part in the children's year as it allows them to be escape reality for a few hours and the smiles and laughter re-enforce the importance of these trips.

The PGL trips are also made special by the social workers who volunteer their own time to join the children and take part in the activities. ESFCA would like to thank all of the social workers and Family Members and Volunteers that help not just by keeping the children safe but by developing their self confidence and confidence in their communication with others



## PGL & ESFCA

ESFCA gained charitable status in 2000 and the trustees and committee were feeling really passionate about children that foster and the lack of support they received. So, we put in our first funding application to "Awards for All", which was part of the lottery for £5000.

We were delighted when we got the approval and we spent the funding on taking the children to Little Canada on the Isle of Wight. We went for a weekend and we went by coach. It was wonderful

and a great way to say "thank you" to children that foster. No-one had really said that and they give up so much. They give up their parents, sometimes their own bedroom, their toys as well as their time in the family unit. So we took them to the Isle of Wight and it was absolutely wonderful. The younger girls thought it was great because they could sit up until midnight.

Some of the fostering social workers went as well as they also recognized and wanted to say thank you to these amazing kids for spending their young lives with their families with vulnerable children.

This was seen as the real beginning and gave ESFCA members real confidence. From getting the first pot of money it lead to raising hundreds of thousands of pounds over the years.



*"One year we went back to Little Canada with the (stropky) teenagers.*

*One of the evenings we went on a walk, all 30 children and 15 carers, social workers and senior managers walked to the most beautiful secluded beach.*

*We had a barbecue going and the kids were dipping in and out of the water. The music was playing and there was a social worker who was the most amazing dancer. As she started dancing all these stropky teenagers got up and joined in with her. To see them all as the sun started to set and you could see Portsmouth out in the distance, to see them all dancing and giggling and to see them behaving as normal kids was priceless."*

TH-Founder Trustee

## CHILDREN WHO FOSTER RESIDENTIAL BREAK AND THANK YOU

On Friday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2018, 30 children who foster and 10 adult helpers arrived at PGL, Windmill Hill for the start of our 3-day residential adventure.

The aim of the project was

- to give children a break from their caring roles.
- Give them the opportunity to take part in new outdoor activities.
- Offer them support and an opportunity to meet other young people who foster.
- Recognise the amazing contribution they provide for looked after children, by sharing their homes, parents, family, toys etc with some of the most vulnerable and challenging children, yet their contribution is often unrecognised.
- By bringing all the children together, they will gain support from each other and be able to share experiences, thus reduce the isolation.
- To give the adults the opportunity to say 'THANK YOU' to these extraordinary group of children and young people.

We were fortunate to have 10 amazing volunteers who came along to support and supervise the project. These included social workers from the foster team, Admin staff, foster carers and leaving care social workers. All the adults took part in all the activities and gained the trust of the young people.

A very strong bond was built between all the children and it gave them the opportunity to talk with their new friends about issues that are hard to live with. There were conversations about their parents having reduced time for them, living with an angry child, abuse, having to watch their parents being physically and verbally hurt, stealing and lying and many more issues. It was clear that there was a strong sense of support and empathy. The foster carers and social workers were also on hand to add any additional support.

We stayed in wooden cabins and our food was served from a central canteen. The activities had been picked by the young people and they included, Giant Swing, Aero Ball, Canoeing, Zip Wire, Archery, Abseiling, Problem Solving and Wacky Races. During our spare time, we carved pumpkins, did lots of Halloween face painting and played lots of team sports.





Two senior Managers from Fostering and The Looked After Children teams, came for the day to pass on their thanks to the group and spoke of their high regard for the work that these children do. It also gave the children the opportunity to speak frankly about some of the challenges they face whilst being a central part of their foster families to senior managers.

During one of the evenings, the adults took on the children at an event called Wacky Races, but we surprised the children by turning up in Fancy Dress, much to their amusement.



Each child was given a medal and certificate to acknowledge their strengths. As it was time to leave and head home, there were many tears as there was such a strong feeling of love and friendship. Many of the children have asked to have more regular activities so they can continue with new formed friendships and share some of the challenges they face daily.

Our thanks go to National Lottery Awards for All for providing the funding and the opportunity for this project to take place.



**LOTTERY FUNDED**

# BLUEBELL WALK



On April 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> East Sussex Foster Care Association took over the Arlington Bluebell Walk for its annual two-day fund-raising event. This event plays a major role in the ESFCA calendar as it not only creates a large sum of funding to help support other events throughout the year, but also allows the association to showcase to the public the amazing work it does on behalf of looked after children and their foster families.

This year was a particularly good year as we met Dame Jacqueline Wilson who sat and talked to some of the trustees about the role of ESFCA. As a result Jacqueline agreed to become a patron to the association.

ESFCA took control of the tea room and served a range of light lunches, cream teas as well as tea, coffee and a huge array of handmade cakes donated by members and volunteers.



Left: Volunteer from Sussex Downs College, Ru-Petratis-Williams, Susanne Beesley, Chris Burt, Alana, John McCutchan

The two days are always extremely busy, and the association relies heavily on volunteers giving up their time and helping out. ESFCA ran the gatehouse (selling tickets to the visitors) as well as keeping the event clean and tidy.

This year South Downs College also bought over some volunteers and used the event to provide some work experience for young adults.

ESFCA raised a record amount of over £3,500 this year and would like to thank all of the members and volunteers who helped this year, without your generosity this event would not be able to take place.



Left: Ru Petraitis-Williams, Dame Jacqueline Wilson, Susanne Beesley, Hannah Carter, Cllr Colin Belsey





Left: Hannah Carter,  
Anja Leeves, Ru  
Petratis-Williams,  
Mark Thornborough,  
Sarah Avery, Susanne  
Beesley

# Volunteer

The Arlington Bluebell Walk is very important to ESFCA.

Over the last couple of years, we have had a great group of volunteers who have worked hard, raised a lot of money and awareness for ESFCA and had great fun in the process. However, we are always looking for support and we always need help and volunteers. Even a couple of hours can make the difference to this event being a success. The roles we need help with include the following:

- Gatehouse-collecting money from the public
- Meet & greet-experience of the Bluebell Walk is essential to give information to the public
- Serving cakes, food and refreshments
- Preparing food
- Clearing tables
- Washing up
- Operating the till

ESFCA has a strong reputation for providing a fantastic range of homemade cakes, scones and desserts. If you feel you would like to help either baking for the event or volunteering at the Bluebell walk then please contact

[admin@esfca.co.uk](mailto:admin@esfca.co.uk)



***Every year John McCutchan and his family open up the Arlington Bluebell Walk to the general public. For six weeks at the beginning of spring the Arlington Bluebell Walk allows thousands of visitors to enjoy the sea of white wood anemones and bluebells.***

***Over 23 charities benefit from these visitors as John hands them control of the tearoom and operational duties and in return they generate funds from their hard work.***

***The Arlington Bluebell Walk started as one farm in 1972 with a limited walk and has expanded to three farms and three walks. It is a favourite with local visitors as well as tourists from all over the country and over the last 46 years has raised over £1,057, 096.***

***We would like to take this opportunity to thank John and his family for their continuing support and we look forward to taking part in the Bluebell walk for years to come.***



# EAST SUSSEX FOSTER CARE ASSOCIATION (ESFCA)

## EQUINE DAY CAMP

AN EXCITING OPPORTUNITY FOR CHILDREN OF ALL ABILITIES, AND DISABILITIES, TO EXPERIENCE THE PHYSICAL & EMOTIONAL BENEFITS OF HORSE RIDING, GAIN CONFIDENCE, LEARN NEW SKILLS AND MAKE FRIENDS.

During the summer of 2018 ESFCA in partnership with **Plumpton College**, offered 12 looked after children the opportunity to take part in an Equine Day Camp. Two sessions were held, and the children all met at lunch to enjoy their picnic and talk about the experience.

The day camp consisted of a tour of the yard and stables with a meet and greet of the horses. The children were then shown the correct procedure for catching and tying up a horse and grooming them.

The children were then allocated their own horse and supervised while they made friends and groomed them. They were assisted with tacking up their horse and completed a half hour riding lesson.



**This day was a great opportunity for the children to sense the freedom and empowerment riding can bring.**



### Horse Riding for Foster Family's



ESFCA also arranged for looked after children and their carer families to take part in horse riding sessions in November.

**Manor Oak Riding Stables** in Horam worked with ESFCA to arrange three lessons over three weekends. The lessons consisted of a 1hr hack through the woods followed by two half-hour sessions learning the ropes, giving practical advice on how to look after a horse.

These sessions were very popular as they allowed the looked after children to take part in the activity with their carer family including birth children.

Both of these experiences were a great success and couldn't have run without the very generous support of **Plumpton College** and **Horam Oak Riding Stables**.

Thank you

# Mousetrap

## THEATRE PROJECTS

...inspiring young people

Family First Nights is a unique opportunity for families, with limited resources or unique challenges, to enjoy a great West End theatre show 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

Our charity was delighted to have been approved by Mousetrap Theatre Projects to participate in their Family First Nights (FFN) programme during the summer. Over 28 members took up the offer and journeyed to London's West End to enjoy a show



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, our funding and Development Co-ordinator and Ray and Mike from the Lottbridge Drove Golf Club, along with all the competitors.

The day started at 8am with bacon sandwiches and hot drinks, followed by a round of 9 holes. Then it was back for lunch and then back out for another 9 holes. Once every team made it back to the clubhouse the presentations began and the winning players and teams received their prizes. The fun carried on to the night with a prize raffle and lots of golfing anecdotes and stories.

The Golf Course was generously donated for

the day by the club owner 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 of all of the staff at the Lottbridge Golf Club.





Sainsbury's

&



This year saw Sainsbury's vote ESFCA the "Charity of the year" for the third time consecutively. However, this year came with a difference.

The Eastbourne Sainsbury's had to say goodbye to ESFCA after two very successful years of partnership. During this period the staff and customers had raised over £10,000 for ESFCA as well volunteering at the annual Christmas parties and the all important Arlington Bluebell Walk.

As the Eastbourne Sainsbury's said goodbye, both the Hampden Park store and the Seaside Local took ESFCA as their Charity. Two stores adopting the same charity had never happened before, but both stores had seen how important the work the association does on behalf of looked after children in East Sussex and decided adopt ESFCA as their Charity of the year.







The Hampden Park Sainsbury's generously donated welcome packs to all of the families going on the Butlin's trip during 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.

Both stores held four awareness weekends over the year. During these events members of the ESFCA manned information desks and raised money by running tombolas. The Prizes included signed copies of Dame Jacqueline Wilson's book "My Mum Tracy Beaker".

The Local Sainsbury's store held a Halloween themed weekend in October and bought in face painting for the children (and some adults) visiting the store. The grand finale for the year though was the Wagathon, members of the Seaside local, volunteers and ESFCA members took their dogs from the Holywell Café on Eastbourne's seafront (Beachy head end) and walked to the pier, (enjoyed an ice cream) and walked back to Holywell completing four miles raising money, enjoying the company and taking in the views.

The Partnership with Sainsbury's has now ended and ESFCA would like to extend their thanks and appreciation for all of the support and funding they have received from all of the colleagues in all three of the Sainsbury's stores for their generosity.



# SIBLING SUNSHINE DAYS

ESFCA has recognised the importance of maintaining a sense of connectivity for siblings separated in different foster care placements. As a result of witnessing some heart-warming moments between families at events the Sibling Sunshine Days project was created to address this issue.

When multiple sibling groups enter the care system it is not always possible to place them together as one unit. This can be for a number of reasons. Sometimes it is necessary to separate the children for protective purposes and sometimes the family is too large to house together.

The various needs of the individual children cannot always be catered for in one fostering family. Equally a shortage of carers, carer's room capacity or carers in a viable proximity to school influence decisions regarding placing siblings together or not.

Often sibling groups might not only be living in separate foster care placements but in different areas of the county. Contact is frequently limited to sterile rooms in remote contact centres and for a restricted period of time, usually 1.5 hours only. A general pattern of contact is only three times per year. The contact is supervised by a family worker who sits in close proximity to the family observing and recording all interaction. This type of environment is not conducive to natural sibling rapport.

ESFCA want to protect, promote and increase meaningful birth-family associations and longevity of that relationship into adulthood.

Sibling Sunshine Days provides the opportunity of running special events, dedicated to sibling groups living apart. This allows them to enjoy and experience the event together. Such occasions promote strong bonds through play, involvement, familiarity and occurrence and ultimately help strengthen relationships in the

birth families with common memory-making moments.



ESFCA applied to the National Lottery for funding to finance taking sibling groups, currently registered as separated in different placements, for weekend trip to Butlin's in Bognor Regis

On Friday 19<sup>th</sup> October, 23 excited children and 17 (over the age of 15) adults made their way to BUTLINS in Bognor Regis. The children were part of large sibling groups, who, because of the size of the family unit, are unable to live together in one foster family, thus leading to the children being separated from their siblings. The aim of this trip was to bring the siblings together to allow them the opportunity to experience quality time together with their brothers and sisters and allow them the opportunity to build some positive, shared, childhood memories that they can take into adult life. This was achieved in a safe environment and the children were supported by Foster Carers and Social Workers.

On arrival, the families were shown to their accommodation which was large enough to allow most of the children to stay together. Sainsbury's provided each apartment with a starter pack of goodies, including tea, coffee, biscuits and milk. One group of siblings decided to make camps in the lounge so they could all sleep in the same room, under the watchful eye of a foster carer.





One of the golden moments, was to see the large families sitting together sharing a meal, as for many of these children, this was the first time this had been achieved. The tables were full of laughter and lots of discussions about the experiences they had during the day as well as planning the next day's activities. Butlin's was a perfect venue as it provided so much choice of activities and shows. Another highlight was the pool party on the Saturday evening. A majority of the looked after children chose to spend the Saturday evening swimming and sliding down the many flumes. The pool area was filled with music and many of the kids were dancing together as the waves lapped over their bodies. Other activities included go-karting, climbing wall, high ropes, football coaching, dancing with the red coats to a morning exercise class, a disco and of course the fairground rides.



At the end of the weekend, the children returned home, exhausted, happy and full of precious memories. However, there was also some sadness as the children said goodbye and some children spoke about the reality of 'this is what my life could have been like'. But this gave the foster carers and social workers the opportunity to talk openly about the feelings this raised children and

we helped them make sense of their mixed emotions.

All the children spoke of a very special time together and how they wished this could happen again.



On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October ESFCA took another group of siblings to Chessington Zoo (there have been trips to Legoland and Thorpe Park in the past). The children and their carers took a coach at 8:00 and arrived at Chessington for 10:00.

The families had a fantastic day enjoying the rides and side shows as well as a meal in one of the many pizza and pasta restaurants available

The coach left at 5pm and everybody made it back safely arriving in Eastbourne at 18:30.



In February 2019 ESFCA ran one more trip for the Sibling Sunshine project and the goal was to get everybody back together for a few hours at Urban Jump the trampoline park in Heathfield (based in the heart of East Sussex).

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 part of limited contact they will have with their brothers and sisters.

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 and stories to add to their family repertoire.

# CONFERENCE

A key objective ESFCA has is the education, training and support of foster carers and their families. This has been ESFCA's ethos over the last 25 years and the biannual conference has been a favourite of carers and social workers alike.

The conferences over the years have brought in a myriad of guest speakers such as Nancy Thomas, Holly van Gould, Dan Hughes, and Margot Sunderland and all the way from America Terry Levy and Michael Orleans. These guest speakers brought with them a wealth of information, skills set and coping mechanisms that have enriched the carers and helped change the lives of their looked after children.



Last year ESFCA was privileged to have Richard Rose (MBA, BPhil, PQCCA, PGSWE, and CQSW), be the guest speaker at our latest conference held at the East Sussex National Golf Club.

Richard Rose (MBA, BPhil, PQCCA, PGSWE, and CQSW) is the Director of Child Trauma Intervention Services LTD and UK based. Richard undertakes consultancy and training on Life Story Therapy and working with 'hard to reach' children and adolescents and developed academic training programmes in the UK and internationally. He is an Adjust Associate Professor of Social Work and Social Policy at La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia and is also a fellow at the Berry Street Childhood Institute, a part of Berry Street, Australia. Richard works with children and their carers in out of home care and

family placements to assist understanding and attachment with the aim of enabling placements to become healthy and nurturing for all involved.



The objectives of last year's conference included;

- Techniques for reaching the 'hard to reach' child.
- Listening and interpretive skills.
- The significance of feelings and 'magical feeling',
- Trauma and recovery.
- Techniques for communicating and recording.
- Issues of confidentiality
- Addressing sensitive issues and providing appropriate responses.



The course provided an opportunity to consider communication techniques for traumatised children aimed specifically at those working with children between 3 and 18 years of age. The course also introduced theories and practice rich in examples as well as inviting contribution and group engagement.





Those that attended had the opportunity to try out these techniques and to actively consider their current work and evaluate how these approaches might benefit their service users.

The day included 20 different approaches and those who attended will be able to use many of these in their day to day practice.



The target audience for these conferences includes Foster carers, adoptive parents, social workers, educators, residential workers, therapist services and anybody working with traumatised children.

The Conference not only focuses on training but also on networking, there are plenty of opportunities to meet other delegates and create new friendships and contacts. The mix of delegates creates a wealth of experience and knowledge which is invaluable to the relief of Looked after Children, their Carers and their Carers' families.

Throughout the day there are also exhibitors that offered a range of different services and

products.

The day included breaks between speakers and activities as well as a lunch which allowed the delegates a time to network with each other and create new contacts.

ESFCA were extremely lucky to also secure the services of Theresa Hadfield, a Therapeutic life story practitioner.

Theresa holds a post graduate Diploma in Therapeutic life story work accredited by UEL at Institute of Arts in Therapy and Education and works with both domestic and internationally adopted and looked after children and their families.

The delegates were given a taste of how Therapeutic life story work sessions can help children make sense of the puzzles of their past in a meaningful way.





From feedback given by ESFCA members over the last few years it was mentioned that there was one group of looked after children missing out on the activities the association provided. These groups were the under 5's.

There are regular baby and toddler groups that carers could go to, however the nature of fostering means the carer may not look after the child for long before they move onto their next placement. This brings up a security issue for the child and the carer.

Ann Holder MBE and Anja Leeves (both trustees) decided to set up coffee morning groups for the under 5's and their carers. The groups meet regularly and change location to embrace children from across East Sussex.



As part of ESFCA's continuing growth, last year saw ESFCA members have the honour of working alongside the ESCC events team and marshalling Eastbourne's Herculean 10,000k run part of the Eastbourne marathon. On the 27th of October 2018 the team from ESFCA manned checkpoints across the South Downs including Beachy Head ensuring all the runners took the correct path and were safe from the arduous course.

Although the day was bitterly cold, it was bright and sunny up on the South Downs. The atmosphere was electric with amazing performances from all of the runners.



## The Children's Reflexology Programme



This year saw ESFCA embark on an exciting new community partnership with "The Children's Reflexology Programme".

This innovative programme uses rhyme, storytelling and beautiful illustrations to engage both the carer and the child. The course is given in three informal 2-hour sessions spread across 3 weeks.

Reflexology is beneficial for children's physical and mental wellbeing, helping to

reduce anxiety, promoting relaxation and improving sleep patterns. This is a safe non-intrusive therapy will promote bonding between you and your child and give you a specific easy action to take when you need it most.

The course is aimed at children aged between 0-5 years old and well received by the carers who attended the sessions.



# Reflect Recharge Relax

During the last year ESFCA saw the start of “Reflect, Recharge and Relax”. This series of activities allowed the carers to take part in something different which in turn allowed them a few hours respite and as titled, a chance to reflect, recharge and relax.

Reflect allowed members to visit Ashburnham place and enjoy an afternoon tea and walks through the gardens with fellow carers. This was a very popular activity and had to run twice due to over subscription.

Recharge saw members enjoying an evening out at the Happy Dragon Chinese restaurant, again allowing some time with fellow carers.

Relax was a day at Bannatyne health club in Eastbourne, where members had full access to the swimming pool, gym and fitness classes.



## Reflect, Recharge, Relax!

Do you sometimes feel, you never get time for you? Everyone else comes first? Well 2019 is time to book yourself in a little treat.

**East Sussex Foster Care Association** would like to invite foster carers to choose ONE of the following:

**REFLECT:** Afternoon Tea at Ashburnham Place, Battle, TN33 9NF  
On Tuesday 12th March at 11.45am—2pm

Included: Variety of sandwiches, hot drink, cream scone with jam and a choice of cake from the counter. Optional, Free walk around the grounds.

**RECHARGE:** A Chinese Meal at the Happy Dragon, 4 North, Pevensey Bay.  
On Thursday 14th March at 7pm

Included: All you can eat buffet (Foster Carers are liable for all their own drinks)

**RELAX:** A Spa day at East Sussex National Health Club.

Little Horsted, Uckfield, TN22 5ES.  
On Thursday 21st March at 9am-2pm

Included: Zumba & Yoga class (optional) use of the pool, sauna and steam room.

Pool loungers, Light lunch, tea & coffee plus 15% off any beauty

Treatments. (Foster Carers are liable for any beauty Treatments)

Note: We have the opportunity to have a private, deep relaxation class.

Please indicate if this would be of interest to you.

All sessions are limited, so do respond to Hannah & Nigel as soon as possible. We will require a £10 deposit which will be refunded on the day of your treat.

If you have a wish or idea of something that you would like us to consider for the future, please do let us know.

Happy New Year from the ESFCA Team and please enjoy a well deserved break.



# CHRISTMAS



Once again, East Sussex Foster Care Association hosted another magical Christmas party for both Children in Care and Children Who Foster. With a total of made up of 115 children between the ages of 6 months to 20 years old and 68 parent carers, it's safe to say that it was a huge success. Firstly, our gratitude is extended to the Magdalen and Lasher Charity, who generously donated £500 towards the party. Once again, we owe a huge thank you to the Kings Centre and staff for offering the hall and facilities under their charity initiative and for dealing with the catering so smoothly. We would not be able to deliver our much-loved party with such ease without their support.



Importantly, we thank our staff Hannah and Nigel for their amazing organisational skills prior to the event which is always key to the smooth running of the party. We are grateful to the committee and all those who volunteered, supported and donated towards this event including More Radio. For the fifth year running, the Lewes and Eastbourne Lady Soroptimist's provided an array of gifts and helped the children to wrap them for their carers. As a charity, we highly value this incentive as the children learn the importance of giving to others as well as receiving and in such a creative way.



We had the pleasure of having our Patron Jacqueline Wilson attend with her little dog Jackson. All were thrilled that she took the time out of her busy schedule to attend. Jacqueline spent her time talking to the children and carers as well as having many photos taken. The Eastbourne Lions lent ESFCA their beautifully decorated sleigh for all the children to enjoy as they watched Santa arrive with the sleigh to distribute presents. Ellie McCarthy-Dyer (friend of the charity) generously gave up her time to purchase and wrap individual presents and sweets for the children. There were older children who foster tirelessly face painting, which is always a popular activity, so thank you to all involved. Thank you to Graham at Starlight Disco for providing a fantastic entertainment service for another consecutive year which included games, competitions and music and catering for children of all ages. We'd also like to





thank Emma from St Johns Ambulance for attending and being available for medical incidents (thankfully there were none). Our community partner at Hampden Park Sainsbury's added to the Christmas cheer by donating copious numbers of mince pies. There were Foster Carers who spent time making and donating homemade cakes as well as providing raffle prizes. Sussex University provided the helium for the balloons that decorated the hall and each child left with a balloon at the end.

Christmas can be a difficult time for looked after children and the ESFCA party provides a marvellous distraction for the children to relax and just enjoy themselves. The children took away fantastic memories, some even meeting up with siblings who may have been in different placements, as well as other children from similar circumstances.

Without the support of all those involved, we wouldn't be able to make this popular event happen each year. All the supporters mentioned above contributed to yet another successful party. It's amazing how it is possible to fit so many exciting activities into such a small amount of time, yet every year it works! Please understand that due to the importance of protecting Looked After Children's identity, we are not able to share photographs of some of the children but we hope we have managed to portray even just a small part of joy the party brought to so many in the selection of photo below which hopefully adequately demonstrate the fun that was enjoyed by all and reveal the creative way the generously donated funds were utilised





# PANTOMIME

*(OH NO IT ISN'T!!)*

*(OH YES IT IS!!)*



ESFCA purchased 206 tickets for the Panto in Eastbourne." A Saturday morning at the wonderful Devonshire Park Theatre in Eastbourne, one of the best examples of a small Victorian Theatre in the whole country, with its beautiful décor, boxes, interior and foyer. The tickets were snapped up by foster families and we even had a waiting list.

On the day, the children and adults arrived full of excitement and joy. Each family was given a box of chocolates and drinks. We had a practice run outside the theatre of 'Oh yes you will, oh no you won't'. It was a pleasure to watch the children laugh, giggle, clap and sing along to a fantastic performance of Cinderella. The highlight was seeing

Cinderella enter her glass coach and being pulled high into the night air by a flying horse. There were gasps from the audience in utter amazement of the magical sight. For many of the children, this was their first experience of being in a theatre and their faces told a story of joy and happiness. Buttons was a real favourite with his wit and humour.

A special thanks to the John Jackson trust, the Roy Hudson Trust and the Happy Days Trust for the funding which helped to secure such a firm favourite activity for foster families

Next years Pantomime will be Jack & the Beanstalk and we look forward to going back to Pantoland.

# Care Leavers trip to Thorpe Park

Funding was received from ESFCA for 51 tickets, coach and £8.50 food allowance for each person. Through Care Managers made up the food allowance to £10, with staff receiving the £8.50. Managers also brought juice, water and breakfast bars for the coach.

The tickets allocation was made up of 40 young people aged 16 to 21, 10 staff and one member of ESFCA.

All tickets were allocated with an extra staff member coming in place of the ESFCA member. Initially we invited young people who were in Employment Education or Training. Once this group of young people had received the opportunity to take a place, we opened it up to young people who are NEET, but workers thought a day out would be good for their confidence or motivation to get into EET.

One the day we had 29 young people who attended and 10 staff. There was a variety of reasons why 11 young people didn't arrive at the pickups from receiving an offer of work, illness, social anxiety and train issues from Brighton that were unforeseen. Two young people were withdrawn due to their behaviour the day before.

The coach arrived at Thorpe Park at 13.45 and young people were offered the opportunity to go off in groups or to stay with staff. Two members of staff sat in a central area for the young people to be able to return to for reassurance and arising issues.

All young people were behaved well with only minor issues of one young person wanting to go home part way through which was resolved quickly, and she enjoyed the rest of the evening.

Two of the young people hadn't ever been on a roller coaster ride or to a theme park before. I was privileged to go on their first ride the Nemesis Inferno. Both were visibly nervous and excited in equal measure as we queued for over an hour to get on the ride. Both were elated with beaming smiles and really enjoyed the experience. Both

went on many other rides throughout the day.

One young person with complex needs broke up a fight she saw between other park visitors (not our Young People). Something she was very proud of as in the past it might have been her involved in the fight.

We took 5 young people with learning needs who all had a good time mostly going off with friend's old and new, building up their confidence.

Many of the young people hadn't been to Thorpe Park before and many didn't know anybody on the trip. Some of these young People are very isolated in their lives due to circumstance or anxiety. None of the young people were left out of the experiences of the park and the chance to make new friends.

All the young people asked said they had fun, had had a good time and were grateful for the trip.

Many of the staff got to spend time with young people that are hard to engage with, building the young people's trust in their workers and staff and creating better relationships which will help immensely in the future.

We left the park at 10pm and finally after a diversion due to road works on the M25 got back to Eastbourne at 12.30am. The coach then going on to Hastings getting there at 1.15am. All the young people were given lifts home by staff or by taxi.

Staff and young people would like to thank ESFCA for the funding and support of such an incredibly fun and successful day.

John Darling

Sessional Worker Children's Services



Left: John Darling, Social worker with the through care team and friend of ESFCA.

# Financial Review

We are extremely grateful to receive an annual grant of £20,000 from East Sussex County Council (ESCC) which enables us to employ staff to support the trustees in running the charity. This money also provides back office and operating costs. This is named our designated fund.

We continue to receive restricted funds from ESCC to top up our allegation fund to £10,000 annually, which is held by us to support any foster carer facing an allegation. The fund enables independent support to be provided to our foster carers which could involve a lengthy and complex investigation.

All grants from the wider community have been fully spent on the nominated activity and the association has often contributed further funds to enable more children to benefit from the specific project.

Our reserves remain the same as last year. These are held to provide a safety net to provide annual events such as holidays, PGL weekends, the Christmas party and Pantomime should we be unsuccessful in receiving donations for these cherished activities. We also would be able to continue operating for a period of time should the Local Authority withdraw its annual grant. The association can access our reserve fund immediately should the need arise.

Where donations are received and the donor has a specific request, we mark these funds restricted so they are only used for that purpose

We have also for the third-year running been voted by local Sainsburys, this year at Hampden

Park and Seaside Eastbourne as their charity to support and this has been a tremendous success for us.

We continue to hold stock of new suitcases donated from Tripp luggage and other providers. These are available to specialist teams of Social Workers needing to move children in an emergency thus ensuring that their personal belongings are carefully packed and transported with the young person.

The annual events within this financial year has been one of the busiest years ever and has provided so many events, activities and projects. We have had donations and fund raising from so many varied organisations in our local community and are truly amazed at the generosity from so many.

Lysette Grosvenor

Trustee and Treasurer





***Statement of financial activities (Incorporating the income and expenditure account for the year ended 31 March 2019)***

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2019 Total £	2018 Total £
<b>Incoming Resources</b>					
Donations		6,550	-	6,550	11,357
Core funding		20,000	-	20,000	20,000
Advocacy support		-	2,396	2,396	4,243
Membership		1,295	-	1,295	1,380
Fundraising		15,315	-	15,315	8,032
Grants		-	-	-	17,700
Christmas party		-	500	500	1,746
Keep it reel		-	1,000	1,000	-
Sibling sunshine days		-	9,999	9,999	-
Pantomime		-	3,679	3,679	-
Contributions towards events		6,857	-	6,857	7,137
Interest		101	-	101	20
<b>Total incoming resources</b>		<b>50,118</b>	<b>17,574</b>	<b>67,692</b>	<b>71,616</b>
<b>Resources expended</b>					
Conference		4,415	-	4,415	1,184
Insurance		1,078	-	1,078	563
General running expenses		5,977	-	5,977	1,449
Inspire		-	1,002	1,002	959
Dinner		-	-	-	795
Pantomime		-	3,538	3,538	1,768
PGL		-	15,308	15,308	17,814
Events		4,540	-	4,540	1,029
Sibling Sunshine		-	9,771	9,771	-
Keep it reel		-	500	500	-
Leaving care project		2,116	-	2,116	-
Fundraising		813	-	813	1,362
Intuitive Horse		560	-	560	5,660
Advocacy support		-	2,989	2,989	2,396
Salaries & pensions		14,677	-	14,677	15,490
Christmas party		64	1,057	1,121	948
Computer costs		225	-	225	-
Training		383	-	383	-
Accountants fees		1,606	-	1,606	1,573
<b>Total outgoing resources</b>		<b>36,452</b>	<b>34,165</b>	<b>70,617</b>	<b>52,991</b>
<b>Net incoming/(outgoing) resources for the year/ Net income/(expenditure) for the year</b>					
		13,666	(16,591)	(2,925)	18,625
Transfers		(1,309)	1,309	-	-
Total funds brought forward		71,634	17,980	89,386	70,761
<b>Total resources</b>		<b>83,992</b>	<b>2,698</b>	<b>86,461</b>	<b>89,386</b>

# Thank You



East Sussex Foster Care Association

**Members,  
Volunteers &  
Trustees**



**The Magdalen and  
Lasher Charity**



**TRIPP**



**LEWES**



**EASTBOURNE**





**Reel Poster  
Gallery**



**Beachy Head  
Marathon**



**Manor Oak Horse  
Riding School**



**Audioactive**



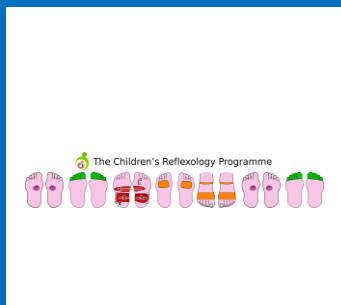
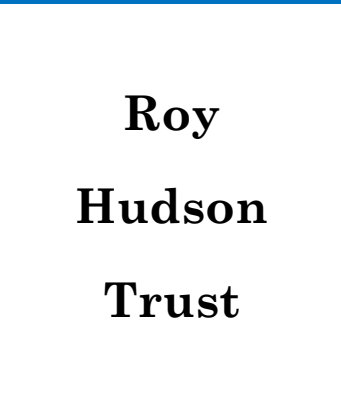
**John Jackson Trust**



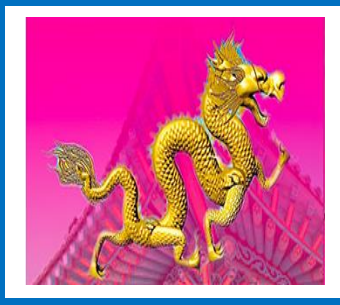
**Eastbourne**



**Happy Days Trust**



**Helen Young**



**Happy Dragon  
Chinese Inn Restaurant**



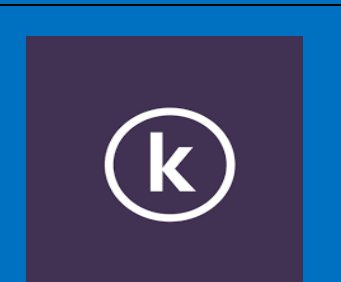
**Eastbourne**



**Elyshia McCarthy-  
Dyer**



**Uckfield Rugby  
Club**



**Kings Centre**



**Dizzy  
Piggy  
Catering**



*“Facilitating life  
changing  
experiences for  
fostered children  
to enable brighter  
futures for the  
whole fostering  
family”*