

NEWSLETTER

2024/25 - Issue 28



Chairman's Introduction

It is brilliant to be able to bring you news of how we have supported the children and young people in need in Warwickshire over the last year. The children are referred to us from local schools or children's services. We have provided pictures and stories about volunteer activities with our Younger Friends over the last 12 months and case studies of our friendships. There is also news about what we have been doing, from fundraising, to updates from our Operations team. This all helps bring it alive, so that you can see how valuable your or your organisation's contribution is.

In the wider world there are still very challenging times for young people impacted by war and regimes, not focused on the best outcomes for them. The political landscape has changed in various countries, bringing with it some uncertainty economically. This does not help an already vulnerable charity sector, where in the Midlands we have seen several leading charities close through funding issues. We are not immune to this. Bids for grants we make are regularly oversubscribed, with success frequently no better than 1 in 8, whereas previously we were looking at above 50% a few years ago. This does put pressure on mostly a volunteer team, to seek new funders whilst we maintain our existing connections.

We have expanded our resources to help combat this trend, though it is still a struggle to maintain funding streams,

even though we are a charity that is heavily volunteer focused, with only a small, essential Operations Team of dedicated part-time employees. If you are able to nominate us to any local businesses looking for a Charity of The Year, or to actively support a small local charity in Warwickshire, then please let me know. Additionally, please do highlight any additional funding streams that might be helpful to us.

I would like to say a big thank you to the funders, companies, organisations and individuals who have supported us in the last twelve months, without you we would not be able to deliver the invaluable early help needed to local, disadvantaged young people.

Our AGM is on Zoom at 7pm on 12 June. We would be delighted if you are able to attend. If you can, then please register with karen.hoy@friendshipproject.co.uk and you will be sent joining instructions.

Two of our volunteers are organising an exciting family and fundraising event on Sunday 13 July this year. It is in Corley and the fun starts at 10am! Please do check out the poster towards the end of this Newsletter! You can contact kate.meek@friendshipproject.co.uk to find out more. We are looking for stalls and displays, with a small donation of £10 for a pitch, plus sponsors for the horse and dog show awards too.

In May 2026, we will be 40 years old, a significant feat. We will have helped around 2000 children and young people over the years. We are looking for sponsors for our celebrations next year, so if you are aware of anyone who might be interested, then please let me know.

Lastly, I cannot close without giving a massive thank you to our fantastic team of Volunteers, Older Friends, Group Supporters, Trustees, our dedicated and enthusiastic employees and those that contribute their services and time to help sustain the charity. **Cheryll Rawbone – Chairman** cheryll.rawbone@friendshipproject.co.uk

The children that we support

Our Younger Friends are referred to us via a professional body, such as their school or social worker. This can be for a variety of reasons ranging from having a limited friendship group, or perhaps coming from a very large family where it's difficult for them to have one-to-one time. Our volunteer Older Friends take them out regularly for friendship and fun! Often, our Older Friends say that their outings become just as important to them as their Younger Friend as it's a way of exploring new things to do. It is very rewarding for them when they can see first hand when the child flourishes during the time that they befriend them. We have regular Safeguarding check-ups with the Younger Friend and their family/carers which is a wonderful way of finding out how their friendships are making a difference to them.

Feedback from some Younger Friends and their Carers

"M went out with her Older Friend yesterday. When M got home, she said to me that Helen and her have decided that they're going to be friends forever, and that when they're older they're going to go shopping together all the time. I thought that was lovely."

"Because Chris does a lot of car tinkering with A, he's now really interested in cars and is drinking up all the information Chris gives him. Recently he's spoken about being a mechanic in the future."

"S looks forward to going out with Julia every week. S starts asking mid-week if I've heard from Julia about going out. She absolutely loves it, and her Older Friend Julia is amazing."

"It makes me sad to think that it will end one day! Anthea is so wonderful and has a wealth of knowledge, so A learns so much when she's with her."

"Since I've been seeing Brian I'm not just sat inside all day – I go out and get a lot more done."

"My Older Friend is very kind. She is creative. She feels like my friend and is someone I can talk to."

"I like going out for food with my Older Friend and exploring new things."

"Now that I go out with my Older Friend, I'm not shy anymore."

"I feel more confident. I don't really know how to put it into words, but I just feel happy."

"My Older Friend helps me to feel optimistic. She takes me to different places and gives me options of what we can do and what adventures we can have."

"Once we had a Mr Whippy ice cream and Claire brought a chess board for us to play. I like that she takes me out. She takes care of me and listens."

Younger Friends

The number of children that we support is constantly changing. We currently have 74 children aged between 6 and 16 that have an Older Friend.

The children enjoy a variety of activities with their Older Friends such as trips to the cinema or a café, baking, cycling and playing at the park.



2024 Events

As always, we had a varied calendar of events throughout the year for both Older Friends and Younger Friends.

January

- Zoom Safeguarding Training

February

- Zoom Safeguarding Training

April

- Fishing Event

May

- Zoom Safeguarding Training
- Fishing Event

June

- AGM Zoom
- Volunteer Get Together x 2

July

- Alpaca Event

September

- Craft Event
- Zoom Safeguarding Training

October

- Volunteer Get Together

November

- Volunteer Get together
- Children's Christmas Party



With thanks to The Newdigate Arms in Bedworth and to The Royal Pug in Leamington for allowing us to use their facilities free of charge for our Volunteer Get Togethers.

Fishing

The children and their Older Friends had 2 fabulous fishing sessions at Jubilee Pools in Ryton on Dunsmore. Both days were organised for us by The Angling Trust.

With any of our outdoor events we hope for wonderful weather and luck was definitely on our side!

The Angling Trust were extremely professional throughout and volunteers from there coached the Younger Friends on both mornings. The children loved learning a new skill.



Alpaca Event



On a beautiful warm day in July we visited Lucky Tails Alpaca Farm in Hurley, Atherstone.

As well as alpacas, the farm is also home to rabbits, guinea pigs, tortoises, pigs, goats, chickens, meerkats, ferrets, ducks and donkeys. First we had a tour of all the animals and were able to stroke and feed most of them. We then had the opportunity to go into the meerkat enclosure. They were extremely friendly and were very happy to come and sit on us and nibble on the food we gave to them.

Many of the children had never experienced anything like this before, so it was a real treat for them.

We finished off by walking some alpacas. They were all very friendly and well behaved.

The feedback from the event was so good that we will be doing it again in 2025!



Christmas Party

Our Christmas Party is always a fun-filled afternoon full of games, dancing, slime, glitter tattoos, gingerbread decorating and sparkly drawing! Old Leamingtonians RFC once again kindly allowed us to use their facilities. Entertainer Ellie from www.dnakids.co.uk had the children up dancing and playing games.

Father Christmas himself even visited to give the children their presents! Funding was through a donation from Networking Group BNI that Older Friend Sue collected, proceeds from a cake sale that Older Friend Danielle arranged, a charitable donation from St Marks Church in Bilton. which was again arranged via a volunteer and finally Older Friend Kelly funded the lovely food.

Free Cakes for Kids once again made some beautiful cakes for us free of charge and finally – Make Good Grow donated Advent Calendars!



Craft Event

In September we held our Annual Craft Event at War Memorial Park in Coventry. The children did pottery painting, made their own slime (run by Older Friend Pat and her Younger Friend C), drawing and pebble painting.



What others have been doing for us

In February 2024, as part of their ongoing support, we collected a cheque from O'Brien Charitable Trust for £3,000.



Southam Lions raised £3500 for us from their Santa Sleigh.



We were thrilled to receive a grant of £13,500 from the Inclusive Communities Fund at Heart of England Community Foundation.

Becketts Farm Shop supported us via their community fund token scheme. We received a cheque for £532.47

Bulkington WI gave us a donation for our work in North Warwickshire.

St Mark's Church, Bilton donated £350 to us as part of their 2024 charitable giving.

Older Friend Sue organised collections at her BNI Networking Group.

Older Friend Danielle organized a cake sale and held a raffle for us.

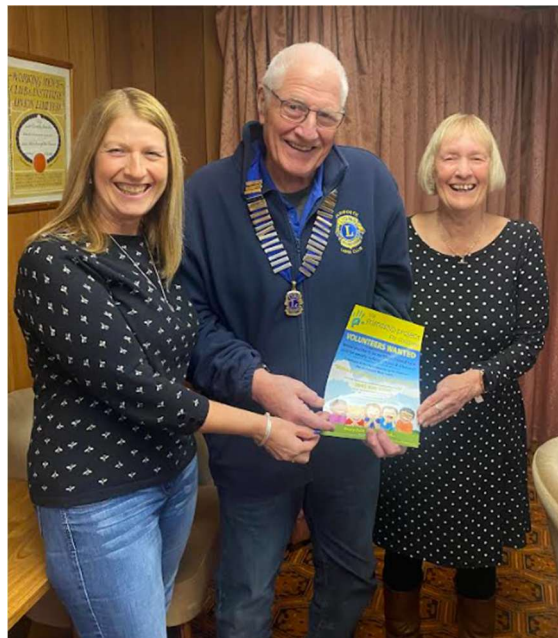
www.o3e.co.uk arranged a scooter building event at Ashorne Hill. We were gifted 7 scooters for our Younger Friends.



£297 was raised at a Cream Tea Event that Fiona Roche from The Friendship Project held. Thanks Fiona!



The Bedworth Lions made a donation.



We cannot list everyone that we need to thank on here, but we are grateful to every one of you that helps us out in any way.....

In 2024 Thomas Flavell Solicitors donated Easter Eggs to the Younger Friends in the Warwick district. They also helped with some of our printing needs as well as taking part in the Leamington Round Table Santa Sleigh.

A huge thankyou to the 8 girls in year 3 at Ettington Primary School who raised an incredible £179.07 for us.

We were the chosen charity for the Rotary Leamington Spa fundraising event 'Mamma Mia! Here we go again' sing-along at the Royal Spa Centre. The event raised £500.



It was lovely to go to the Guild Cottages Garden Party to receive a cheque from the Stratford Municipal Charities for £2,500 to support our Stratford Friendships.



A donation of £2,500 was received from Aubrey Allen, who give to worthwhile causes every year.

Fundraising by Sing it Loud Community Choir



We were delighted to be chosen by community choir, Sing It Loud, to be their chosen charity of 2024. As a choir member myself I was particularly pleased! Committee member Val McNally, and choir members Peter Hancock and Cheryl Doshi had all previously been Older Friends to children, so we had a strong link to the choir. Even more exciting was the fact that SIL were celebrating their 10th anniversary! Their largest concert to date was held at Warwick Arts Centre on the 25th May 2024 with 1000 tickets sold! There was a massed choir (which Older Friend Clare Ollerenshaw joined in with) combining with the Sing it Loud choir of 230 singers. The music was played by the musicians of Coventry City of Culture Orchestra.

A truly incredible evening! Our star of the show was former Younger Friend Caitlin and Older Friend Judy Sims. Alongside Cheryl Rawbone, our Chairman, they gave such a touching speech about what their friendship had given them. It brought the audience to tears.

Maestro Seb Farrall had the audience eating out of his hand. He got them clapping to a rhythmical beat which got everyone in hysterics and made everyone feel part of this wonderful evening.

There was a 2nd concert performed at Trinity Church in Leamington on the 7th December called 'Under the Stars.' Again, a sell-out performance! A great evening with mulled wine and mince pies in the interval.

In total, with donations and ticket sales, Sing It Loud donated £3041 to our charity. We had Older Friends attending with their Younger Friends to both concerts and they all loved it. Two of the audience have since joined The Friendship Project as Older Friends and another member has kindly donated us money towards advertising so that we can spread the word of the wonderful work that we do.

We were all extremely saddened to hear that the musical director Seb Farrall has since passed away. We feel especially privileged to have been part of these two beautiful concerts.

Thank you Sing it Loud!

Written by Fiona Roche, Area Coordinator and Sing It Loud choir member.



Operations Team News



Older Friend Gilly received a Rotary Club Community Spirit Award

This award is presented to people who are undertaking significant and sustained contributions to making the lives of others better, safer, healthier and more fulfilled, in their own time as volunteers. These are unsung community heroes, who do selfless and committed good work in the community without seeking any recognition other than achieving something tangible and worthwhile, are wholeheartedly fulfilling the Rotary motto 'service before self.'

We would like to congratulate Gilly for the past 7 years of volunteering she has done with 4 friendships and with the support of her husband Jeremy who is also a brilliant Older Friend. Gilly is pictured left, with Trustee of The Friendship Project, Jon Gibbons.



Afternoon Tea with CAVA

As a thanks for volunteering with us, Area Coordinator Kate Meek nominated 3 of her volunteers – Danielle, Judy and Mary to have afternoon tea with CAVA.

As well as volunteering, Danielle has also been busy fundraising for us by baking brownies to sell and arranging a raffle.

Judy has volunteered for us for 16 years and also supports many of our Older Friends as a Group Supporter.

Mary has volunteered with us for 3 years and has supported 2 children over that time.

Danielle, Judy and Mary are pictured left at the event.



Volunteer Events

We regularly attend volunteering fairs in order to promote The Friendship Project and to recruit volunteers. If you or anyone you know are interesting in volunteering, the volunteer fairs are definitely worth a visit. Do come and say hello if you attend one that we're at! An excellent volunteering website to look on is www.wcava.org.uk

Fiona Roche, Area Coordinator for The Friendship Project, is pictured left at a CAVA Volunteering Fair in June 2024.



Fundraising at local fairs

Similar to the volunteering fairs, we also regularly attend local village and town fairs. This is so that we can spread the word of The Friendship Project and also, the fairs may well choose us as their charity to support. If you or someone you know is involved in your local fair, please do consider us to support!

One of the fairs we attended in 2024 was the Gurdwara Charity Fair in Bedworth. It was very busy, and the tombola was finished in 3 hours!

We made £125 for the Friendship Project.



Volunteer Get Togethers

Our regular Volunteer Get Togethers offer a relaxed social setting to discuss experiences and maybe even find a few hints at tips.

The Area Coordinators regularly arrange the Get Togethers and all volunteers are always welcome, along with anyone else interested in becoming a volunteer for us.



Jewellery Workshop

Older Friend, Group Supporter and Trustee Pat ran a wonderful jewellery workshop for our Operations Team in 2024.

We made a necklace and earrings each using the wide variety of beads that Pat provided. www.eastchasedistillers.com proved to be the perfect setting for the workshop, and we sat amongst their delicious creations!

It was lovely for the team to relax and enjoy the experience.



Sam Spencer said farewell to The Friendship Project. We thank her for her hard work and commitment to the charity.

With grateful thanks to those who donated in 2024

We are extremely grateful to all our grant funders, corporate and individual donors and who supported us in 2024 through grants and a range of large and small donations. We would also like to thank our cash and QR code donors where the details of the donor are not always known.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ✓ 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust | ✓ Heart of England Community |
| ✓ Albert Hunt Charitable Trust | -Foundation – Inclusive |
| ✓ Anonymous donors | Community Fund |
| ✓ Aubrey Allen | ✓ Just Giving |
| ✓ AE Beckett & Sons, Becketts Farm | ✓ Kenilworth Lions |
| ✓ Bedworth Lions | ✓ King Henry VIII's Endowed Trust |
| ✓ BIGGA | -Warwick |
| ✓ Brian Murtagh Charitable Foundation | ✓ Masonic Charitable Foundation |
| ✓ Charities Trust | ✓ Michael Marsh Charitable Trust |
| ✓ Cheryl Rawbone | ✓ Mr & Mrs Owen |
| ✓ Claverdon Fields Charitable Trust | ✓ Nuneaton Borough Council |
| ✓ Coventry & District Cricket Club | ✓ O'Brien Trust |
| ✓ Danielle Kay | ✓ Redrow Homes |
| ✓ BM & SJ Hall | ✓ Sing it Loud |
| ✓ Edward Cadbury Charitable Trust | ✓ St Mark's Church, Bilton |
| ✓ easyfundraising | ✓ Stratford Municipal Charities |
| ✓ F C Stokes Trust | ✓ Square |
| ✓ Fiona Roche | ✓ Terence Hague |
| ✓ Foyle Foundation | ✓ The Higgs Charity |
| ✓ Garfield Weston | ✓ Mrs SM Weetman |
| ✓ Hammons Solicitors | ✓ WCC County Fund |
| ✓ Heart of England Community Foundation | ✓ WPH Charitable Trust |
| -Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Fund | |
| ✓ Heart of England Community Foundation | |
| -Dulverton Trust | |

Thanks also to **Thomas Flavell Solicitors** for kindly printing off our Guidelines for our volunteers.

Leamington Lawn Tennis and Squash Club regularly allow us to use their meeting space free of charge – thank you.

SSD in Stratford-upon-Avon for storing our archiving free of charge.

Our volunteers who have raised funds for us this year through their own collections and fundraising.

Like all charities, The Friendship Project relies on donations from the general public for a significant amount of its income. If you can spare even just a pound or two, or perhaps help to organise a fundraising event to help towards our valuable contribution to society, then please do feel free to contact our Trustee Fundraiser, Richard Barrett richard.barrett@friendshipproject.co.uk.

There are several methods in which you can donate to us, listed below, with further details on our website. We're now also registered with easyfundraising, the UK's biggest charity shopping fundraising website. This website allows us to receive donations directly from brands when you use the site to shop with all your favourite stores online.

It's completely free and easy to use and a great way for you to support us when you're shopping online without it costing you a penny!



easyfundraising

Turn your online shopping into everyday magic for Friendship Project for Children with easyfundraising. You shop, brands donate to us. It won't cost you any extra!

How to sign up

Scan the QR code

or visit: <http://efraising.org/r1PKzAh2X9>

Download the easyfundraising App

Google Play App Store

Other methods to donate are:

- Charities Trust through Payroll Giving, Sponsor Me, and Match Funding
- One-off card donations
- Cheque
- In person with a staff member via the Square app
- Using our QR code shown on the right



Emily's Older Friend Story



When I first joined The Friendship Project as an Older Friend, I was filled with a mix of excitement and nervousness. I wasn't sure what to expect, or how I could make a real difference in someone's life. But looking back now, after a year of shared memories and laughter with my Younger Friend 'L', I can say with certainty that this experience has been just as positive for me as it has been for her.

L, who is about to turn 13, was initially a little shy, but we quickly found common ground and we have the best outings. She is super chatty and has a brilliant sense of humour. Over the months, we've shared so many wonderful moments—from hot chocolates with all the trimmings and swimming at the local pool, to enjoying meals together at our favourite restaurants. We've baked cookies on weekends, go to the cinema and spent hours on our scrapbook which we love, as well as crafts and creative projects. We also love to go to the planned Friendship Project organised events. Our favourite would have to be the Craft Event. L loved the mug she got to paint.

I'll admit, I was a bit nervous at first. I wasn't sure how I would connect with her or what I could offer as an Older Friend. But with a mixture of small outings and some larger ones I've learned that being a good friend is about being present, listening, and sharing experiences. It's those small, meaningful moments that make the biggest difference.

With her 13th birthday approaching, I'm looking forward to celebrating with her. I am looking forward to planning a special outing, and it will be another great opportunity to make more memories together.

The Friendship Project has provided me with a unique experience, and it's not just about helping someone else - it's also a chance to reflect. This journey has brought new perspectives and a sense of fulfilment that I didn't expect when I first started. As she turns 13, I'm excited to continue our journey together, filled with more shared adventures and meaningful moments through The Friendship Project.

If you're looking for a way to make a real difference, I highly encourage you to consider joining The Friendship Project. It's an opportunity to connect with young people, offer support, and be part of something meaningful. The positive impact you can have on a child's life is clear - and you'll likely find yourself gaining new perspectives and experiences along the way. The friendships built through this charity are valuable for both the children and the volunteers, providing rewarding opportunities for growth and connection.



Helena's Older Friend Story



I moved to Leamington Spa in 2014, before which I lived in Leicester where I was involved with an organisation called YOT's (Youth Offending Team). I was a volunteer for 7 years, working 1-2-1 with teenagers who were on their final warning with the police. There were set objectives that needed to be fulfilled during the pairing - mainly helping the young person understand how their offence affects them, their families and the wider ripple effect. The kids were usually frustrated with the situation they were in, so giving them the opportunity and a safe space to talk was really helpful for the kids I supported. So, when I moved to Leamington I found The Friendship Project, and I instantly wanted to be involved with such a fantastic organisation.

Following my initial interview and relevant checks, Fiona Roche, the Area Coordinator for my district, contacted me and talked me through 3-4 Younger Friends' details. I think M was the 3rd case she ran through with me, and there was just something that caught my attention about M.

Our first meeting was arranged at M's Primary School, which is where I met M's mum & M for the first time. They came across as a lovely family. M was quiet & a little shy. We agreed our first outing for the following week. The type of friendship was very different to what I'd previously done, so I was a little unsure of how the outing would go.

Our first trip out, was to St Nicholas Park to feed the ducks on the river. As I was fairly new to the area I wasn't sure of the route from M's house to the park. As it turned out, my lack of knowledge of the area & getting lost was a huge source of amusement for M, and a great ice breaker!

Over the last 10 years we've been to lots of places, including Tamworth Sky Centre for the Christmas Party! We got lost, and we were the last to arrive! Another time we met another Older Friend in St Nicholas Park as we were meeting them to go the Warwick Boat Club for a squash taster session. I didn't know that there were 2 mini golf courses at the park, and true to form we were at the wrong mini golf, so we were late again! The Older Friend we were meeting, Geoff, was very understanding when we finally found him in the park.

As M got older they would navigate the route to our destinations using a mobile phone. Which I like to think has taught them a great life skill! We've done so much during our time together - we ran a 1 mile colour run, which lead us to complete Couch to 5k. We've baked cakes, swam, walked in the rain, fallen over in the mud, played snap in Costa coffee until closing time, carved pumpkins, been to the dungeons at Warwick Castle and climbed to the top of the turret of the castle. We've explored, been pen pals during lock down..... the list is endless! I think the most life-changing experience for M that The Friendship Project has enabled them to experience is music, specifically learning to play the piano and more recently learning to play the drums at Top of The Rock drum studio in Warwick. This has given M the confidence to make friends with people who play in a band. They write songs and sing too. M wants to become a music teacher and is in college studying art which hopefully will enable them to gain access to a level 3 music course.

We have been to a gig at the O2 in London to see Billie Eilish, and watched the Arctic Monkeys perform at the Ricoh Arena. M also attended the concert by Fiona Roche's Sing it Loud choir. M was fascinated by the performance & had never seen an orchestra play before. They were blown away by all of the instruments, especially the harp. Without the support from The Friendship Project, M would not have been able to access these opportunities, and realise their dream of becoming a music teacher.

Although our Friendship Project time ended as M is now 17, we are still in contact. They get the bus to my house after college sometimes. M wants to learn how to cook, so whilst I'm finishing up my working day, M bakes a cake & then we cook dinner. M's next lesson is learning how to wash up!

I'd like to thank everyone at The Friendship Project for allowing me to be part of the charity, it has brought much joy into my life, just as much as I have been able to give.

Kay's Older Friend Story



When my own children set off for pastures new, I reflected on how lucky they were to have so many opportunities open to them and how important it was for them to feel confident enough to take on new adventures and challenges, and that many children may not be quite so fortunate. I had worked for many years supporting people who had had difficult educational experiences or family situations, back into higher education and was keen to use my knowledge and experience in a voluntary role. A friend recommended the Friendship Project and it immediately felt like the perfect fit.

My Area Coordinator matched me with a young girl approaching her 10th birthday. H and I hit it off immediately – our love of sport and particularly Liverpool FC was a very good start. H has a great sense of humour and although of course initially reserved and nervous, she was open to both the friendship and trying new things. It was quickly apparent that she loved food, so I knew every trip needed to include a visit to a café or a picnic in the park. We started our outings tentatively with walks with my dog, kicking a ball in the park, trips to the cinema, Warwick castle, Ryton Pools, Jump In and Gaydon Motor Museum to name a few. As the friendship developed, I started to challenge H a little more to help build her confidence, interacting with other people and developing new interests and skills.

We often go to the gym, play board games (at the board games café and at home) and regularly do a quiz – her knowledge of music and football is incredible – she beats me every time which delights her. If my husband is around he joins in the board games too and H loves the dynamic of that. I think if I asked H what her favourite activities are she would say playing tennis and going to the driving range – both have come on leaps and bounds and our best day out is a mix of those two, followed by a picnic (a picky eater when we first met, she has now developed quite a taste for sushi) and then going home with her in charge of the music in the car – neither of us have good singing voices so it's good job no one else can hear us.

I started with the Project in 2018 so my friendship with H is now in its 7th year and I have thoroughly enjoyed watching H grow in confidence and how our relationship has flourished over the years. We have a lot of fun together and I think H feels safe, sharing some of the challenges she faces in life and talking through ideas on how to handle them. She lives with her supportive and loving Grandparents, and I too have a good relationship with them which has helped make the friendship so enjoyable.

Over the last couple of years in particular, H has built up some positive friendships at school, joined the ACF and has focussed more on her school studies. Whilst there will inevitably be many challenges ahead for her, I can see she has grown in resilience and confidence to deal with those better and I've thoroughly enjoyed playing a small part in that.

H turns 17 later this year and hopes to start a college course in September so our friendship will inevitably change, but I'm looking forward to seeing where life takes her."

Danielle's Older Friend Story



I was matched with J in early 2023 and we had our first outing in the March.

I was quite nervous before taking J out for the first time, and even though I felt very excited to be a part of such a wonderful Project and was honoured to be able to spend time with a such a special young person, it was also quite daunting!

After our first outing to a bowling alley, I felt absolutely sure that this was the start of a great friendship between J and myself.

Since March 2023, we have gotten to know each other quite well and we both look forward to our outings, which tend to take place every couple of weeks. Some of our favourite places to go together include Laser Quest, the cinema, bowling, swimming and local parks where J loves to play in the play area. We have been to zoos, farms, museums, just about anywhere!

My experience with J and The Friendship Project has been just amazing and I have honestly loved every outing that we have been on together. I've had more fun in the past year than I've had in a long time. Who would have thought that running around Laser Quest (our favourite activity) would be so appealing to somebody in their late 20's! Now, I can't wait until the next time we go.

It has been a privilege to spend the last year getting to know J, and I think my chattiness is wearing off on him as he has come a long way from the quiet, shy young man who I met in the school office last year.

The community of volunteers and Area Coordinators at The Friendship Project are incredible people who have made me feel so welcomed and appreciated, it has truly been a pleasure from day one. Thank you to The Friendship Project for the amazing work that you do and for letting me be a part of it, I so look forward to the future of my friendship with J, I feel we have many years of fun and new experiences ahead of us!



Could you be an Older Friend?

We have many children on our waiting lists needing an Older Friend. It could be you helping one of them! Here is some feedback from a regular referrer showing the positive impact that you could have on a child in need.

If you are thinking of volunteering for us, or feel that you would like to know more, please contact karen.Hoy@friendshipproject.co.uk for more information.

Some key facts about being an Older Friend:

- We work with children in need aged 6-16 throughout Warwickshire
- The Younger Friend is a child who would benefit from a break from their personal situation
- Our Older Friend volunteers have regular meetings with a child for 1-2-1 time
- As an Older Friend, you are reimbursed mileage, plus expenses per outing of up to £14 for the Younger Friend's expenses
- We give you safeguarding training, guidance and support
- You would need an Enhanced DBS check (which we pay for) and ideally have your own car to take the child out
- We ask for a minimum commitment of 6 months in this role to allow some continuity for the child

WESTGATE PRIMARY SCHOOL



Head Teacher
Mr. M. Watson, M.A, B.A (Hons)

09.05.2024

Reference to the Friendship Project

To whom it may concern,

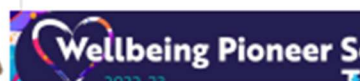
I have personally been working with Fiona Roche and the Friendship Project for six years and Westgate Primary School has a working relationship stretching back more than eleven years.

We are involved with the Friendship Project through our submission of referrals for vulnerable children, the matching process and ongoing contact as the children work with their 'friend'. The children regularly talk about the experiences that they share, such as day trips, visits to local parks, to the cinema or to favourite cafes.

I can't speak highly enough of Fiona, and her team, as they work tirelessly to ensure suitable matches and to make sure that the children's needs are met and their interests fully documented so that they can get the very most out of the partnership. This careful process is never rushed and the gains in the confidence that we see in the children are often dramatic. With the type of activity that the partnerships work on together, we find that self-esteem increases and this leads to them wanting to push themselves out of their comfort zones and their engagement with work improves and their friendships become stronger.

It is clear to us that having a non-family adult supporting them enables the children involved in the Friendship Project to experience new opportunities, to have one-to-one time where they are the sole focus of attention and to learn new skills which lead to improvements in wellbeing, confidence and self-esteem. The Friendship Project is a wonderful resource and we are very fortunate to be able to access such high-quality support for our pupils.

Yours sincerely,
Matthew Watson
Head Teacher




Westgate Primary School • Bowling Green Street • Warwick CV34 4DD
Tel: 01926 492015 • Email: admin2322@welearn365.com



Social Media and Marketing

HOW CAN YOU HELP?



PLEASE FOLLOW, LIKE, COMMENT & SHARE
Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter.
This really helps to spread the word of what we do!

PHOTOS, VIDEOS, TESTIMONIALS
Please send us content that highlights your experience with The Friendship Project. This content will be shared on our Social Media to raise awareness of how we support young people #LocalCharity #Fundraising

OUR AMAZING VOLUNTEERS
We would love to do Volunteer Appreciation Posts!
Please send in testimonials and photos of activities you have done with your Younger Friend. This may also inspire others to volunteer!

PLEASE SEND TO:
amrit.bass@friendshipproject.co.uk





A SNAPSHOT OF 2025 SO FAR



Safeguarding

Safeguarding remains the utmost priority for The Friendship Project and it's been my pleasure to be leading this for another year, along with my fellow Trustees.

As ever, there has been lots of training and this remains one of my favourite ways of ensuring the welfare of the child is at the centre of everything we do. I really enjoy meeting new volunteers attending our full training session and getting to meet older volunteers coming back for refresher training. The refresher training has been updated substantially this year with new scenarios that really encourage our established volunteers to reflect on their understanding of what safeguarding means and their responsibilities.

I also delivered a safeguarding training session for the Trustee group – encouraging the Trustees to think about how they would deal with a volunteer's concern should they be in the position where they had to.

An area of focus this year has been clarifying the Group Supporter's role in relation to Safeguarding. A small working group including myself, members of the paid team and a Group Supporter explored the opportunities to fine tune the guidance. This led to a training session for the Group Supporter team and updates to the procedures and paperwork making clearer the expectations on frequency of contact between Older Friends and their Group Supporter, how safeguarding concerns should be reported, and record keeping.

As ever, I remain thankful to the paid Operations Team for their ongoing commitment to safeguarding and for always working with me as we identify ways to improve practice and procedure.

And a thanks, as always, must go to our wonderful volunteers. I appreciate them giving up their time to attend and really engage in safeguarding training and I am especially thankful for those volunteers who have shared a worry, whether big or small. Having a conversation about concerns is so important!

If you have questions, comments, or feedback on any aspect of our safeguarding procedures or policies, get in touch. Esther Jones.

Future Events

We really hope to see you at some of our events this year!

We are always adding new dates, so we will be sure to communicate these with you when we do.

If you have any questions or ideas for future events, please feel free to contact:

karen.hoy@friendshipproject.co.uk

Younger Friend Events:-

5 April – Tennis Event
11 June – Canal outing
12 July – Lucky Tails Alpaca Event
13 July – Charity Fun Day
27 September – Craft Event
Nov/Dec – Xmas Party TBC

Volunteer Events:-

16 January – Zoom
Safeguarding training part 1
23 January – Zoom
Safeguarding training part 2
6 February – Zoom
Safeguarding refresher training
13 February – Zoom
Volunteer Get Together
25 March – Volunteer Get Together
3 April – CPR Training
11 May – North Boat Trip
14 May – Zoom Safeguarding training part 1
21 May – Zoom Safeguarding training part 2
4 June – Zoom Safeguarding refresher training
12 June – Zoom AGM at 7pm
5 & 6 July – Cream Teas

All Volunteer Get Togethers and Group Events which are not yet booked will be communicated as soon as they are in the diary!

SUNDAY 13 JULY FROM 10AM

the friendship project for children

ALL PROCEEDS TO
WWW.FRIENDSHIPPROJECT.CO.UK

SCAN HERE TO DONATE

CHARITY FUN DAY
CASH ONLY ON THE DAY PLEASE!

At: Marslands Farm, Montague Rd/Church Lane, Corley, CV7 8AZ
Contact Lynsey 07971 859778 or Kate 07496 670321
Email: kate.meek@friendshipproject.co.uk to book your space at the car boot, or the 'bring your own' stall

- Novelty dog showing classes – open to all!
- Horse showing classes – to watch
- Hobby horse racing – open to all!
- East Chase Distillery – licensed bar
- Stalls
- Burger van
- Raffle
- Bouncy castle
- Ice cream van
- Tombola
- Car boot sale
- And lots more!

TEAM CKRC
E | C | D
SOUND HOUNDS

Trustee Recruitment

In the next 12 months we are looking to recruit Trustees for the following roles:

- Hon Secretary
- Hon Treasurer
- Marketing/Social Media
- QA/Compliance

If you have any of these skills and would like to chat about what is involved, please contact **Cheryll Rawbone – Chairman**
cheryll.rawbone@friendshipproject.co.uk



the
friendship project
For Children

Volunteers Wanted

Would you like to be an Older Friend
to a child for regular outings of just 2-3 hours?

For more details and an application form, please contact:

0845 838 2098*

email: info@friendshipproject.co.uk

www.friendshipproject.co.uk

 Facebook/  Instagram/  Twitter@friendshipproj



Make a difference to a child's life!

Registered Charity No. 517684

*Calls to this number from a BT telephone line will be approx. 2p/min daytime and 8.5p/min evening (exclusive of VAT.) Calls from mobiles and other operators may vary.



Registered Office:- Myton Park, Myton Lane, Warwick, CV34 6PX.

Registered Charity No. 517684

www.friendshipproject.co.uk

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