



The Friendship Project
For Children

Newsletter Issue 3 / Page 1
September 2005

Chairman's Report

Since the last Newsletter there have been a number of personnel changes. Pete Aldersley, previously an Older Friend and Co-ordinator at Nuneaton has replaced Clive Barnes at Atherstone. He has strong connections with the church network in his area. As an IT buff, he is busily developing the Project's website and streamlining administrative procedures.

I am delighted to welcome Phil Hayes as the new Co-ordinator of the Warwick branch. Prior to retirement, Phil was a highly respected teacher at Campion School, very experienced in pastoral work. He will be a great asset to the Project.

A small team comprising Sara Thomson (counselling background), Charlotte Rigby (Warwick Volunteers) Andrea Thompsett and Amy Hardinge (Student Leaders) and myself are working to resurrect the Project at Warwick University. The focus is on befriending youngsters from Sherbourne Fields and Charter Primary Schools and working with the Connexions Service and Coundon Social Services Team which supports many of the families connected with Charter Primary School.

Barry Aust, formerly Operations Manager, is temporarily co-ordinating our fundraising efforts and his systematic approach is starting to pay dividends. His work will provide a good platform for the future fundraising manager who we are hoping to recruit.

As ever, thanks to all Project members for their valuable work.

John Hancock Chairman

Friendship Project Second Annual Conference October 8th 2005

The 2nd Annual Conference will take place on Saturday 8th October at Sydenham Primary School. As with last years Conference there will be input from guest speakers, Project members and an opportunity to work in small groups. Efforts will be made to include items requested by members at last year's conference and a healthy lunch will be provided. We look forward to welcoming all Friendship Project members to what we hope will be another useful and informative occasion. More information will be forwarded to you when final plans have been made.

Fundraising Manager

The Project is looking for a volunteer to co-ordinate and develop our fundraising strategy. We are seeking to raise around £30,000 per year. Previous experience of fundraising is not essential but IT competency is highly desirable. For further details contact John Hancock on 01926 513065.

Congratulations!

Congratulations to Julie Ramezani, Co-ordinator of our Rugby Branch, who has recently gained a good honours degree in Social Studies at Warwick University. During the past 3 years Julie, a mature entrant to University, has combined her studies with work for the Project. She now hopes to become a Teaching Assistant on the way to becoming a teacher. The really good news for us is that she intends to carry on her valuable work for the Project. Well done Julie!

EDITOR'S COMMENT

Welcome to our third Newsletter! This edition contains an article from Jamie Darwin, Project Manager of Warwick University Volunteers that describes the enthusiasm and dedication of the students in their involvement with the local community. Their fantastic support has enabled the Friendship Project to extend itself to providing Older Friends for children from two local schools. Well done to all the students for being so generous with their time and dedicating themselves to such good causes.

October 8th is the date for our next Annual Conference, put it in your diaries, more details will follow shortly. A big thank you to everyone who has contributed to this Newsletter, it is particularly encouraging to hear from Older Friends about their experiences with Younger Friends and provides inspiration for all of us. Please keep them coming in, it is what the Project is all about!

Gina Worrall Editor
gina@FriendshipProject.co.uk

John Vallis

John Vallis is a stalwart who has been involved with the Project since its inception in 1986. For most of this time he has been in charge of fundraising, always managing to raise

sufficient funds to run the Project. He has also had spells as chairman. John is greatly admired and respected for his integrity and other personal qualities. He has been one of our most influential Trustees and will be sadly missed when he steps down later this year.





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Newsletter Issue 3 / Page 2
September 2005

Fundraising in 2005

In 2005 the Friendship Project is aiming to raise £33,000. This will enable us to cover our costs for the year, and to go into 2006 with around five months in hand. We need a sizeable reserve, as we must ensure we can continue with Friendships once they are established.

The year started well as we were able to carry over two large contributions received at the end of 2004. One was from the W.C.C Community Development Fund for the second Co-ordinator at Nuneaton and Bedworth, the second was from Lloyds TSB Foundation towards our general running costs. Our aim for 2005 was to get out a large number of applications early in the year, and this was achieved by mid April. We have approached some 120 organisations and these bids amount to over £200,000. The low 'hit rate' means we need this amount of cover.

The team is working in an increasingly competitive area. A large number of Funders have found, like the Pension Funds, that their investments are not producing returns as they had in the past. Also, there are an increasingly larger number of charities approaching Funders, "we can only help about one in twenty of the applications we receive" is a message that we frequently hear. Another problem that we are often faced with is that Funders prefer to donate to 'new' projects, and are less interested in general funding such as, supporting ongoing costs, funding of core costs, continuity funding and replacement funding'. These problems face all Charities once they are established.

Sadly, two of the projects most stalwart supporters and Fundraisers announced that they were not going to be able to continue with the amount of work they have done for the project in previous years. We will greatly miss the efforts and experience of both Brian Rush, who has led the Fundraising so successfully for a number of years, and John Vallis, who has been a stalwart supporter of the Project from its early times, and who has been helping with Fundraising over the last few years. Both Brian and John feel that after many years it is time for them to step down, as such they will only be able to help in a small way during 2005.

We are always looking for sources of funds so if you know of a Funder we could approach we would be delighted to hear from you. Similarly we would welcome help with researching possible Funders and with submitting applications - let us know if you would be able to help by contacting **John Hancock on 01926 513065**.

An Older Friend from Nuneaton writes.....

As this was my first attempt as an Older Friend it was with some trepidation that I agreed to befriend not one, but two children. Not lucky enough to be a granny, it is twenty years plus since I have had young children in my care, so I am not up to date with the latest toys and TV let alone computer games! My life style is very much 'countryside' oriented, so I hoped the children would like to share in this. I was lucky. Both enjoy our trips to the farm, helping to feed, water and care for the animals, watching and waiting for the first lambs to arrive (all of which are given names that I am supposed to remember!)

To begin with, the younger child was very quiet, slightly overshadowed by the elder, who never stops chatting, but slowly he is becoming more outgoing and self assured, first with cheeky grins and now neither stop talking! I was expecting some temper outbursts, but as yet there have been none. We all have a great time, occasionally having a picnic in the park or a trip to MacDonald's. I even get a kiss goodbye now, which until recently was a privilege reserved for the dogs!

MENTORING V FRIENDSHIP

Both involve helping an individual, usually on a one to one basis. Mentor - Mentee and Older Friend - Younger Friend.

Mentoring emphasises listening and guidance frequently on personal, social and vocational aspects, whereas Friendship is more open ended and based on enjoyment and having fun around activities of mutual interest.

Once a trusting relationship has been established, however, guidance and mentoring may become a feature of the friendship.

On this basis the Older Friend may be in a good position to change attitude and patterns of behaviour.

Friendship may therefore be seen as an important pre-requisite of mentoring and invariably combines the features of both.

Invitation to Older Friends; What are your experiences of Friendship and mentoring? Let us know so we can include your thoughts and experiences in the next edition.

Walking for the Project

During the past 2 years the Chairman has walked the Pennine Way (270 miles) and the West Highland Way (100 miles) to enjoy the challenge of outdoor life but also to raise much needed funds for the Project. The next one up is the Coast to Coast path which is a mere 200 miles!

Can you Help?

The Friendship Project is always looking for people who can help us in our valuable work. From volunteer Older Friends willing to befriend a child, to Coordinators, fundraisers and people willing to take on a Trustee role. If you feel that you have particular skills or interests, or time to donate that could be of benefit to the charity then please contact us in the first instance by ringing the Chairman: John Hancock on 01926 513065.

A Volunteer Older Friend from Stratford writes

"I decided to become an Older Friend after seeing an advert in the local paper. My own son was going off to university and as I like children so much I thought it would be a great opportunity to give something back to others. It's really easy to put your hand in a purse and to give some money to any of the worthy causes out there but somehow I felt that now it was right to give some of my time to other people instead of just money. I have been seeing my Young Friend for around eight months now and to see her growing in confidence is wonderful, we do a variety of activities together and keep it fun and relaxed, she is now building better relationships with her peers at school and making new friends. It's such a pleasure to see her grow, she's a delight."



Friendship
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for Children
Registered Charity No: 517684

The Friendship Project
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Newsletter Issue 3 / Page 3
September 2005

The Friendship Project at Warwick University

The Friendship Project has had a branch at the University of Warwick for many years, providing opportunities for students at the University to volunteer as Older Friends to local children in Coventry and Warwickshire. For many years the project was supported by Valerie Gough and Peter Muckersie, extremely dedicated project Co-ordinators who set up friendships and provided advice and guidance to student volunteers.

In 2002, the University received funding to develop new opportunities for students to volunteer in the local community. Warwick Volunteers was established with three full-time members of staff to set up projects and provide training and support for volunteers. We now have over 600 active student volunteers on over 40 different projects. Students wish to participate in activities like the Friendship Project for many different reasons: they may be looking to gain experience to help with career choices like social work or teaching, they can gain valuable new skills, they may just enjoy working with children, and for many it is an opportunity to get away from the 'campus bubble' for a bit. Certainly most find it a rewarding experience, and can see the difference they are making to the lives of young people.

The Friendship Project is very important to us - not least because it is so popular with students. Over the last couple of years, we have looked to work with the Project to improve the training and support we give to volunteers and build a structure for how the Project works at the University that can be sustained into the future. John Hancock, the Friendship Project Chairman, has been working very closely with us and has started to develop the project in new and exciting ways - particularly through relationships with Charter Primary School and Sherbourne Fields Special School.

This year we have had around 20 students involved in the project, supporting children at these two schools and some referred by Coundon Social Services. About 15 of these will continue into the next academic year, and we hope to be in a position to recruit many new Older Friends when term starts again in the autumn.

Key to this is the energy and enthusiasm of our student Project Leaders who, as well as being Older Friends themselves, volunteer to help with

the organisation of the project, recruiting students and supporting them through their friendships.

Amy Hardinge, who has just graduated from the University and is now going into teaching, writes about her experiences below. We are very pleased to announce that Amy has recently won a national Student Volunteering Gold Award as recognition of her achievements for the Friendship Project.

Jamie Darwen Project Manager,
Warwick Volunteers
www.warwick.ac.uk/volunteers

I have now been involved with the University of Warwick branch of the Friendship Project for four years. During my first and second years at university, another student and myself befriended a family of four girls in Coventry, aged between 7 and 14.

During our two years with the girls, we pursued all manner of activities including swimming, cooking, going to the cinema and a trip to Cadbury's World. We also took two of the children to an event organised by the Friendship Project at Pizza Express, where Older and Younger Friends got together to make and eat pizzas.

For the last two years I have been a student Project leader at the University. As a Project leader, my responsibilities have included; helping with recruitment of students at the volunteering fayres, ensuring that the necessary training sessions are provided for all of the Older Friends and then establishing and monitoring friendships.

My role as Project leader has allowed me to see a very different side to the project and I have enjoyed this equally as much as being an Older Friend. The new friends I have made through the project and my experiences over the four years have enhanced my university life considerably. Being able to reflect upon my involvement in the project has just helped me to get my first teaching post and I hope that, as I enter my new career in a different part of the country, similar volunteering opportunities will be available to me.

Thank you Warwick Volunteers and the Friendship Project for providing me with such a unique and rewarding experience!

Amy Hardinge
Project Leader for the Friendship Project, 2003-05

An Older Friend from Warwick writes.....

My Younger Friend has now reached 16. He and I have been paired since he was 7 years old. We have both enjoyed each other's company and he has become part of my family, even my three grand daughters love him and will continue to see him.

I've already said that I will vet his girlfriends and be at his wedding. He wants to own a mini but I've told him that my future Zimmer frame won't fit into the boot, when he takes me to the Post Office for my pension!

He has matured into a fine young man who is going to college in September and works part time for the things he wants. He knows where he is heading and what he wants to achieve.

I don't think I could be lucky enough to have another friendship that would go as well as this one. My Younger Friend has never been any trouble to me. He has always been polite, funny and has developed my sense of humour in being able to laugh at one's self!

Thank you for the opportunity of meeting my Younger Friend and being able to be a part of his life. Both of us hope that the Friendship Project will continue to help other children to grow as he has.



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**Newsletter Issue 3 / Page 4
September 2005**

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Social Services Duty Officers (24 hours a day)

WARWICK 01926 412294 LEAMINGTON 01926 33411
COVENTRY 02476 832222 STRATFORD 01789 269391
RUGBY 01788 541333 or 07788 570011
NUNEATON, BEDWORTH and ATHERSTONE
Normal hours 01926 410410 Outside normal hours 01926 886922

N.B. These numbers are to be used if you encounter a major issue such as suspected child abuse and are unable to contact the relevant social worker.

Friendship Project Web Site up and running!

The Project now has its own web site and this can be found at

www.FriendshipProject.co.uk

The web site provides information about the project to would be Older Friends and referrers and those considering making donations. It also contains contact details for all branch offices and officers of the project so is a good reference point. Hopefully, in the future, it will contain news about things happening in the project!

Please visit the site and see what you think. Make a contribution to the future news page. If you have had an experience with a Younger Friend that demonstrates what the project achieves then send it to the website to be placed on the new Testimonials Page.

Any comments about the web site will be greatly received, email them to

pete@FriendshipProject.co.uk

or send them to Pete Aldersley at 9 Newcomen Close, Bedworth, CV12 0ER.

Grateful Thanks to Funders

The Friendship Project for Children is grateful for recent support from the following organisations;

Jarman Charitable Trust	Garfield Weston Foundation
Bewley Charitable Trust	Four Acre Trust
Lloyds TSB	WCC Community Development Trust
Warwick District Council	Warwickshire Masonic
Kenilworth Round Table	UIA Charitable Foundation
Stratford Town Trust	Warwick Lions
	Peugeot