



Newsletter

Issue 15 Summer 2012

From the Chairman

In recent months there have been big changes in the management personnel of the Project.

Peter Aldersley and Sue Bourne have resigned their posts and we are grateful to them for their dedicated work in recent years. We welcome Dave Beckett as our new Project Administrator and Newsletter Editor. Valerie Burrows has replaced Cheryl Rawbone as Secretary who has moved to the position of Vice-Chairman of Trustees. Valerie and Alan Marshall (Treasurer) have both become Trustees.

Our friendships continue to yield great benefits to the children we support. Thanks for your contribution.

John Hancock
Chairman

2 MOORS WALK FOR THE FRIENDSHIP PROJECT

In August the Chairman, John Hancock, is aiming to walk the Devon Coast to Coast path which crosses both Dartmoor and Exmoor. The distance is about 120 miles.

You can sponsor John online at <http://www.justgiving.com/FriendshipProjectforChildren> or by completing a sponsor form. Please encourage your friends to donate.

Thanks.

Judith Goodman

Sadly, Judith Goodman died on 24th January 2012 at the age of 73.

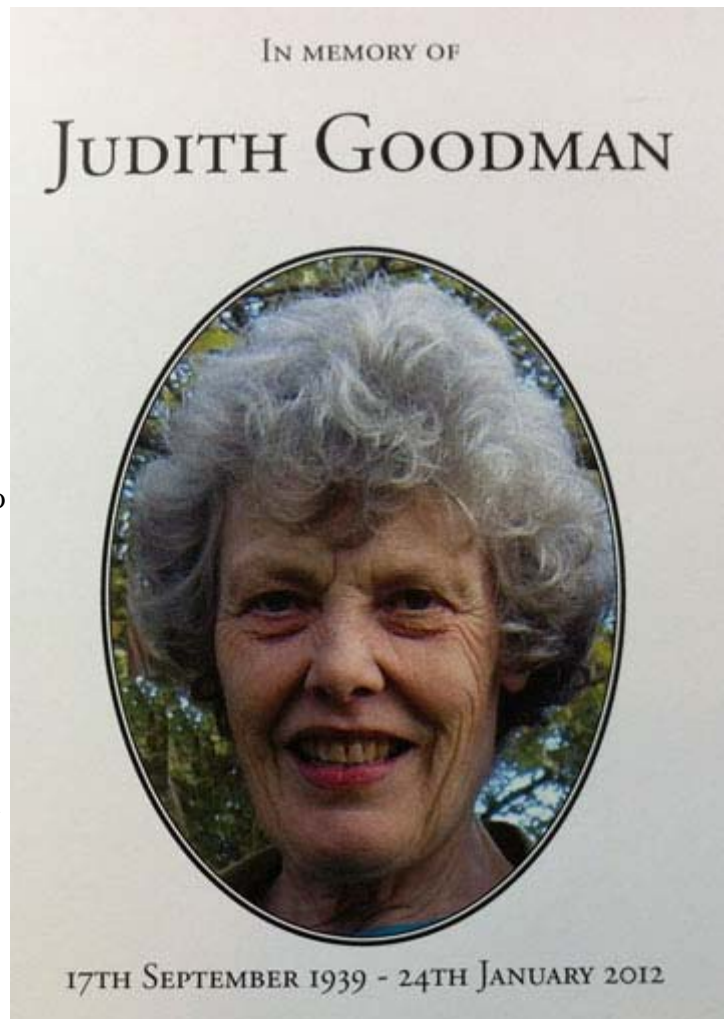
Judith was an Older Friend for 17 years and stepped down in 2008. During this time she befriended 6 needy young people, latterly, a brother and sister being cared for by their Grandmother.

Judith put a great deal of thought into the activities she organised for her Younger Friends. She was determined to provide them with the sort of outdoor activities and adventure games which she had enjoyed as a child and which young people seldom experience today. She joined in many of these activities including tree climbing!

Judith attended a reception in November organised for past members in celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Project. She reminisced enthusiastically about her time with the Friendship Project. Apparently, one of her Younger Friends, now in her thirties, used to contact Judith when she experienced difficulties in her life.

Judith was one of life's great eccentric characters. She was totally committed to the Friendship Project and much loved by the young people she befriended. The world is a poorer place without her.

Friends of Judith have donated £1,600 to the Friendship Project in her memory



FUNDERS

Our thanks to the following organisations and individuals who have donated money to the Friendship Project in 2012:

BBC Children in Need
Stratford Town Trust
Stoneleigh Male Voice Choir
Magdalen Hospital Trust
Provincial Grand Lodge of Warwickshire
Baron Davenport's Charity
FC Stokes Charitable Trust
Institute of Exporters – Coventry Branch
Mrs W Godfrey-Payton Trust
Donations in memory of Judith Goodman
Maggie Bartmanis
Liz Crute
Dawn Wood

ASDA Support Friendship Project through their local Community Life Campaign

Nuneaton branch of ASDA nominated The Friendship Project for Children, along with 2 local schools, to be featured in their recent Community Life Campaign.

The basic idea was that, over a period of 2 months, shoppers to the store were given a token when they reached the check-out and were asked to vote for their favourite project from the three nominated. The voting display was at the store exit and gave details of each of the nominees. At the end of the 2 months, the winner was to receive £200 and each of the runners-up £50.

Support for our Project was tremendous and I was invited along to a presentation to in early June to receive a cheque for the most votes awarded.

Thanks to everyone who supported this effort.

Lois Hamson
Area Co-ordinator North Warwickshire

Leamington and Warwick Rotaract Supports the Friendship Project

In the autumn of 2011 Leamington & Warwick Rotaract members Matt Dyer and Dan Wearden presented a cheque worth £1,355 to the Friendship Project, a culmination of a year's worth of events and activities.

Amongst those activities were a pub quiz, our first black tie ball in 3 years, several tinshakes, and various local events that we supported and received donations for, such as Santa's Sleigh.

This year we have been raising money for other local causes, Acorns Children's Hospice, Warwickshire Young Carers and Burma Campaign UK. We have already been very busy, again had a very successful annual quiz in February, and our plans are coming together for our most successful annual ball in years on June 29th – anyone is welcome!



Email us at contactus@lwrotaract.org.uk or download the poster from our website if you'd like to find out more and you fancy joining us for a great evening in aid of some excellent causes.

The club is always on the lookout for new members, so if you'd like to get involved in Rotaract, and the club also organises many social events for young adults (up to 30 years old), have a look at our website – www.lwrotaract.org.uk

THE TIGER DID COME TO TEA **- The ALLEY CATS BOWLED ON**

Saturday 3rd December 2011 was the day the younger element of South Warwickshire Area "Younger Friends" were treated to their Christmas Party. The children, accompanied by their Older Friends, 28 in total, eagerly converged on Warwick Arts Centre to see "The Tiger Who Came to Tea".

The performance was thoroughly enjoyed by all – young and old alike. NFU MUTUAL (Stratford) were the main sponsors for this event. Warwick Arts Centre kindly donated the use of the National Grid Room for an after performance "Tea Party" and to everyone's delight the cast, including the "Tiger", did come to tea. They spent time chatting with the children and obliging with photographic memories. One little six year old refused to leave the table until all his food had gone (just in case the TIGER was still hungry)!



To finish off a WONDERFUL afternoon SANTA came to visit. Every child was presented with a present; these were kindly donated by AMETHYST GROUP (Stratford).

The Tea Party, resplendent with a large Christmas Cake, was a resounding success, enabling the children to meet each other and giving the Older Friends an opportunity to compare friendships and ideas in a convivial setting. All in all, the whole event was a great experience for the children and they expressed their thanks. These we pass on to everyone concerned who helped to make this afternoon possible.



A special thank you goes to Carrie-Ann, our photographer and Older Friend who gave up her time to photograph and produce "free of charge" the wonderful photographs of all the fun of the day, enabling each Younger Friend to have a mounted memento as a keepsake. We would also like to mention WAITROSE of Kenilworth for their assistance with the food, and BOOTS of Leamington Spa for the supply of Red Bags they provided for the gifts to be presented in.

Santa of course was the icing on the cake, he looked amazing. You can see from the photograph the children looking out of the window, convinced they could see him in his sleigh arriving. Many thanks go to Terry, a wonderful Older Friend for the time and effort he put into this role.



The following Saturday, December 10th, Leamington Ten Pin played host to the Annual South Warwickshire Friendship Project Christmas Bowling party attended by the over 11 year olds. This event was sponsored by AMETHYST GROUP (Stratford).



A very creditable group of 45 Younger and Older Friends assembled to hone their skills and compete on the bowling lanes. (The Younger Friends of course giving advice and guidance on how to pick up the ball, how to take out the “strike pin” etc. ---- to the Older contingent). As it turned out, everyone was a winner. The group were treated to the customary bowling fare of burgers ‘n’ fries complete with drinks.

The surprise visitor – Santa – had to learn to “break-dance” for this group of Children and came in with a Yo Yo Yo rather than Ho Ho Ho!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Every child received a Christmas present (these were donated by AMETHYST GROUP (Stratford)).

Thanks go once more to our Santa – (T.H.) Terry enjoyed the proceedings as much as the Children did. The photographs for this event were taken by Older Friend Etain Heavens. The whole day was captured beautifully and each child received a mounted memento of their day. Ten Pin (Leamington Spa) were really obliging looking after our every need. May we thank them for their patience and goodwill in terms of booking costs and understanding the requirements for the day.

Lynne Ballantyne
Area Coordinator South Warwickshire

Without the support of Older Friends and Group Supporters at both Christmas Parties who gave up their Saturday, some doubling up with another Younger Friend to ensure that no child missed out on their Christmas Party, these events could not have taken place. Thank you for the dedication and care you take in making a difference to the life of a child.

Lynne Ballantyne
Area Coordinator South Warwickshire

CHRISTMAS CARD VENTURE 2011

In order to encourage Younger Friend participation, the children in South Warwickshire were invited to design a Christmas Card. Upon receipt of the entries, 6 designs were chosen as the Cards for 2011. These ranged from Snowmen to Fairies, Christmas Trees and on to Candles. The Younger Friend who submitted the Candle design had included in his picture a SLUG! (simply because he liked slugs). So ---- you're right ---- we had to include the Slug! We sought and received funding to cover the print costs, and to this end we would like to thank BDR THERMEA (Warwick) and AMETHYST GROUP (Stratford). All of the Christmas Cards sold, improving the profile of the Friendship Project, raising funds, and best of all including the Younger Friends, thus raising their self-esteem.

Lynne Ballantyne

Area Coordinator South Warwickshire



Hello from Dave

Hi everyone, my name's Dave Beckett and I was delighted to take up the appointment as Project Administrator in April.

My role includes receiving initial contacts from potential Older Friends, handling applications and references, liaising with the Area Co-ordinators and CRB/Briefing Officers, processing Older Friends' expenses, maintaining central records and editing the newsletter.

I am originally from a village in the south of the county and went to school in Stratford. After graduating from University in Wales, where I met my wife Jayne, employment took me to Coventry and I have lived there ever since, 31 years.

Last year I took voluntary redundancy and early retirement from my job as a senior manager for administration in Further Education in the City and have since then (partly by accident!) built up a portfolio of activities that together are keeping me more than busy.

I have found the concept of the Project very inspiring and readily admit that it has been a real eye-opener to someone of my background.

I have also been made very welcome by everyone in the Project and I am really enjoying working with all concerned.

Thank you for taking me on!

Letter from a Parent of a Child in the Friendship Project – Leamington Spa

To The Friendship Project Trustees,

We first met Lynne Ballantyne at a CAF meeting in 2011. Oliver had been referred in order to get some support for him and the family. He is diagnosed ADHD with traits of autism and was particularly challenging at home. Lynne explained clearly what the Friendship Project is about and how the process of matching a young person to an older friend worked. It's very important for families to realise that it's not a case of just sending someone and then off they go, it's about matching personalities and getting the right person to support your child.

We met with Amy in the local park, Oliver settled well and enjoyed the walk, learning lots of information about the trees and the leaves. Lynne came with us making it a thoroughly enjoyable and relaxing experience. I knew that Oliver would get on well with Amy, she has a wonderful personality and is very patient.

Oliver is very happy when he spends time with Amy and has had some wonderful experiences. Amy is always happy to do the things Oliver enjoys, such as spending time outdoors walking along the canal or building snowmen and sledging. If Oliver is unwell and unable to go out with Amy, she will always pop over for a cup of tea to keep in contact. There is never any pressure for Oliver to communicate with Amy, she knows him well and waits for him to come to her, we always give him notice of when he is having a visit with Amy so he is prepared.

The Friendship Project held an anniversary celebration, which we attended. It was at this event that we got a true picture of the extended family that makes up the project. It was clear how much Lynne and Sam care for each and every child. Having never met Lynne's husband Sam before, he knew who I was and recognised Oliver immediately and made us feel extremely welcome.

Amy has made a great difference to Oliver's life, she has given him a sense of independence and he feels valued for who he is and listened to. The Friendship Project has also made a huge difference to our family life. It allows us to have some respite from meeting the continual demands of his behaviour and care needs, ergo allowing me to spend quality time with my daughter. To know Oliver is safe and happy with Amy means we can relax.

As a family we are very happy with the support offered from the Friendship Project. Amy has become a dear friend, not just to Oliver but to all of us. When Amy came to us things were very stressful and we were really struggling to cope, thanks to the Friendship Project things have continued to get better.

Kind regards,

Sally Harwood

Editor: Dave Beckett dave@FriendshipProject.co.uk Tel. 0845 838 2098

Printed by