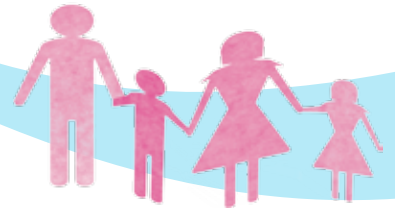


FamilyMatters

The newsletter for parents, families and practitioners



Welcome to Family Matters

Family Matters is the newsletter for Warwickshire families with children and young people aged 0-20. The Family Information Service created the publication to help you find out more about local services and support.

The Government's Every Child Matters: Change for Children agenda has influenced the content of the magazine and each issue will focus on one of the five outcomes identified by children as being important to them.

This particular issue focuses on the outcome 'Enjoy and Achieve' and so all articles are related to how different local services strive to help local children, and young people to do this.

We have only included a selection of the services currently working towards this aim. To find out more about Warwickshire County Council services that are available to residents, visit www.warwickshire.gov.uk

We hope that you enjoy reading Family Matters. If you would like to comment on anything that you have read or make suggestions for future articles then please get in touch.



Enjoy and Achieve in the Great Outdoors

In 2011 Marle Hall Outdoor Education Centre will be 40 years old. That's 40 years of providing opportunities for young people and their families from Warwickshire to enjoy and achieve in the outdoors.

Marle Hall is Warwickshire's residential outdoor centre in North Wales. We have a perfect location on the coast overlooking the Conwy estuary, with easy access to the dramatic mountains, lakes and rivers of Snowdonia, and the cliffs and beaches of Anglesey. And what's more - the weather here is much drier and sunnier than most other parts of Wales.

We run residential courses for all age groups (from 8 to 80!). Here are two examples of courses where young people can achieve whilst also having fun!

The John Muir Discovery Award is an environmental activity award based on discovering and exploring wild places. Three Warwickshire primary schools took part at Marle Hall this year: St Benedicts, Woodside and Brookhurst. All children completed the challenges of Discover, Explore, Conserve and Share whilst enjoying activities such as rock climbing, canoeing, underground exploration, bushcraft studies and rock pooling.



They completed various conservation tasks, including litter clearing, recycling and a national beach tidy day.



The children took photos and kept diaries, and on their return to school produced booklets and presentations to parents and others. All pupils achieved certificates from the John Muir Trust.



The Marle Hall Summer Camp saw 26 young people camping on Anglesey, enjoying a 7-day residential programme focusing on fun, challenge and making new friends. It provided an opportunity to achieve, both physically and mentally, through undertaking a range of adventurous outdoor activities.

We ran a multi activity course including rock climbing, gorge scrambling, sea kayaking and sea level traversing/coasteering; and a pure rock climbing course for those who wanted to focus on one activity.

Evenings were spent at the beach, playing volley ball and rounders, and toasting marshmallows under the setting sun.

In small groups young people cooked for everyone else. Firm friends were made and there were a few tears when it was time to leave.

10 young people fulfilled the criteria for the Gold Duke of Edinburgh residential, whilst others achieved accreditation in rock climbing and kayaking, including three getting A* in A level PE.

Next summer, we will also be offering a family week at the Centre. Here is a chance for all ages to enjoy a range of activities (both challenging and more leisurely!) and achieve something together, whilst enjoying the comfortable accommodation, good food and hospitality of this wonderful facility.

Why not come and join us?
After all, life begins at 40!



For further details about this, or any other opportunities to use the Centre, please contact Marle Hall on **01492 581218** or visit: **www.marlehall.co.uk**



Aiming High and Driving Ambition

The Aiming High for Disabled Children programme focuses on providing a number of short breaks and activities which give disabled children and young people a range of enjoyable experiences.

In Warwickshire, the scheme has provided funding for several young people aged 14 to 18 years to access an exciting opportunity on a Driving and Road Users course with Motorvate UK, the educational training provider.



For more information on Aiming High schemes and activities in Warwickshire, please contact, Lynne Barton, IDS Head of Service and Lead for Aiming High on **01926 742 977** or email: **lynnebarton@warwickshire.gov.uk**

Motorvate UK has successfully trained over 3000 young people in the Coventry area since it began back in 2003. It runs a number of courses which teach children and young people, including those with special needs, a range of life skills, but specialises in structured motor vehicle training courses. This particular course ran for two hours a week over a ten week period and took place at Motorvate's teaching base at the Motor Museum in Coventry.

The course tutors Mark Haines and Brian Andrews are both specialist driving instructors with many years of experience. When asked about how the course has been for them, they stated that; "Meeting the young people has really made it for us - seeing their reactions, their faces and their sense of achievement: they have all done so well."

Director of Motorvate UK, Phil Moodie, said the scheme originated from his own personal experience through loss and cars as well as his interest in providing positive opportunities to support the development of young people. With reference to this particular course, Phil stated, "So many people have such a negative image about young people with hearing impairments and driving. This really shouldn't be the case and I am determined to put on other courses for the benefit of people with all sorts of needs.



This particular course provided young people with:

- Improved confidence and social skills
- Help to overcome hidden personal barriers on how other people perceive them
- Planning and practical skills
- Understanding their responsibilities on all aspects of driving
- Experience of working as a team
- Forward planning skills
- A real sense of achievement

All the young people who took part in the course achieved their Certificate for the Motorvate UK Road Users Driving Course and can go on to use this as a foundation towards AQA awards, BTEC Drivers Science, GCSE Motor Vehicle Course and BTEC Construction Skills. Two of the young people are already going to use this course to move onto other qualifications in Motor Science, which

is a fantastic achievement! One young lady has already made plans to carry on her driving lessons with one of the course instructors, she was so impressed.

Phil commented, "The group has come together and made new friendships and they have shown real confidence with regards to driving. But it's not just about the driving; it is about learning skills for life."

All of the young people who took part on this course agreed, stating that they had all learnt a great deal from the course through their driving experiences, but had also enjoyed meeting new people and cementing new friendships.

By working together in partnership, IDS Aiming High and Motorvate UK have provided a unique experience for these young people, resulting in confident, happy and safe young people on the road, with a qualification that will help them in their future lives.

Parenting is never easy, but the PSA's can help

The logo for the Parent Support Adviser Service. The word 'Parent' is in pink, 'Support' is in green, and 'Adviser Service' is in blue. There is a small white silhouette of a person inside the letter 'o' of 'Support'.

Parent Support Advisers (PSA) can support the parents of children at selected primary schools with issues including attendance, behavioural issues and learning and progress, helping their child to get the best out of their education. Here is how the service helped one Warwickshire family.

A PSA was approached by a parent who wanted advice regarding her son's bedtime routines and general behaviour issues. Although, they hadn't identified any behavioural issues, the school did report a bullying incident, concerning her son, which had been dealt with, and that his attainment levels were lower than they should be.

Mum felt that the bullying had lowered his self esteem and was also concerned that an underlying medical condition may be responsible for his often controlling and obsessive behaviour at home. She worked from home and he would get very upset at times if she was working while he was there.

The PSA visited the parents at home where she delivered the one-to-one Triple P Positive Parenting Programme. They implemented a bedtime routine, a personalised behaviour chart and introduced sanctions of quiet time and time out. Both parents started praising their son for good behaviour and the PSA encouraged Mum to spend some quality time with him when he came home from school.

The PSA introduced Mum to some additional out of school activities for her son to boost his self-esteem

and confidence. He is now attending Beavers and loving it. He has increased confidence and has made new friends out of school. This has had a positive impact on his social, emotional health and well-being needs.

Still concerned about his possible medical condition, the PSA encouraged the parents to speak to his teacher about it at the next parents' evening and to seek advice from their GP and the school nurse. The PSA had informal discussions with the school and the Education Psychologist to provide information and advice for the parents about controlling behaviour and the need for imaginary play as a form of escapism.

The strategies learnt on the Triple P had definitely improved things. Both parents felt much more in control and able to cope with their son at home where his behaviour had significantly improved. They have continued to pursue a referral to CAMHS via their GP, but Mum is feeling less guilty about working from home and felt finding quality focused time for her son had definitely helped. He now seems much happier and his learning and progress at school has continued to improve.

For more information about the Parent Support Advisor Service call **01926 746967**
or visit: **www.warwickshire.gov.uk/fis-psa**

Hitting the right note with CMS



Through running a wide-range of music groups across Warwickshire, the County Music Service (CMS) provides children of all ages and backgrounds with the opportunity to engage in the joy of making music.

One such group is the Warwickshire County Boys' Choir, who narrowly missed out on winning the BBC Choir of the Year competition in the Grand Final at the Royal Festival Hall recently.

This astonishing achievement is the culmination of just two years of incredibly hard work by the CMS choral team, seventy boys aged 8 – 14 and the Choir's Director, Garry Jones. As the former director of CMS, it was his vision to get Warwickshire singing and there is now a thriving choral network for children of all ages in all areas of the county. On his retirement two years ago Garry was invited to lead a project to develop boys' singing. Now, two years on, his success is clear to all.

The choir was the only non-auditioning group in the final of the competition and CMS's open door policy has paid dividends with the young singers in the boys' choir. Two of its members have been excluded from schools due to disciplinary issues and several are on the autistic spectrum.

One of the members has Asperger's syndrome. "We've had teachers telling him he's not the sort of boy they want," says his mother, "and he's suffered a lot of bullying." While he may not be welcome in mainstream schools he's found friends among the County Boys. "The boys are very supportive," she says, admitting to having been overcome with emotion watching her son perform at the Category finals in Birmingham.

Being part of a team also attracted an 11 year old boy who went through open heart-surgery as a baby. As he cannot take part in school sports he sometimes finds it tricky to socialise. "The choir has allowed him to mix with boys with similar interests as an equal", his mother explained.

"The boys have a wide range of abilities", says Garry. "The choir includes members of various County sports teams, members of local football and rugby clubs, actors, musicians, academics, even an expert kayaker." He strongly believes that this diversity creates an attitude of tolerance and mutual support which is a major strength of the group and produces a high level of team work, commitment, achievement and consequent success.



For more information about County Music Service groups, activities and services, call **01926 742 630** or email cms@warwickshire.gov.uk

Young people find a new challenge



Each year, **The Duke of Edinburgh's Award** inspires thousands of young people, many from disadvantaged backgrounds, to undertake programmes dedicated to building and nurturing their personal development. Warwickshire's Award Officer, James Vann, gives us an insight into one such programme which took place last summer.

With the helicopter hovering overhead, the last of the group of young people prepared to take a leap of faith by jumping off the rock into the sea. With a squeal they jumped, and almost immediately the icy cold water rushed inside the wetsuit as they hit the water. As the downwash from the rotor churned up the sea, the group swam through the choppy waters, heading for the safety of the shore.

The pilot waved as the helicopter moved away, signalling the end of their training exercise. The smiles of relief and laughter from the group signalled the end of another day of fun and excitement. They had just completed a full day sea traversing along the Anglesey coastline as part of their Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

During the August summer holiday, a group of twenty 16 to 22 year old young people from all over Warwickshire took part in a residential trip to North Wales.

The trip had enabled individual young people to spend five days and four nights away from home with people they didn't know, and develop their communication, leadership and teamwork skills. As the group took on various challenges throughout the week, they gained a real awareness of their strengths, and explored new talents and abilities.

The friendly knowledgeable staff all helped the young people experience activities including canoeing, rock climbing, gorge scrambling and bush craft. As the group slowly got to know each other over the week, positive relationships were formed and email addresses and contact details were swapped.

This was the first time that a County supported gold residential had been run by Warwickshire, and the limited places that were available had been eagerly snapped up by the young people involved. It had been amazing to see young people getting to know each other in an informal and challenging setting and the trip had been a complete success.

Five of the attendees have already sent in their completed record books, and will soon receive their invite to St James' Palace to receive their Gold Badge from the Duke of Edinburgh or Earl of Wessex.

For more information about the Duke of Edinburgh's Award in Warwickshire, contact James on **01926 742502** or email: **jamesvann@warwickshire.gov.uk**



Helping children to enjoy and achieve through reading



As well as supporting schools in encouraging pupils to improve their literacy in order to make the most of the school curriculum, another of the Schools Library Service's (SLS) key roles is encouraging pupils to read for their own enjoyment. By improving their reading skills, pupils of all ages can learn more effectively and become more confident in all areas of their life, in and out of school.

Apart from regular collections of fiction, which are lent to schools and pre-schools across the county, SLS also offer training to staff in promotional work, story telling, and other ways which can help to ignite an interest in reading for

pleasure amongst children that will hopefully continue into their adult lives.

The service can also run sessions on request to schools who wish to focus on particular pupils who need targeted support, e.g. boys or gifted and talented.

They can also help to dispel a few myths about reading, encouraging

staff to relax about what their pupils are reading, for example, letting pupils choose their own books and encouraging the reading of magazines, graphic novels and non-fiction in subject areas that interest them – sport, music, biographies.

Supporting schools For primary schools, SLS now offer a ready-to-teach information skills package called First Steps (for Key Stage 1 pupils) and Next Steps (for Key Stage 2 pupils) which enables staff to take children through the basics of enjoying books from reception onwards to finding out information for a mini research project in Years 5 and 6. This provides a solid foundation for the future research skills that they will need in secondary school and beyond.

Recently, the service ran a successful training day for pupil

librarians across primary and secondary schools, which proved to be very popular. A second session is fully booked for January and the service hopes to offer this again in the summer and autumn terms later this year.

The service runs the Warwickshire Book Award which enables Year 7 and 8 pupils to read a shortlist of 6 recently published books and then vote for their favourite and also organises similar shadowing groups for Year 8 and 9 pupils to follow the national Carnegie medal shortlist. During the summer of 2011, SLS will also be launching the primary award – a competition for pupils in Years 5 and 6.



For more information about the Schools Library Service call **01926 413461/2** email: **schoolslibraryservice@warwickshire.gov.uk** or visit our website at: **www.warwickshire.gov.uk/schoolslibraryservice**

Learning to Enjoy and Achieve Victorian style



Heritage Education turned back the clock to 'Christmas Past' at the end of 2010 by inviting schools to come and experience a very Victorian Christmas at St John's Museum! The team runs a series of popular schools programmes throughout the year including Anglo Saxons, World War Two and Romans day projects, as well as a lively Community programme, which encourage and inspire children to discover and learn about Warwickshire's rich and diverse history. The team gave their usual Victorian school visit a very special festive twist this December....

A nineteenth-century cook took up residence in the kitchen and invited children to help her to make a Christmas pudding. With no electrical labour-saving devices, children learned how to grind up spices, weigh the ingredients and put in plenty of elbow grease to mix the pudding together! They then took their puddings back to school to cook and taste.

School visitors also experienced a very different kind of lesson in St John's Museum's real Victorian classroom. Schoolmaster Mr Roach made sure all the children knew the difference between shillings and pence and the class dressed in Victorian costume, wrote on slates and read aloud from Charles Dicken's *The Christmas Carol*. There was also chance to 'cheer up Mr Scrooge' in the last session, where the children made traditional Christmas cards and cornucopia to round off their day of historical festive fun.

Before leaving, all school groups gathered back in the museum hallway around the Christmas tree to sing some traditional carols. The day gave children a real chance to experience life as a Victorian child at Christmas, and contrast this to their Christmas 'present'.

Laura Pye, Head of Heritage Education said: "The children have a great time and it's really nice to see them having fun and getting so excited about Christmas whilst also learning something about the past!"



For more information about the Heritage Education schools programme and their programme of events for families, call **01926 412069** or email: heritageeducation@warwickshire.gov.uk

STOP PRESS: The Warwickshire Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2010/11 attempts to measure whether there is enough childcare to meet the needs of parents in your area. To find out more and to express your views on our findings, visit: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/childcaresufficiency

FamilyMatters

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this issue. The theme of the next issue is 'Making a Positive Contribution' and will be available as of April 2011.

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