



FusionNews

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Her Wildest Dreams

Knees shaking, hands grasping
For the bag that holds the contents of her life
Unable to comprehend
How this could be any different.

A warm face, a twinkling eye
They open a door
To reveal a whole new world
One that defies her wildest dreams

They personify kindness
Hearts looking warm
Everything she knew
They offered her love
An eternity of affection that would make
everything okay

The fear melts, anxiety subsides
As she takes her first step into the house, into
her future,
She knows this is a good thing

All the weight of worry, is lifted by
their hearts,

And she finds herself thinking for the first
time in the life 'this is a family'

*This poem has been written by a foster child
in the South East. We think it is brilliant, and
want to congratulate her on this wonderful
poem.*

Amazing Charity Experience !

On Saturday 11th May 2019 some of our Head Office & South West Ladies took on the 15 mile Moon Walk Challenge in London to raise Money for Breast Cancer.

The Moon Walk took place at night walking around the streets of London and seeing some of its famous landmarks, with over 26,000 people taking part which was both Men & Women (as Cancer effects all genders) it was an amazing experience.

Our ladies wanted to complete the charity event as they have all experienced the effects of cancer in some way, either from family members or friends and they wanted to bring awareness to everyone what an amazing charity this is.

We are very proud to say that all 9 ladies completed the course in their decorated bra's and by doing so have so far raised £3500!

Although the walk was challenging & colder than they had anticipated, they would definitely recommend it and encourage anyone to give it a go next year!

We would just like to say Well Done to you all (Billie, Chloe, Gail, Helen, Kayley, Jan, Karen, Louisa & Heather), what an amazing team. Finally we would just like to thank everyone who has sponsored & supported the team to help raise an amazing amount for the breast cancer charity.



Ali's Blog

Andy and I attended some attachment training the other day and afterwards we both said we wished we had known about the issues surrounding attachment and the behaviours and feelings it generates when we had first adopted our daughters over 25 years ago. We just muddled through in those days (poor girls!) following the advice of family and repeating the methods we knew from own upbringing - using the naughty step etc, which, on reflection, was not the best response. Now we can see so clearly how our daughters were displaying different types of attachment dysfunction and how we hadn't understood that at the time. Luckily they have both survived our amateur parenting into adulthood!

There is no point beating yourself up about it if you get something wrong as an adoptive or foster parent. I have reacted to a bout of verbal abuse and meltdowns in the calmest textbook perfect way one day (and given myself a big pat on the back!) and then failed miserably the next time and then beaten myself up about it! Many children in care are comfortable with conflict because it is what they know and expect and they are also masters of observing human behaviour and working out your achilles heel - they have had to learn it in order to survive.

You also have to develop a thicker skin when it comes to other people's reactions to yourselves and the kids in your care - I have had people look and mutter mutinously when my foster child has barged their own little darlings out of the queue so they could get prime position and refused to apologise. I was as stunned as everyone else when an angelic looking little child in my care screamed a string of obscenities that would make a burly rugby player blush at toddler group. There are many other moments when out and about that our children haven't 'conformed' and we have to stand by them, support them and help them negotiate what for them has been, and often still is, a very unstable scary world. Now I believe I could handle most situations calmly but it has been a bit of a steep learning curve at times.

Foster carers are human, we make mistakes and I don't think we should have to be perfect - just reflect, re-evaluate and keep up the training and then every mistake is a step towards being stronger and more effective at helping our children.

Thank you for this Ali and Andy.



YOU'RE A STAR

Celebrating Success Stories and Good News

All children's names have been changed for confidentiality and safeguarding reasons

Permeance Panel

It was a huge pleasure to attend Permanence Panel with Matilda (also known as Gertrude Armadillo) and her foster parents Di and Kenton to have it agreed that she will remain with them permanently, after nearly a year of living together. A very emotional moment for all when the decision was announced, topped off with an ice cream and foot long hot dog to celebrate!



Head Girl

Eve is in the final 3 for selection of Head Girl at school- she's worked so hard to do this!



South West Fun

South West Fun: sixty South West staff members, carers and children went to Creaky theme park. They all had a lovely day.



Army

Olli had two years of staying put with us after foster care. He left to join the army on 5th May for 6 months training in Catterick. He has done so well and we wish him all the luck in the world. I will be attending his passing out parade up north on 29th November. We are all very proud of him.



Congratulations

On Saturday 18th May, Carol and Richard, Fusion carers in Torbay, tied the knot.



College

John, 16 year old moved in with us in Romsey area in February has just been successful in his college application of his choice. Great news and well done to Russell and Chris. First placement for them for encouraging him forward.



New Office

The London office has officially moved. The new address is:

Fusion Fostering
Office C3B, Knoll Business Centre
325 - 327 Old Shoreham Road
Hove, BN3 7CS

Gorilla Adoption in the North West

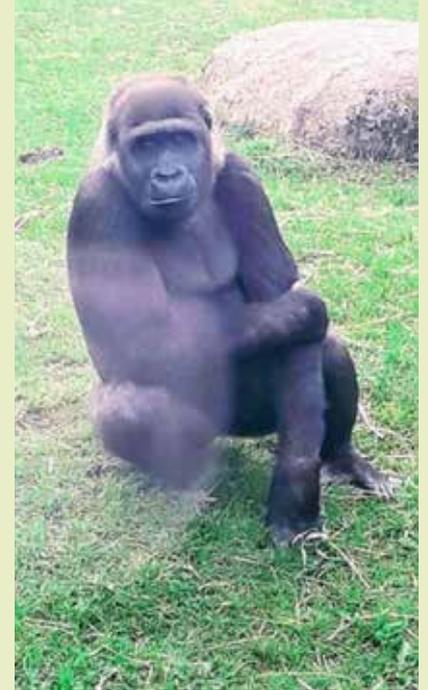
Children and their carers have adopted a gorilla at Blackpool Zoo. The group, along with Ray, Suzanne and Shirley from the Porter McGaffin Care Partnership and student social worker Conor Porter visited the zoo as part of a Family Fun Day on Sunday April 28th.

The day was a great success, with more than sixty children, carers and their families attending. In addition to seeing the wide variety of animals and visiting the new Base Camp enclosure for the elephants, it was a great opportunity for families to spend time together and getting to know other carers and their children.

April weather in the North West can always be a bit unpredictable; thankfully, Storm Hannah chose to visit the region the day before the trip, leaving behind some really pleasant conditions for a group picnic lunch.

Undoubtedly though, the highlight of the day was adopting an animal and choosing its name. The group held a naming competition after adopting a gorilla and the winning name was Logan.

Plans are currently underway for the next North West Family Fun Day which is taking place at the end of the summer.



Brighton Healer

I'm Rebecca Howgill White a local Reiki Healer and Theta Healer here in Brighton.

I've been supporting Jonathan Howgill and his Foster Carers down in the London Region with Reiki and Theta Healing sessions to help them to relax and to release stuck energy in the bodies and in their life systems. We've been really working on calming Foster Carers' nervous systems helping them to continue to be resilient and effective in their busy roles.

If you've never experienced Reiki healing before it's a Japanese technique for stress reduction and relaxation that also promotes healing of the body, mind and spirit. It is administered by "laying on hands" and is based on the idea that an unseen "life force energy" flows through us and is what causes us to be alive. If one's "life force energy" is low, then we are more likely to get sick or feel stress, and if it is high, we are more capable of being happy and healthy.

Reiki is great for stress busting and calming an overwhelmed nervous system.

Theta Healing is great for locating people's limiting beliefs and removing

them and replacing them with positive beneficial beliefs by guiding you into a Theta brainwave to take you into a reflective state of mind. From this space you're able to co-create the desired change that you want in your life.

The benefits of both of these modalities is long lasting relaxation and healing.

Perfect for busy Foster Carers who are always up against it, giving so much emotionally and practically.

Reiki and Theta Healing are also very beneficial for children and young people, helping stuck energy to move through leaving the person feeling calmer and more relaxed.

Just ask Jonathan and his Foster Carers how much they've benefitted from these wonderful modalities.

We at Ray of Light Holistic Healing are committed to supporting Fusion Fostering to continue to be the change that children and young people need in their lives.

For more information please get in touch with Rebecca at Ray of Light Holistic Healing:

07429 361 719 www.facebook.com/rayoflightholistichealing/

Birthday Fun in the 'Snow'!

On Saturday 18th May, John and Gina held a birthday party for their now 6 year old foster child, Mia (name anonymised).

Mia has been with John and Gina since August 2018 and struggles with being in school. Mia is a highly intelligent little girl, who can sometimes be very down on herself, when she feels she has "failed". Mia is doing much better, and is in school full-time. However, she could do with a little help with her social skills.

This was one of the reasons Gina and John (mostly Gina, poor John!) decided to invite 20 of Mia's classmates for a birthday party, to celebrate Mia turning 6! For FOUR hours.

Fortunately, not long before the party, Gina spotted an Elsa in town and invited her to

come along. This went down very well, as did the lucky dip that Gina and Mia had put together. There was plenty of confetti in the lucky dip (novice mistake Gina), and the aftermath of this can be seen in a very small amount in the photo of John vacuuming the lawn afterwards. He had not yet started on the house!

The important part though is that Mia had a wonderful time, has already had a play date invite from one of the children at the party and she told John and Gina that she had loved her very first birthday party.

Well done, John and Gina, and relax – until next year!



Duke of Edinburgh Award

This is a diary account of a 14 year old female who is placed with one of our carers in the South West. She has recently just completed what sounded like a challenging practice trip with her school, working towards her Duke of Edinburgh Bronze award. It involved around 17 hours of walking over two days! She has been training every Friday for this and she will be doing her Bronze award in June.

'I am 14 years of age and I am also a kid in care. I am happy to share my experience I had over the weekend doing my bronze Duke of Edinburgh. I am going to tell you how I did it and how it went.

On Friday the 17th of May at 10.45, I got dropped off at the Royal William Yard ready to start my Walk over at Mount Edgcombe for 11.00 with my group. So on Friday the 17th May, I walked for 8 hours to get over to Whitsand Bay for 7 O clock in the evening.

When we got to where we were camping, we set out tents up straight away which was lucky because as soon as our tents were ready, it started to rain but we luckily kept dry in our tents.

20 minutes later the rain stopped and we were able to cook our tea which was pasta in a tomato sauce. We all had to be in our tents at 9 O clock and we all had to stop speaking at 10 O clock. I was unable to get

to sleep just like the rest of my team which meant we were all very tired in the morning but we were ok after having our breakfast.

On the second day we all woke up at 7.15 and we got out of our tent and went up to the toilets and we got washed then after we got dressed, when we came back to the toilets and started to do our breakfast which was porridge and pancakes but because I did not like porridge, I had two cereal bars and strawberry flavoured milk.

We set off at 9 O clock and we did walk for 9 hours and we returned to Cromwell ferry at 3.50 and I was so happy to see my foster dad pick me up and I was even more happy to give him my rucksack because I wanted nothing more to do with it as it had already caused me enough pain.'

I also tried to find a few quotes on the Duke of Edinburgh website which may also be useful to include in the story. Hope this is ok and will work well for a good news story.

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award has helped countless young people on their sometimes difficult path to adulthood.

For the past seven decades, our charity (Reg. no. 1072490) has inspired and transformed the lives of millions of young people from all walks of life. From volunteering to physical activities, life skills to expeditions, achieving a DofE Award is a passport to a brighter future, valued by employers and universities.

The world's leading youth achievement award, the DofE in the UK is proud to be part of The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Foundation, which drives and supports global growth.

It's Good2learn in the North West

Have you ever felt the frustration of trying to help a child with their Maths or English homework? You are a reasonably intelligent person, so why do you find it so hard to explain your methods to a child who is already struggling and looking for help...?

This was the premise that led to the development of Good2Learn, an online educational resource offering support in English and Maths. Closely following the National Curriculum, each online lesson starts with a short video introduction to an area of learning which can be watched as many times as is necessary before tackling the database of related questions to check understanding and progression.

June sees the launch of a pilot partnership between Good2Learn and Fusion Fostering. 17 children and their carers have been invited to try out the resource over a period of three months as a means of supporting learning that takes place in the classroom.

However, Good2Learn isn't just about providing extra lessons outside of school. Its aim is to promote self-esteem about learning, develop confidence in applying what a child has learnt and to help overcome some of the barriers that are faced in the classroom. Each lesson is very short – rarely more than ten minutes in length – so easy to fit in around busy home life. There isn't anything to download, so it can be accessed on any device that has internet access. The resource is very visual; ideal for learners if English isn't their first language, and the on-screen colours were selected to be supportive for learners with dyslexia. Above all, it aims to encourage and motivate users with clear evidence of their progress.



Permanency

Permanency is when a child is granted by court to stay in the same placement permanently. It is a difficult decision for carers to make, it has to be a child centred decision and sometimes the best decision for all concerned is for the child to find permanency in another home. Below is a truthful account of one of our carers making the many decisions surrounded by permanency.

Andy writes: I have attended a meeting with a child therapist, school and social workers to look at the transition for the boys and how we can best support them and to look at therapeutic support going forward.

This was a very heavy meeting and very emotional. Lots of different scenarios and options were talked about regarding the family finding process, especially how one boy now will most probably find a new foster family before his brother. This was making my mind race with lots of different thoughts and feelings. How will each boy take the news; what on earth will they think of us; why has he gone but I haven't, or vice versa; why am I going but he is not? Oh my! I wonder how on earth will this go smoothly for them both, was a constant feeling I was having.

Discussing it again later with our supervising social worker, again gave me the reassurance and support needed to perk me up after what was quite an intense meeting.

Luckily, we have a great support team with our Supervising Social Worker,

Lynne, our foster carer colleagues and support workers, the boys' social worker, school, as well as each other to talk things through with and to get the reassurance and strength and also to remind us just how far the boys have come. One of them was his class star of the week last week, something he dreamed of, but thought could never happen. How proud he and us all were of him. His achievement was immense and again, a little reminder that we might just be doing something right!

The following morning, the boys met the child therapist on an individual basis. Following advance advice from the therapist, about how to introduce her to the boys, they were told that our "new friend, who is American has heard lots about them and would love to meet them". One child was immediately fine with this, especially as our support worker might have to go for breakfast at McDonald's with him, whilst I took the other child onto the meeting venue. This was in order to avoid the boys seeing each other in between their individual sessions. The other child was, as expected, very worried and needed lots of calming down, and reassurance



that he will remain in our care after the meeting, and that she is not taking him away anywhere today.

It is very hard to see someone who obviously cares about, and listens to you so much, have that much fear and worry that you may not be telling him the truth. The truth is absolutely the only thing to tell them, they will know if it is not!

Him telling me on the way to school after the meeting that he knows we care, love and look after him, reassures me that he does trust and believe us and will in time know that we are doing what we feel is the right and best thing for them both.

Therapy visits will continue for the boys and we are also going to see the therapist separately, to ensure consistent messages are being given to the boys. That will no doubt be the subject of our next blog....

Thank you for this Andy, we look forward to reading what happens next.

There is a need for over 7000 new foster families in the UK. Can you help?



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