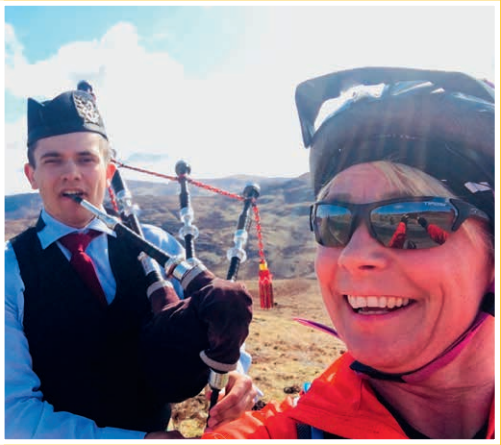
St Andrew's Children's Society
ADOPTION & FOSTER CARE

Reflections[18]

Newsletter of **St Andrew's Children's Society**

Summer 2018



Welcome to the Summer 2018 edition of the St Andrew's Children's Society newsletter, **Reflections[18]**.

In this issue, we are highlighting the Edinburgh Kiltwalk which is happening on Sunday 16th September. Join Society staff, choose one of the walks, ask friends and family to sponsor you and help raise funds for us.

Jill Watson, one of our intrepid Senior Practitioners has cycled around Loch Ness and has raised over £480 for us.

Happy 5th anniversary to our Aberdeen office.

Following a review of two years work in developing Concurrent Care, we are now ready to launch the next phase of development with West Lothian Council.

Our fundraiser celebrated raising over £1,000,000 for the Society - with chocolate cake!

…and there's news about events just past and some coming up.

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News

It is now five years since the opening of the Society's office in Aberdeen. Great things have been achieved in that time, through the incredible energy that the staff have put into developing adoption and support services from scratch.

They cover an area of a 60 mile radius from Aberdeen – no adoptions on an oil rig yet – but plenty of folk whose livelihoods depend on the North Sea. The social work team are Shiona Freeman, Anne MacLeod, Debbie McDonald, Gillian McHaffie. All kept on their toes by Velga MacDougall, the administrator.

Our first preparation group was run in February 2014 and since then 76 potential adopters have attended groups. The first child to be placed with an Aberdeen family was in January 2014. We've placed 34 children with adopters and approved two foster carers.

Not only are these amazing numbers, but the team also run a full range of support groups as well as liaising with social workers from throughout the north-east.

Every year we take part in the **Celebrate Aberdeen Parade**. Welcoming potential adopters from the LGBT community will be encouraged by the Society stall at **Grampian Gay Pride** on Saturday 26th May.

St Andrew's Children's Society in Aberdeen is here to stay!

Introduction to Theraplay

An **Introduction to Theraplay™ Workshop** was held at Edinburgh on Wednesday 21st March 2018. Theraplay is an engaging, playful, multi-sensory, relationship focused approach that is physical personal and fun. Theraplay aims to promote and build on healthy attachment, promote trust and establish and maintain connection and joyful engagement between a parent and their child.

The workshop was well attended by adoptive and foster parents, here is what they said…

"Great fun activities to use going forward"

"Interactive – helps both watching and doing"

"Helpful … informative"

"Good intro to Theraplay, good to know some simple techniques"

"Very helpful, informative … Great to get some new ideas"

"Good resources and examples"

Edinburgh hope to run another Theraplay workshop in the autumn, keep your eye on the Society website and Facebook.

Rita Grant

Photography project

The Society was fortunate to be chosen by an Edinburgh student, Beatrice Karklina, to carry out a beautiful child-centred project with some of our children and young people.

Beatrice, who comes from a small city in north east Latvia, aimed to inspire children and young people by giving them the opportunity to pose for pictures – and make them smile. Most of all she aimed to raise an awareness of children and young people who have dreams and goals, and we all need to help them to achieve them. The photo shoot, with several children and young people, featured a unique composition, representing a dream and personality of each one.

A very big thank you to Beatrice for her time and care in this lovely experience.

Rita Grant

(left) Some of the images captured by Beatrice Karklina (above).

Safer internet

The Society participated in the National Safer Internet Campaign 2018.

Two workshops were held (Edinburgh and Aberdeen) for adoptive and foster parents, staff and our partners. The workshops aimed to raise awareness of online issues; including opportunities and risks, social networking, current trends and helpful strategies to keep our children safe online. Both workshops were well attended, and here is some of the direct feedback…

"I enjoyed the open nature – chatting and discussions of others problems ... Informal but informative ... I learnt about new apps to look out for"

Edinburgh will be running a further **Safer Internet Workshop** on Wednesday 13th June 2018 10am – 1pm. Please get in touch of you wish to attend.

Jill Watson & Michael Opitz

Talking about adoption

A Talking About adoption workshop was held at Edinburgh on Wednesday 18th April 2018.

The aim of the workshop is to help adoptive parents develop their understanding, develop skills and confidence in talking about adoption with their child. The workshop was well attended. Some parents feedback ……

"It was helpful talking with adopters on their own experiences"

"All of it! theory and learning from participants in the group"

"Hearing other parents experiences"

"Sharing is essential even if its hard information."

Rita Grant & Jill Watson

Single Adopters Group

We are still running the Single Adopters Group, four times per year.

This has proven to be a valuable and supportive experience for single adopters. The group has been running for almost ten years, and is run in conjunction with Edinburgh City Council and Scottish Adoption.

The next group will take place on 18 June 2018 from 10 – 11.30am. Refreshments are provided.

If you are interested in coming along, please get in touch with Carole Bell at the Society, or the duty worker.

Rita Grant

2018 Edinburgh Kiltwalk Sunday 16th September

On 16th September, many of the staff of St Andrew's Children's Society will be gathering at Murrayfield Stadium. They would like to be joined by as many supporters of the Society as possible.

Why walk in boring old trousers when you can stroll around the city in a kilt? You have a choice of three challenging distances through the city, **The Wee Wander** of 6 miles, **The Big Stroll** of 13miles and **The Mighty Stride** at 26 mile, all around Edinburgh to help raise funds for the Society. All three distances start and end at Murrayfield Stadium.

Join hundreds of other people on the **Edinburgh Kiltwalk** and you will be well looked after in the run up to the big day and along the route. After you register for the Kiltwalk, you will receive plenty of top tips and useful hints from both the Kiltwalk team and the team at the Society, to help you through your training, preparation and fundraising efforts. When you are taking part in the Kiltwalk, along the route on challenge day you will be able to make use of the pit stops, where the Kiltwalk team will keep your energy levels topped-up with snacks and drinks, an encouraging smile and chat to keep the spirits high throughout your experience.

As you approach the finish line in Murrayfield Stadium, you'll spot the Kiltwalk Village, where you will complete your challenge and be presented with your well-earned medal. You can sit back, relax, enjoy some live music, a hearty meal and say cheers with your team mates as you celebrate your achievements. The Village is also a great area for your friends and family to cheer you across the finish line!

Sir Tom Hunter, Scottish Philanthropist, entrepreneur and founder of The Hunter Foundation, came in to underwrite the Kiltwalk charity in 2015. Since then, the Kiltwalk has grown from strength to strength. In 2017, the Kiltwalk supported over 700 charities all over Scotland, raising in excess of 2.3 million pounds.

Register today for the Edinburgh Kiltwalk

To find out more about the Kiltwalk and to register online go to **www.thekiltwalk.co.uk** or email ddocwra@standrews-children.org.uk. Registration costs £31.65 for the 12 mile The Big Stroll and 26 mile The Big Stride routes; while the fee is £12.66 for the five mile The Wee Wander route (£6.55 for children aged from 5 to 15 years). **Don't forget to select that your chosen charity is St Andrew's Children's Society.**

Everyday Hero* is a fundraising platform transforming how people give, fundraise and connect online with the causes they care about most. Thanks to the multitude of tools available to our Kiltwalkers, the Everyday Hero online platform makes fundraising at the Kiltwalk as easy as possible.

All your fundraising will support the Society

If you are looking to take on a challenge and to raise money for the Society, the Kiltwalk is a fantastic event to take part in. We will send you Society T-shirts, so let us know size – S, M, L, XL or XXL.

Every penny that you raise for the Society will come directly to us – so all the money you raise will help us to give loving and caring homes for the hundreds of children in care and waiting to become part of a family.

The Hunter Foundation has pledged to top up all Kiltwalk fundraising by 40%, this means that every £100 raised by participants will see the Society receive £140!

Unlike many other challenge events, for the Edinburgh Kiltwalk there is no fundraising target – whatever you raise will help the Society.

kiltwalk

Royal Bank of Scotland

Funraising via Kiltwalk:
How it works...

You can ask friends and family to sponsor your Kiltwalk either by filling in the sponsorship form that Kiltwalk will send a link for (or print direct from the Kiltwalk website), or they can donate via the Kiltwalk's chosen online platform, Everyday Hero. **www.everydayhero.com**.

All funds raised by supporters must come through the Kiltwalk before they send it to the Society, as this is the only way the Kiltwalk can gather an accurate figure on how much has collectively been raised and allows them to claim any eligible gift aid.

The Kiltwalk retains Gift Aid in order to make their platform sustainable and guarantee that 140% of fundraising can go to your chosen charity. Please note, that if funds do not come via the Kiltwalk, the additional 40% boost from the Hunter Foundation cannot be paid to your charity. This is part of their terms and conditions and vital to ensuring the sustainability of the Kiltwalk.

*Please note, that for the Kiltwalk, the online fundraising platform will be Everyday Hero, and not Virgin Money Giving that the Society uses for all other donations and sponsorship.

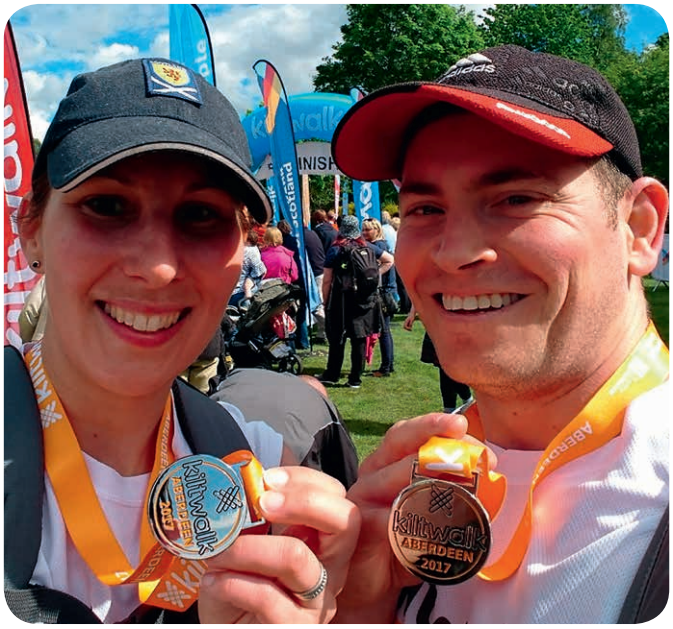
Don't forget
Fundraising Deadlines

To ensure your fundraising receives the 40% boost* from Sir Tom and The Hunter Foundation, please have your fundraising in by **no later than two months after you're completed the Kiltwalk**.

Funds will be paid to charities within 3 months of the event. Any funds received after this time will be paid on a monthly basis. Charities can track their funds on the Charity Dashboard.

Charities receive 100% of **your** fundraising plus an additional 40% donated by The Hunter Foundation (subject to deadline). If using online fundraising to gather funds, please use Everyday Hero, Kiltwalk's online fundraising partner, to maximise your fundraising potential.

*Please note that the 40% fundraising boost applies up to a limit of £5,000 per walker and subject to trustee approval.



(above right) Iska and Chris Birnie who raised £1034 at last year's Aberdeen Kiltwalk.

Edinburgh
16th September 2018

Arnold Clark

THE HUNTER FOUNDATION

Concurrent Care with the Society

Concurrent care describes a particular type of foster care/adoption which thoroughly explores the possibility of a baby or very young child being returned to his or her birth parents before adoption can become the plan for that child.

During the period of assessment of the birth family situation, the baby will be placed with concurrent carers, on a fostering basis. If the child cannot return home to live, these concurrent carers will then become the prospective adopters and the plan for adoption is progressed.

The main benefit of concurrent care is that a young child experiences a close emotional relationship with only one primary care giver in the early days of their life. The child is given the opportunity to build significant emotional relationships with their birth parents if this is in his or her best interests but if this cannot be achieved they remain with their concurrent carers and therefore do not have any disruption to their care.

Why is concurrent care needed?

In most situations concurrent care would be considered for a child when their birth parents are leading chaotic lives that potentially prevent them from meeting all the child's emotional and care needs. It is common for these parents to have misused alcohol and drugs and often domestic abuse can be a factor. Previous children born to these parents may already have been removed to local authority care.

The family will have come to the attention of social work services following ante-natal visits. Concerns about the well-being of an unborn/new baby will have been identified and social workers will have assessed the family ability and willingness to work with a concurrent care plan.

What does concurrent care achieve?

- The needs of the baby or young child are kept central to the whole process, and the aim is to minimise disruption in their early lives.
- Birth parents will have the chance to have positive parenting experiences with their children. During the assessment period, contact takes place at a dedicated contact centre under social worker supervision. This contact is typically at a high level – 2 or 3 times per week.
- Support to the birth parents to make the required changes to their lives to enable their child to return to them. If the decision of the court is to return the baby to the birth family, this support would be continued and prolonged.
- If contact leading to rehabilitation with the birth family is unsuccessful then an adoption plan would be progressed. The concurrent carers become the prospective adoptive parents with no impact on the child that a change of family circumstances would have had.

Becoming a concurrent carer – is it for me?

This route to adoption is not for everyone, it puts the child's needs at the centre of the plan and can play a vital role in ensuring the best possible outcomes for babies or very young children who are at risk of not being able to remain with the families of their birth.

In order to become a concurrent carer, you need to:

- Live within one hour's drive of the designated contact centre.
- Have the ability to be child-centred and put the needs of very young children to live in the right family for them before your own needs to become a parent through adoption.
- Have the ability to respect and work with birth families, through actively supporting contact with the child.
- Have the ability to cope with stress and live with uncertainty.
- Have a strong support network through family and friends.
- Be able to give up work at relatively short notice when a child has been identified for you.

Becoming a concurrent carer – what can the Society offer you?

The Society will be alongside you every step of the way through the process of concurrent care – and beyond. Couples will receive in-depth preparation training in the their role as concurrent carers and then adopters.

Full support will be given during the period of fostering to cope with arranged contact with the birth parents. This includes financial support in the form of foster care allowances to meet the care needs of child and a foster care fee which is a payment to you to offset some of the costs of loss of employment income.

You will be supported throughout the legal process if adoption becomes the plan for you and the child.

The full range of post-adoption support services will be available.

Stop press: Joint Concurrency Project Review

Marie Hindmarsh, senior manager with the Society retired last year. She was the senior manager responsible for Concurrent Care and liaison with West Lothian Council.

Marie has just completed a review of the joint concurrency project over the past two years. Although not yet available for general viewing, this summary of the report is very positive:

> *There is no doubt that the concurrency project has been very successful for West Lothian. The timescales to permanence for those children in the concurrency project compared to those not in concurrency are significantly reduced. The original aims of the project have been clearly met so much so that it is now being extended to all children under 12.*
>
> *The Society hoped to recruit two families per year placing two children annually. While in the three years the project has been operational in terms of referrals, only three families have been recruited those families have five children placed between them.*
>
> *The families are all very positive about their experiences and willing to be involved in promoting concurrency in the future. The only area of caution is that none have experienced the intensive contact usual in concurrency and so this is not an area where prospective carers can benefit from their or the agency's experience in practice.*

Want to find out more?

Then please contact us via the enquiry form on our website **www.sacsadopt.scot** or phone our offices in **Edinburgh, 0131 454 3370**; or **Aberdeen, 01224 289749**.

Please mention when making contact that you are interested in adopting a baby or young child and would consider a concurrency care plan as an option.

Fundraising Round-up

This is the bit I like, usually…

In the Winter Newsletter, I concentrated on supporters who had made great efforts by walking or running in sponsored events. This time, I want to say a huge thank you to one of our own, Edinburgh Senior Practitioner, Jill Watson.

On 29th April Jill cycled the 66 mile Etape Loch Ness. This is from her fundraising page:

> Well I have done lots of physical challenges (Tough Mudder, half marathon etc.) not only for fun but those who know me well will know my passion for eating and drinking! Last year I suggested to a few of my good friends we should undertake the Etape Loch Ness 2018.
>
> We have been training painfully hard. I have seen parts of Fife which I never realised existed! I have also felt pain in places I never knew existed either!
>
> I have to admit I have totally under-estimated this event and this is why I feel it's worth fundraising for! Etape is described as a 66 mile cycle around the beautiful Loch Ness. However, there is a hellish 5 mile hill around the half-way mark, where apparently there are beautiful views and hopefully an oxygen machine! There is a required 13 mph average speed to achieve, failing to do this, you will be picked up by the sweeper bus! I'm currently averaging 12mph…it's me against the bus! Did I mention it starts at 6.30am?

So far, Jill has well exceeded her sponsorship target of £250. You can still add to her total at **www.virgingmoneygiving.com**.

Jill Watson, proudly wearing her medal – and a Society t-shirt!

I prefer my fundraising from behind a desk, in front of my computer screen and a cup of coffee at the side. Some success has come from this over the past few months, with very generous donations towards our Concurrent Care project from The R S Macdonald Charitable Trust, The Cattanach Trust and a terrific £70,000 over two years from The Henry Smith Charity.

Other donations were received from The JTH Charitable Trust, The PF Charitable Trust, The Kintore Charitable Trust, The W M Mann Foundation, The Royal Caledonian Charities Trust, The Lady Marian Gibson Trust, The Martin Connell Charitable Trust, The Gloag Foundation, The Ryvoan Trust, The Dullatur Foundation, The John Gordon Charitable Fund, The Leach Family Charitable Trust, The Hugh Fraser Foundation and The Kuenssberg Charitable Foundation.

At the April team meeting, I shared a delightful chocolate cake with my colleagues at John's Place. I was celebrating having raised over £1,000,000 for St Andrew's Children's Society since July 2009. Our director, Stephen Small made the comment, "…but where did all that money go?"."You spent it", I replied!

In closing, don't forget to register for the Kiltwalk in September.

Dan Docwra

www.sacsadopt.scot
Visit our website, find us on Facebook or follow on Twitter, for all our latest news.
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