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

Reflections

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

Issue 25 | Winter **2021**

Welcome to our winter newsletter!

While most of our lives feel like they have returned to a semblance of normality, we still face some uncertainties and restrictions that are likely to be with us over the winter.

We are gradually getting back into our offices, and starting to see more and more of you face to face when that feels right. We have probably been busier over the last two years than any of us can remember.

We will be celebrating a very special anniversary in 2022, when St Andrew's Children's Society turns 100 years old. We have had four different names during our existence, but the work we have done to make the lives of vulnerable children as good as they can be has been a constant. We are the oldest Scottish adoption agency still operating, and so we are planning a number of events that will mark the occasion. We hope that you can be part of these events, and more details will follow early into the New Year.

We are planning to produce a booklet that will highlight the work of St Andrew's Children's Society from our inception to the present day, and if any of you have an anecdote or message that you think would be useful to include in the booklet, we would love to hear from you. I am sure you will see our commemorative centenary logo a lot throughout 2022 – here is the first showing of it!

St Andrew's Children's Society
ADOPTION & FOSTER CARE
100
A century of care

Everyone at St Andrew's Children's Society wishes you, your children and your wider family members the very best over the Christmas and New Year period and we all want you to know that we are here if you need us.

Stephen Small CEO

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Adoption Support

In the spring we had an Adolescence and Identity workshop online, pertinent for those with teens in the home and trying to understand some of their actions and behaviours.

The Moray and Highland Summer Picnic was held at the start of August, and it was a great success. Everyone had so much fun meeting up, and the children all enjoyed playing together for the first time in over a year. It was a lovely reunion for some of our families, and a first welcome and meet up for our new families. Luckily, the weather stayed nice and fair, with the sun even peeking through a couple of times!

Hope you like the photo of some of our dinosaur guests enjoying the picnic!

This was followed by the Aberdeen annual picnic which was great fun, and so lovely to be able to come together again. It has been way too long. Many thanks to the Milne Hall Committee for the use of the lovely new facilities.

August also featured our storytelling event with Mrs Mash: the Storytelling Cook, in the Edinburgh office. Absolutely wonderful to see the 'tots' come through the doors of St Andrew's Children's Society, and some of our older adoptees came to help.

Adoption Support Team

Our Moray and Highland Summer Picnic was a roaring success.

[Far left & left] Aberdeen annual picnic.

[Above left & above] Mrs Mash: the Storytelling Cook in our Edinburgh office.

Friends and Family training:

A total of 185 people attended between December 2020 and September 2021.

We attended the Friends and Family Training in April this year. Whilst we had no great expectations of the training, we came away feeling much more informed and enlightened as to what our son and his partner were embarking on, and how we as extended family needed to be aware of the early life experiences their future child may come with.

The discussion and information about the practical issues resulting from attachment issues was invaluable. The appropriate examples given illustrated the possible problems that will arise. It all added additional understanding to present knowledge.

Funnelling was a new concept to us and we will definitely be putting appropriate strategies into place when and if we are blessed enough to welcome a new grandchild.

We learned that St Andrew's Children's Society is outstanding in its care of the children that they help place. They also demonstrated care of the new parents and the importance of including the family and friends of the potential parents.

Anyone who has a family member or friend becoming an adoptive parent would definitely benefit from this training.

As I said earlier, we joined the seminar with no particular expectations; however, we were so impressed with everything we heard, we learned so much about St Andrew's Children's Society and your services and are very grateful for the time you spent to ensure we were all well informed. Thank you so much. It was brilliant.

Future Grandmother

I found the session very informative, moving and worthwhile. I thought it was really factual and honest and gave a good insight into what we may expect my friends to be dealing with but also how we should approach getting to know the children as they settle in.

Pauline

Pauline attended a recent online Friends and Family session. She was invited to the event after being a reference for her friends.

Friends and Family September 2021 feedback:

It's been really helpful, thank you.

A fascinating insight on how to help loved ones in the adoption process. It makes so much sense - especially the funnelling. Thank you so much.

Very helpful session, useful tips and information.

Found it very informative. Thank you.

We found it quite enlightening. Lots of useful information, ways of behaviour for us, we may not have considered.

Perfect length of time. Very interesting as an adopted child myself. Thank you ladies.

Very helpful, thank you very much. The timings and presentation were great.

Thank you. Excellent presentation. Very helpful. Length fine.

Thank you very much for your time and all the information. Very helpful.

Very informative and helpful. Thank you!

Fundraising

Farewell 2021 – and goodbye to being 99!

I'm sure, as we approach the end of 2021, we will all be glad to bid farewell to a second year of Covid uncertainty.

The year has also been an uncertain and challenging year for charity fundraising, with significantly increased competition for those grants which are the very lifeblood in allowing us to provide our vital after adoption support.

We are so grateful, therefore to have received an extremely generous £75,000 from the Scottish Government's Adapt and Thrive Programme, as well as further donations from: The Hobson Charity, The Ryvoan Trust, The Sir Jules Thorn Charitable Trust, The W A Cargill Charitable Trust, The Souter Charitable Trust, The Arnold Clark Community and The Hugh Fraser Foundation. This brought our total for the period to £119,750.

Welcome 2022 – and hello to being 100!

This is a huge milestone for us as a charity, and we really hope that you'll want to celebrate this momentous occasion with us.

As fundraisers, our thoughts have turned to ways that we can involve our families, both past and present, in raising much-needed funds to continue the work that has made and continues to make such a difference. The magic number is 100 and we're starting the year with a simple ask – for as many families and individuals as possible to join in our **Family February FUNdraising** event and each raise £100 for St Andrew's Children's Society.

There's just one rule – whatever you do has got to be fun! We'd love to get a bit of a buzz going on social media about our centenary so, if you have exciting ideas of how to raise £100 as part of our Family February FUNdraising, we'd love you to share them with us. Or you can use this hashtag in your social media posts and we'll be able to see them – **#100FamiliesFUNdraise**.

You can contact Dan, ddocwra@standrews-children.org.uk or 07903 104557

Ideas might include:

- **Baking 100 cakes or scones** to sell to family and friends. Why not bake 100 heart-shaped biscuits for Valentine's Day?
- **Running or walking 100km** across the month of February and asking friends and family to sponsor you.
- Popping down to the local pool and **swimming 100 lengths** – on your own or as part of a family relay.

More information about Family February FUNdraising to follow soon.

Please keep an eye on our fundraising page on our website **sacsadopt.scot/fundraising**

Looking ahead

On Saturday 7 May, we're delighted that Edinburgh-based choir, Cadenza, will be performing a special centenary concert to raise funds for us at Broughton St Mary's Church on Bellevue Crescent. Cadenza is a mixed-voice choir with a wide-ranging repertoire including folk, jazz and popular songs, as well as renaissance church music and contemporary classics. An enjoyable and memorable night is guaranteed! Keep an eye on our website and social media posts, or get in touch to ensure you're notified when tickets go on sale. Contact ddocwra@standrews-children.org.uk, or call 07903 104557.

In September, the Aberdeen and Edinburgh Kiltwalks will take place – a wonderful opportunity to walk 26, 16 or 6 miles with lots of other kilted walkers and get sponsored by family and friends. With matched funding by The Hunter Foundation, this is a fantastic way to increase any funds that you raise. A number of our lovely staff team have already indicated their intention to participate, so why not join them and make this a big celebration of our centenary year… could we get to 100 walkers? More information in our next newsletter.

Thank you for all your support of St Andrew's Children's Society, and we look forward to celebrating all things 100 with you in 2022!

Dan & Karen Docwra FUNDRAISERS

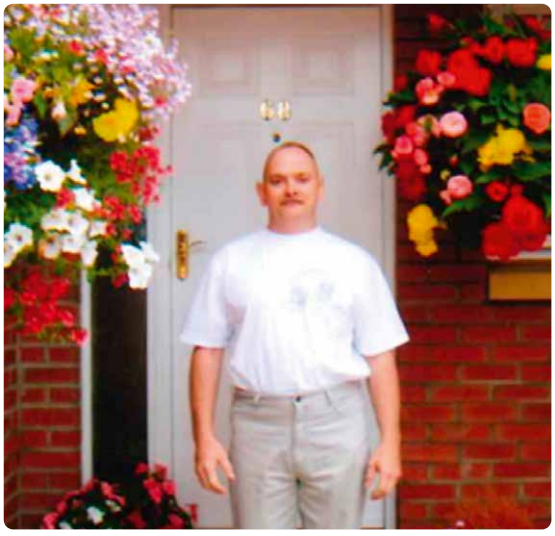
Centenary celebratory ceilidh

As part of the St Andrew's Children's Society's centenary next year we are hoping to organise a celebratory ceilidh. So far three of the trustees have volunteered to help organise the ceilidh, but we are looking for additional volunteers from our adoptive and foster care families. We're hoping the event will include music and dancing, of course, with refreshments and maybe some fundraising too, such as a raffle or similar. It will be open to all adoptive and foster care families to come along, as well as others who have connections with St Andrew's Children's Society.

If you would like to help organise the ceilidh, or if you would like to perform or know of ceilidh bands, suitable venues, caterers etc., we'd love to hear from you!

Please contact the Duty Worker on 0131 454 3370 or email info@standrews-children.org.uk

Robert Swift CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES



Clive Wiggins 4 June 1965 to 23 August 2021

It is with great sadness that we record the death of Clive Wiggins at the age 56 yrs. Clive's sudden death during the summer came as a great shock to all who knew him, especially his life-long partner and wife, Gillian and all the family. Clive was one of our most valued foster carers. Clive and Gillian were approved as foster carers on 5 May 2006. Over their long career together they have fostered many children, and adopted their much loved daughter, Jordan, in 2010. Clive was a very positive man who never did anything by half measures and this included in his role as husband, father and foster carer. He is sadly missed, but fondly remembered, by everyone who knew him.

Saying farewell...

Carole Bell

Carole retired in July of this year having worked for St Andrew's Children's Society as a Senior Practitioner since 2012.

Carole joined the agency from the family placement team in Midlothian and during her time with us was involved in the placement of over 40 children. Carole also supported foster carers who looked after children on a long term basis. Carole was a committed and dedicated member of staff and was and is held in high regard by colleagues and the families she worked with and supported.

We wish her well and hope she enjoys a long and healthy retirement, spending time with her family and grandchildren.

Ruth Dolan

Ruth began working with St Andrew's Children's Society in 2009. She had previously worked in Edinburgh, Midlothian and East Lothian councils in their family placement services. She had always had a particular interest in adoption and was pleased to come to us where she could concentrate on that area of practice. We all wish her the best in her retirement and envisage her spending many happy hours tending her allotment.

Carole Bell

Ruth Dolan

Mike Opitz

Mike Opitz

Leaving us after four years of working at St Andrew's Children's Society, Mike has worked with many of our prospective adopters, children and teenagers. For the time he was with us, Mike brought a great deal of enthusiasm and experience to his work. As a team member, he quickly became so integrated, that it felt like he was here for much longer!

Mike is now training to be a primary school teacher – back to the books and classroom! Mike has a tremendous sense of being able to connect with adults and children alike, and we know he will be a great advocate for children and families in the school setting who have had struggles and poor starts in their early lives.

We wish Mike every success in this new venture, and look forward to seeing him (hopefully at the Christmas party!).

Promotions

Debbie McDonald

Acting Team Manager (Aberdeen)

I moved to the role of Acting Team Manager in Aberdeen in August this year, having been with St Andrew's Children's Society from 2013 when the Aberdeen office was set up. I qualified as a social worker in 2000 and my entire social work career has involved working in children's services.

Fun fact about me: I always wanted to work in the Diplomatic Service but when I was 18, I dislocated my knee in the toilets of the Scottish Office, adjusting my make-up for my interview and had to leave by ambulance! That was when I decided that the Diplomatic Service was not for me and perhaps social work beckoned.

Tracey Turnbull

Acting Service Manager (Edinburgh)

I'm really pleased to have been given this opportunity to act up to the post of Service Manager in the Edinburgh Office. I've always been committed to the work that St Andrew's Children's Society does and the post of Acting Service Manager allows me to not only continue to work with our families in a practical sense, but also to support and supervise staff members and to take on some additional management responsibilities in order to contribute to the continual quality and development of the service, all of which really excites me.

Fun fact: I love travelling and going on adventures. I've walked in the foothills of the Himalayas and successfully summited Mount Kilimanjaro.

New arrivals

We welcome four new staff who are joining our social work team.

Tim Rogerson, Emma Quinn and Julie Arbuckle have taken up post in our Edinburgh office, while Carla Hume joins the Aberdeen team. Although they have not been with us long they have already impressed us all with their enthusiasm and knowledge, and are all valuable additions to our workforce.

Julie Arbuckle Senior Practitioner

I decided I wanted to be a social worker at a young age, but had to find an alternative way to get there as I didn't manage school too well! I did a HNC in social care (which I loved), then a degree in social sciences (which I didn't love so much), and then moved to Edinburgh when I graduated to explore where I'm from. Initially I worked in a hostel for homeless older people in the Grassmarket, then Barnardos 16+ (care leavers supported accommodation), and then 20 years with Edinburgh City Council Children and Families (in various posts), before moving to work at Scottish Adoption six years ago.

Fun fact about me: I like to swim outside, except in December and January – as I'm too scared!

Carla Hume Social Worker

I am a NQSW and I studied a Social Work BA (Hons) at Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen. During my time at university I did placements in mental health, older people and fostering and adoption which solidified my interest in this job and position. Prior to this role I worked in mental health and retail.

Fun fact about me: I absolutely love football, both SPL and EPL and could chat about it till the cows come home.

Emma Quinn Social Worker

I studied a BSc (Hons) degree in Psychology at Heriot Watt University graduating in 2017. Once I graduated I worked in various different settings, including residential homes for young people, youth work and Family and Household Support with Edinburgh Council. I then embarked on my social work journey in 2019 where I was a part of the first cohort at Edinburgh Napier University's Masters in Social Work. Next I worked for a local authority Children and Families' team before beginning with St Andrew's Children's Society in September.

Fun fact about me: During my undergraduate degree, I was a competitive snowboarder, both in freestyle and race!

Tim Rogerson Social Worker

I hold a BA (Hons) Social Work degree from the University of Stirling, from which I graduated in June earlier this year. Before this, I held several jobs within the health and social care sector, both private and public.

As well as having cared for older adults during my time at Aspen Hamilton Care Management (2011–2021), I spent several years with the City of Edinburgh Council, working as a mental health support worker (2013–2019).

Fun fact about me: I can play music by-ear. Favourite instruments include drums, piano and guitar.

Marketing

We were delighted to appear on the BBC Radio Scotland *Clever About Cash* podcast, 'The cost of surrogacy and adoption', in July.

Stephen Kearney, one of our adopters, and Stephen Small, our CEO, both took part in the podcast which looks at what consideration potential adopters or foster carers should give to money matters, before they start the process. We would like to say a special thank you to Stephen Kearney for sharing his knowledge and experience during the podcast. **You can listen to the full podcast by visiting our website:**

sacsadopt.scot/home/about/pr-media-links

Stephen Small also did a radio interview with Kingdom FM and Original 106 in July. It was about legislation announced by the Scottish Government to keep siblings together, and the interview can also be heard on our website's PR & media links page.

Events Diary

It is our intention to run **most of the training in person**, but we will be observant of any restrictions regarding Covid-19, which may result in doing some online delivery.

Our **Friends & Family training will continue to be delivered remotely**, as this has proved to work well. Please keep an eye on our Facebook page and website for other events throughout the year.

22 Dec 2021 4–4.40pm
Christmas Magic Show (online)

19 Jan 2022 6–8pm
Friends & Family Workshop

26 Jan 2022 11am–1pm
Introduction to Theraplay: Theory & Demo
St Andrew's Children's Society, Edinburgh

26 Feb 2022 11am–1pm
Introduction to Theraplay: Consultation
St Andrew's Children's Society, Edinburgh

14–17 Mar 2022 9am–5pm
Theraplay Level 1

18 March 2022 9am–5pm
Group Theraplay
St Andrew's Children's Society, Edinburgh

30 Mar 2022 10am–12noon
Adolescence Workshop
St Andrew's Children's Society, Edinburgh

6 Apr 2022 6–8pm
Friends & Family Workshop

26 & 27 Apr 2022 10am–4pm
SafeBase
St Andrew's Children's Society, Edinburgh

14 June 2022 10am–12noon
Talking to your Child about Adoption
St Andrew's Children's Society, Edinburgh

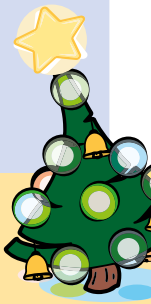
13 Jul 2022 6–8pm
Friends & Family Workshop

5 Aug 2022 tbc
Storytelling Picnic

24 & 25 Aug 2022 10am–4pm
SafeBase
St Andrew's Children's Society, Aberdeen

12 Oct 2022 6–8pm
Friends & Family Workshop

23 & 24 Nov 2022 10am–4pm
SafeBase
St Andrew's Children's Society, Edinburgh



St Andrew's Children's Society would like to wish all our families and everyone who has so generously supported us this year a very happy Christmas and a merry New Year!

Please note that our offices close for the festive period from 12 noon on Friday, 24 December, and we will reopen Wednesday, 5 January 2022, at 9am.

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