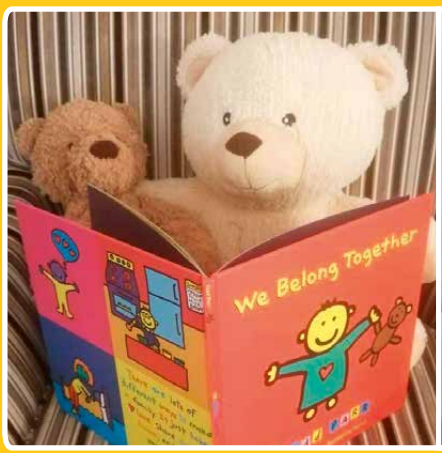
St Andrew's Children's Society
ADOPTION & FOSTER CARE

Reflections

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

Issue 26 | Summer **2022**



Welcome to our summer newsletter!

As I write this we are now halfway through our Centenary. We have held a number of events to mark our Centenary so far and we are hugely grateful to all our families and supporters who have taken part in the celebrations. They have helped us fundraise so that we can continue to support our families when they need us.

The second half of our Centenary year of events will not disappoint you, as you will see in the following pages!

This is an exciting time for our Aberdeen team as we are in the process of moving to our new office. I know that a couple of families have already visited our new building in Dee Street and we have just held our first 'in person' preparation groups since 2020 in our new building. We hope more of you will come to see it when we complete our move. This will be a base for us in the centre of the city that will be much more accessible. It will take us some time to get it exactly as we want it but we are hoping to raise funds to improve the décor and to enhance the accessibility for people with disabilities.

We are, to a large extent, back in our offices and we hope to provide more and more of our services again

face to face. As a result of Covid, we have learned a lot about how to use technology more imaginatively, and this, we will continue to do, but there is no substitute for being in the same room as people, whether that is children and families or work colleagues.

On behalf of all the staff and trustees I hope you and your children and your wider family members have a lovely 'normal' summer and, as ever, we all want you to know that we are here if you need us.

Stephen Small CEO

Adoption Support

Edinburgh

BB Photography photo shoot

Last December Beäte from BB Photography very kindly offered to do a Christmas photo shoot for our families to celebrate Christmas. On 10 December 2021 we had the training room converted into a Christmas scene that made you think you had been transported to another land! Beäte provided all of the props to make the scene fun and Christmassy, and soon after 9.30am (planned appointments, in line with social distancing) little people and their parents began to arrive.

For many of our families this was their first Christmas together – so the photos meant a lot to them. We would like to express our thanks to Beäte for her generosity of time and thought – she made the day very special indeed.

Rita Grant ADOPTION SUPPORT MANAGER

Prep Group update

Those adopters out there who have been through the process from start to end will no doubt remember their preparation groups very clearly. We pride ourselves at St Andrew's Children's Society for delivering high quality, informative training and our prep group is the first training that prospective adopters attend. The group is so important in helping people decide whether they wish to make their application to become adopters from an informed start point.

Just before March 2020 when 'you know what happened', we had planned to redesign the preparation group materials to be as up to date with current research and practice as possible. However, when Covid 19 hit, we had to quickly re-design the course to make it work for attendees online. We didn't want to miss a beat in being able to keep providing our service to our families and the children out there waiting to be adopted, despite the very difficult circumstances we were all in. We launched the first online prep group in May 2020 and have delivered a staggering nine online preparation groups to over 100 households over the past two years – receiving some great feedback on the content and delivery of the training!

As we emerge from Covid 19 restrictions and start to be able to gather in groups again, it is important to us to be able to welcome people back into the office to attend their preparation groups. A team of workers from the Aberdeen and Edinburgh offices have redesigned the 'in person' prep group materials. The update makes it as interesting and interactive as possible, whilst not losing the really great parts of the original course and we're pretty pleased with how it's shaped up. We will pilot the new course in our May 2022 Prep Group and are looking forward to seeing how it is received.

Tracey Turnbull SERVICE MANAGER

Adolescence and Identity workshop

In April the Edinburgh office held an Adolescence and Identity workshop, with our Aberdeen team also planning to deliver one soon – once they settle in to their new office. It was good to remind ourselves and discuss with adoptive parents how tough the teenage years can be (for the whole family!) and the additional challenges that adopted young people have to deal with. We went over some of the science of teenage brain development, and strategies for coping with behaviours and staying connected during these tricky years.

Julie Arbuckle SENIOR PRACTITIONER

Single Adopters Group

We had another small in-person single adopters session in our office in March and our next one is going to be on Friday 24 June at 10am in our office – I'll be making scones for us all to enjoy over a cuppa and child free chat.

If you are a single adoptive parent, who adopted through our agency, another Edinburgh adoption agency or Edinburgh Local authority and want to be invited along please email your name and contact details to: info@standrews-children.org.uk. We would love for you to join us.

Julie Arbuckle SENIOR PRACTITIONER

Aberdeen

It's been a busy few months for the Aberdeen team, including the most exciting event for our team, when we moved into our new office in Dee Street, Aberdeen, at the end of April.

We would like to thank Aberdeen City Park Rangers and Aberdeenshire Country Rangers for facilitating some recent family workshops for us. In February we ran a 'minibeast' class at Duthie Park which was attended by eleven children, ranging from five to thirteen years of age. While in March, on what was definitely the warmest day of the month, we all put on our wellies and headed off to Collieston Beach to undertake some pond dipping. It was such a lovely day that most of the families also stayed and had a picnic. We had thirteen children attend, ranging from five years old right up to fifteen. In the Easter holidays we made bird feeders at Duthie Park and learned all about the local wildlife. This class was attended by eleven children ranging from four to thirteen years old.

Our Easter picnic in Moray had to be cancelled as everyone was understandably away on holiday, making the most of no longer being grounded. We will look to organise another one later this year when more families are at home.

In April after our move, we were able to give pride of place to our beautiful 'fairy door' on our new front door. It was made by one of our lovely families who adopted last year, and is ready to welcome in the fairies now that they have come out of hibernation in the warmer weather.

On a personal note, it's a year since I took up the post of Acting Service Manager in Aberdeen. I have loved the experience and adventures this year has brought with it. However, what I have enjoyed the most, has been being part of a wonderful small but perfectly formed team comprising of Gill, Shiona, Velga and myself. They have welcomed me as the manager, even though we have worked together as peers for many years; they have also worked endlessly to make the move to Dee Street happen whilst I was stuck at home with Covid so I could not be of much assistance. All I can say is… thank you ladies. Look at all we have achieved in the last nine years.

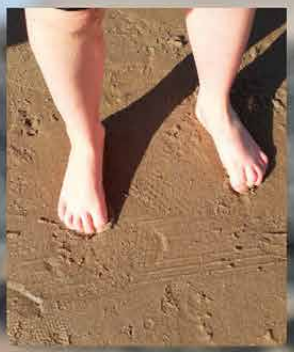
Debbie McDonald SERVICE MANAGER (ACTING)

Family workshops…

[above] Aberdeen City Park Rangers 'minibeast' and 'bug hotels' class in February.

[below] Collieston Beach pond-dipping with Aberdeen City Country Rangers.

[left] At Easter families made bird feeders in Duthie Park, with the help of Aberdeen Park Rangers.



Edinburgh

City Nature Challenge 2022

The RSPB invited St Andrew's Children's Society to take part in the City Nature Challenge 2022 alongside Lauriston Farm.

This challenge is a global event which takes place at the end of April encouraging communities to find and document wildlife in their cities.

Thanks go to the volunteers from Lauriston Farm who shared so much knowledge about the species we were looking at, and how to safely use the bug collecting equipment. A special thanks

goes to Katie O'Neil, from RSPB Scotland, who contacted us to get involved and provided all the equipment we used on the day. I am sure we shall join you again next year to see if we can find more bugs and beasties.

Iona Hughes SENIOR PRACTITIONER

Theraplay™ training

On 14 March 2022 we hosted the Level 1/MIMS Theraplay training in the Edinburgh office. Our trainer, Amelia Taylor, from Theraplay UK was fantastic. We had a mixture of social workers, psychologists, people who work with children in residential care and in refuges, so a wide and varied group of people in attendance. For approximately ten years now we have been hosting Theraplay at St Andrew's Children's Society. We would like to thank Amelia and all of those who participated in the training.

The next Theraplay Level 1 training will take place on 27 June–1 July and 26–30 September. There are spaces available in both weeks. Please note this training is geared towards professionals who are working directly with children and young people.

Rita Grant ADOPTION SUPPORT MANAGER

Time to party!

As part of our centenary celebrations we are organising a ceilidh for our adoptive and foster families, and supporters of St Andrew's Children's Society. The date is Saturday 17 September and it will be held at Lauriston Hall, Edinburgh EH3 9DJ.

There will be a live band and a caller to guide us through the dances. We are trying to keep costs down and there will be a reduced rate for our families. There will be a raffle with the prize of a week's stay in a holiday house on the Isle of Mull.

So brush up your dance steps, dig your pumps and kilts out of the back of the wardrobe and put the date in your diary! **More information will be sent out later when arrangements have been finalised.**

Fundraising

Fundraisers always welcome an additional project on which to increase opportunities for raising funds. For St Andrew's Children's Society, it was not so much a project, but a year!

A 100th anniversary does not come along all that often – once every 100 years to be precise, so we decided to take advantage of every month of this Centenary year to highlight events, either for celebration, participation or contribution.

We decided to give you all a rest after the rigours (and expense!) of Christmas and New Year. So our Family February FUNdraiser seemed like a good start. And wow – what a success that was:

- Jill Ritchie led Team Ritchie to an amazing £455.
- Claire Fitzsimmons encouraged folk to enter the 100 Book Challenge, with 'Read All About It' raising £251.
- Antony Swift, son of our Chair, sang his way into our hearts with some of Elvis's biggest hits and raised a staggering £586.
- Kelly Rossbender 'Walked This Way' to a fantastic £530.
- And finally, our own wonderful staff, Tim Rogerson, Julie Arbuckle and Emma Quinn donned their swimming gear for a bit of wild swimming – in February – raising a brilliant £151.

The H Family have been selling home-made lip balm. So far they have raised £25 for us. The H Family have always been very supportive of our organisation and have often gifted us financial support

So far, we have raised £5,647 towards our target for the year of £10,000. We had our Cadenza Centenary Concert on 7 May; with money still coming in. Later in May, we had a team participating in the Edinburgh Marathon Hairy Haggis Relay – have a look on the website to support them.

2022 Edinburgh Kiltwalk 18 September

You can choose the Mighty Stride of 24 miles, or a slightly less exhausting Big Stroll of 14.6 miles. Then, for families with wee kids, we have the Wee Wander, a nice easy 3.5–4.5 miles*.

To register, go to thekiltwalk.co.uk. Thanks to the Hunter Foundation, everything you raise is topped up by 50% with no extra effort from you!

To qualify for this 50% free boost to your fundraising you must set up your online fundraising page at the same time as making the Kiltwalk registration, they will provide you with a link when you register. Please don't set up a fundraising page on our website, as this will not attract the 50% top-up.

The registration fees vary from £31.69 for the Mighty Stride to £6.50 for kids on the Wee Wander. Please let Dan Docwra (07903 014557) know if you would like St Andrew's Children's Society to repay this to you – make sure you get plenty of sponsorship though!

For those supporters who would rather undertake a less crowded walk, over a distance and route of your own choice, there is The Virtual Kiltwalk over the weekend of 7–9 October. The entry for this is the same as for the other walks.

* Exact route still to be finalised at time of going to press. Visit the thekiltwalk.co.uk website for updates.

Cadenza Centenary Concert for St Andrew's Children's Society

Saturday 7 May was a busy day for the fundraisers and Cadenza members. Up early to get the car loaded, already with six pieces of staging, and then a portable PA system, a CCTV system for the organist to be able to see the conductor – and two flasks of good strong coffee.

I was using my daughter's little Honda Jazz - great load carrier. Flat battery! Everything out and loaded into our own Nissan Leaf EV – it all fitted! Then off to Broughton St Mary's Church, the beautiful venue.

We only arrived 10 minutes late, so there were plenty of Cadenza members to help off-load and set-up in time for the morning rehearsal to commence at 9am. We had a full run through the programme for the evening, ironing out bits here and there that our Musical Director, Jenny Sumerling, was not quite happy with. By noon, we were good to go.

Saturday's first half of the concert commenced with a rousing *Zadok the Priest* and ended with *The Piper o' Dundee*. The interval gave the opportunity for the audience and choir members to mingle and buy raffle tickets for a variety of prizes including a £100 voucher generously donated by Valvona & Crolla and a secret hamper put together by Julie Arbuckle from St Andrew's Children's Society.

Tango to Evora started the second half, ending with the beautiful *The Road Home* – a firm Cadenza favourite. The audience seemed to be giving a very enthusiastic appreciation of our efforts, so they were treated to an encore, a great arrangement of George Harrison's *Here comes the Sun*.

It was a hugely successful evening, and our thanks go to Lindsey at Broughton St Mary's Church, our wonderful accompanist, Morley Whitehead, the St Andrew's Children's Society staff who manned the ticket desk, sold raffle tickets and served the interval wine. But most of all to Cadenza and Jenny Sumerling – a hard day's work – but wonderfully enjoyable.

By the way, the concert raised a magnificent £2,500 towards our Centenary target of £10,000.

Trusts and foundations

We are very grateful to the Scottish Government for once again extending the Children Young People and Families Early Intervention Fund for a final year, with an increased grant of £42,525 from 1 April to 31 March 2023. The winter period brought more success in our fundraising, with donations totalling £26,000 from The Meikle Foundation, The Swinton Paterson Trust, The John Gordon Charitable Fund, The Ryvoan Trust, The PF Charitable Trust, The Thistledown Trust and The Russell Trust.

Dan & Karen Docwra
FUNDRAISERS (& CADENZA ALTO AND TENOR)

Marketing

The start of our centenary year was marked by a blog post written by Maureen McEvoy MBE, our former Chairperson and Agency Decision Maker at St Andrew's Children's Society. She explored the many changes we have gone through in the last 100 years, and gave a personal account of how she and her husband first became involved with our adoption and fostering agency 55 years ago.

Anne Hampton, who has been a valued trustee with us for almost 14 years, wrote a blog post a couple of months later. Hers explained why she has stayed for so long – we got a glowing review as did our families and the other trustees!

Did you know that we have a centenary comments book in both offices and on our website? We would be grateful for any comments or memories you would like to share with us. Please visit: sacsadopt.scot/home/centenary-comments-page

Our centenary T-shirts are in and we would love to send you one if you are taking part in a fundraising event for us during our centenary. Please let us know what size you need.

We were delighted to be mentioned in *The Edinburgh Reporter* as part of our Cadenza Centenary Concert in May. The concert was a huge success as you will read in our Fundraising section.

In a bid to be more environmentally friendly we have created our very own QR code. Now when we go to events where we would normally hand out lots of marketing brochures, people can just scan our QR code to access the same information in digital format. We have had a very positive response so far!

We are delighted to be taking part in a number of Pride events during the Pride months. Details can be found on the events table on the back page. **If you're thinking about adopting or fostering, please come and join us.**

Tara Macgregor HEAD OF MARKETING

the Edinburgh Reporter

Cadenza adds flourish to centenary concert

Cadenza, the Edinburgh based choir, is holding a centenary concert to mark 100 years since St Andrew's Children's Society, an adoption and fostering agency with its head office in Edinburgh, started helping vulnerable children living in Scotland to find safe and loving homes.

The fundraising concert will take place at Broughton St Mary's Parish Church on 7 May and all ticket proceeds will go towards helping St Andrew's Children's Society to continue to offer its families the adoption and fostering support they need, whenever they need it.

The Cadenza choir has had its

has performed to critical acclaim throughout Scotland and beyond. Its repertoire includes folk, jazz and popular songs as well as Renaissance church music, major choral works and contemporary classics. Its Edinburgh Fringe performances

d out.

w.eventbrite.co.uk

And finally, have you seen our new branded blinds in our Edinburgh office? It's especially nice to have them as we are back in the office every day now. Our new office in Aberdeen will be getting their blinds soon too.

Goodbye and Hello...

Good luck, Denise

Denise joined St Andrew's Children's Society on 10 August 1987, having previously worked for the Rotunda Girl's Aid Society, an adoption agency in Dublin.

During the last 35 years, Denise has worked with hundreds of families building and maintaining strong and positive relationships long after adoption orders have been granted. I have been Denise's line manager for approximately 15 years and during that time have seen the trust, affection and respect these many families have for Denise. Denise has worked with adoptive families as well as foster carers and adult adoptees and has done this with enthusiasm and compassion.

In the nicest possible way, Denise is a St Andrew's Children's Society institution and is going to be missed by families and colleagues alike.

We wish Denise well and hope she enjoys a long and happy retirement with her husband Alan, her two children and grandchildren. Thank you Denise from everyone at St Andrew's Children's Society.

Charlie Egan SERVICE MANAGER

New arrival – Eugenia Dorosz

I was born in Poland and moved to Edinburgh In 2005. I hold both a Master's degree in management from the Lublin University of Technology and a Bachelor's degree in Accounting from Napier University in Edinburgh. When I lived in Poland I worked for the council, and after moving to Edinburgh I've worked in a variety of roles such as a care manager and a care assistant. My journey with St Andrew's Children's Society only began recently and I'm already so excited for all the opportunities it is bringing. I've always loved working with people and so this is an incredibly rewarding job.

Eugenia Dorosz ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Events Diary

28 May
Grampian Pride

24 June 10-11.30am
Single Adopters Group

25 June
Edinburgh Pride

25 June
Glasgow Pride

1 July
Group Theraplay

2 July
Fife Pride

13 July 6-8pm ONLINE EVENT
Friends & Family Workshop

30 July
Moray Picnic

30 July
West Lothian Pride

5 August
Storytelling Picnic 12.30-3pm
Stories start from 1.15pm

6 August
Aberdeen Picnic

12, 19 & 26 August
Prep

24-25 August 10am-3.30pm
Safebase in Moray

17 September
Centenary ceilidh

12 October 6-8pm ONLINE EVENT
Friends & Family Workshop

11, 18 & 25 November
Prep

22-23 November 10am-3.30pm
Safebase in Edinburgh office

3 December
Aberdeen Christmas Party

4 December
Edinburgh Christmas Party

10 December
Moray Christmas Party