



# Pegasus Playscheme 2012

## Introduction and Dynamics

Pegasus 2012 sees us into our 26<sup>th</sup> year as a Charity registered playscheme. This year we have offered places to 51 children from the ages of 8 to 21. Each child is always provided with a 1:1 volunteer and we have been lucky that our volunteers are keen, enthusiastic and devoted to the children with many returning from last year's scheme. 48 volunteers were assigned to groups this year and many completed every single day of the scheme. Each day we sent approximately 105 people off site across the 4 groups – this includes children, volunteers and staff.



We continue to be voluntary registered with Ofsted and meet their requirements that relate to safety, Pegasus follows guidelines when staffing for the best people to provide both care and the organisation of childcare.

Feedback from parents demonstrates that a large reason people choose Pegasus as a summer holiday option for their child is because it is value for money, provides a safe environment and makes children happy! The reputation of Pegasus now precedes it and that fact 1:1 provision is offered makes this a popular choice for parents. This has clearly been demonstrated this year as we have had several requests from parents out of area and people wanting to book their children on already for next year!

## Venue



Having now been based at Astor School for the last 2 years we easily and without fuss adapt well to the setting and after an initial set up morning and 1<sup>st</sup> day, we look like we have always been here! Once again the school has been very cooperative and are happy to have us on site. The building is opened promptly each day to allow staff early access which can be useful for them to complete paperwork/photo albums. The buses and parents have plenty of room for parking. There is a playground available for the children. The caretakers on site are especially helpful and keep in regular contact in regards to events happening on site each day. Aqua aid was once again used to deliver water coolers and water to the site.

Children particularly benefit from the large enclosed playground which they use for football, rounders, riding the bikes and more. Wheelchair admittance is straightforward and all rooms are accessed easily from one long main corridor. There is an additional room which serves as a changing and staff room and plenty of additional storage space for our spare equipment/boxes etc.

Fire exits are clearly demarcated and fire drill held in the first week saw all members of the scheme evacuated from the building in 2 minutes 51 seconds; staff re-called registers outside and there was a calm methodical approach to the procedure.

## Outings/Activities



The activities timetable consisted of a range of both pre-booked and free days. Activities such as swimming, sailing, bowling, horse riding, canoeing, Howletts and sea safari were all pre-booked and paid for prior to commencing. The group leaders could decide how to spend their free days and

after collaborating with their assistants and the children in their groups, they were able to book additional activities. All groups reacted positively to the free day option as they could plan activities which were not weather dependent such as meals out, cinemas trips, Build a Bear and Rarebreeds Centre visits etc.



Group 4 secured an excellent lunchtime deal with 'The Plough' at Hougham, where all 30 members of the group could eat for £148 with unlimited squash and chip top-ups!

The weather did have some impact on a couple of days and children returned to the base quite wet! However, still with smiles on their faces and after 20 minutes drying off and having their lunch they were soon back off out!

All groups enjoy the sea safari and 'Build a Bear' was a particular hit with group 1; with all children making a bear/cuddly toy to take home and keep as a memento from the scheme.

Once again having the majority of the outings pre-paid for and planned reduces stress for the group leaders and means they can simply turn up and enjoy the day – this was fed back on positively in the staff evaluation questionnaires.

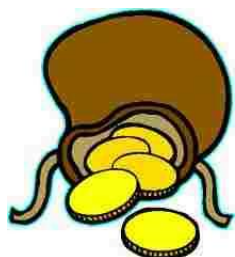
### **Transport**

Regent Coaches once again provided the transport for the scheme this year. These were booked well in advance of the scheme commencing as we were fully aware that many coach companies were being seconded due to the summer Olympics. Despite our early booking of 30 seater's, we were actually presented with 2 29 seaters, 1 33 seater and 1 24 seater. This did create some logistical challenges some mornings as we had to move volunteers whilst still ensuring all children had 1:1 support, however the friendly nature of the coach drivers was exceptional – we have had many of the same drivers for several years now and they are familiar with how we operate and what we require from them. They are happy to facilitate this and support the groups well on their outings. All drivers are issued activity timetables in advance so they can plan their routes and for the majority of the scheme the same driver worked along each group – this ensured continuity and positive relationships were built between the drivers, staff and children. One of the coaches we were issued is rather an old coach now and as such had no air conditioning – this did prove an issue in the first week where we experienced hotter weather than normal – fans were bought so the children could hold these on the coaches, however this is not an ideal solution. Next year, unless we can be guaranteed comfortable 30 seaters with air conditioning we will have to consider employing an alternative company.



Unfortunately this year, we did have to turn a child away from the scheme after the first week as the car seat his parent had provided was not compatible with the coaches and was slightly too small for him – rendering it unsafe on outings. For his parent to purchase a seat specifically for him for the 3 week scheme, it would cost her £600 which is not a viable solution. Sue suggested that perhaps we could look into some funding of these seats for the 2013 scheme as we definitely do not like to turn any child away.

### **Fundraising**



Once again our fundraiser has worked tirelessly non-stop through the year to ensure that Pegasus can still be a viable, financially stable project in tough economic times. There is no doubt that grants and funding applications are now much more rigorous and time consuming and statistics remain that for every 10 applications, we are lucky if one produces any funds.

The roles and responsibilities of scheme treasurer have now been made more definitive and accounts are completed well in time before the AGM. Organising and maintaining track of monies of approximately £70,000 is a detailed and challenging job!

Some of the grants applications which have been a success this year are detailed below:

ING matched giving Marc Storey's marathon monies of £2,209.50 and in turn donated £2,089 alongside further funds donated of £120.50 from 'Winged feet' who organised a quiz night and jeans day.

The Garfield Weston Foundation donated £5,000

DCS community chest £14,999.00  
Dover Grammar school for girls £16.53 and £13  
St. Margaret's at Cliffe parish council £200  
Charities aid foundation £15.00  
Mulberry Cottages £750  
Greggs Bakers £1,000  
KCC individual Councillor award £500  
Kent Community Foundation £9,660.00  
DDC and Coalfields Trust £5,000.00  
Small grants £2,500.00  
Comic Relief £9,660



Wellesley House Chapel collection £188.65

Anthea Turner one of the children from group 1 has been making cards and selling these in aid of Pegasus across the year raising £30 so far. All of these grants and donations no matter how small are essential for the ability to run the scheme. We were also particularly lucky to have one of the actual Olympic torch bearers on the scheme this summer – Jamie Clark – as a fundraising effort, he bought in his torch and people could have their photo taken with him for a small donation to the scheme. Jamie raised an amazing £260!

### Staff/Volunteers



Each group was supported in its leadership by a Group leader with a relevant qualification at NVQ3 or above and 3 assistant group leaders – all with the necessary childcare experience at NVQ 2 or similar.

With a new staff coordinator appointed this year, the decision was made to encourage applicants to apply having seen the playscheme advertised in the newspaper, on the website and through posters sent to local schools as opposed to simply relying on the call back of previous staff; the thinking behind this was to ensure that we are always accessing people with the best qualifications and experience for the job. All applications were completed online and references sought before interview.

Staff members were invited to interview and required to attend a training day prior to commencement of the scheme. Interviews were once again held at Dover Town Hall and all applicants were keen, enthusiastic and portrayed professional attitudes. There was a mix of people new to the scheme, some ex staff and some volunteers – now old enough to apply for a staff position. 4 staff were appointed to each group, including 1 male staff member per group; a trainee member was also taken on to cover absences. All groups had a first aider and CRB checks were completed on all staff not already covered by one.

When asked to describe their experience as a staff member this year, responses given were as follows:

“I would definitely apply again! I have really enjoyed every day and have enjoyed working for part of the Pegasus team. With being a part of Pegasus it has made me think about changing my career and moving into this specific area.”

“I would definitely apply again. My experience was brilliant and better than I thought it would be”

Volunteers were once again encouraged to apply online this year as this reduces our mailing costs considerably. In the majority, volunteers were keen to attend all days of the scheme and the training day prior to the scheme to meet their staff.

When asked if the issues covered at training day prepared them enough for the scheme, all replies answered yes and they were confident that the safety



precautions covered were very thorough and made them feel at ease before the start of the playscheme. Volunteers also responded positively when asked whether they consider voluntary work in the future.

When volunteers apply they are asked to commit to all 3 weeks – to ensure continuity for the children on the scheme and ease of management for the staff – we then know we can rely on their attendance. They are asked to suggest their age preference with whom to work and we facilitate this wherever we can.

### **Children**

After a slow start, applications for Children then flooded in, filling the groups across all age ranges. During the running of the scheme further requests for child places were received and where feasible they were able to join the scheme, space permitting. A request for a child from Newbury was even received! The inclusion of a 3 day trial period has proved essential for new children applying to the scheme and whilst we always try to include them beyond the trial period, it also ensures we are covered if we find they do not meet the criteria laid down in our constitution. This did have to be implemented once this year and a child was turned away after 3 days.

Children were aged between 8 and 21 this year and were organised largely in age order across the 4 groups – where children were late in applying they may have been placed out of age, but where possible children were moved to facilitate this. In the future, the concept of removing the title of groups 1,2,3,4 could be beneficial in reducing the stigma attached to age; children would not feel like they have ‘always been in group 1’ or have moved down in some instances. The suggestions for new group titles from the youth forum were taken on board before as animals and perhaps they could re-visit this concept for next year. Existing children up to the age of 26 are kept on, but no new children age 21 or above are taken on.

### **Youth Forum**

Once again the Youth Forum has continued to run effectively throughout the year and is providing a social outlet for many of the young adults on the scheme.

The group meets once a month – usually at the local pub and they run a meeting to plan and decide on things they would like to do socially – some of their most recent suggestions include planning a trip to the cinema, go –karting, a trip to Belgium, Bowling or a casino! They like to plan big! The young adults are very keen to see the age limit of Pegasus raised to ensure they can keep coming for many more years!

The youth Forum has a new member Ryan who completed a desert trek across the Sinai desert in aid of Pegasus – they are very proud of his achievements. In the near future they will be taking place in a local “It’s a knockout” contest – being organised by the Lions Club near Tenterden – we wish them every success in this venture.

### **General**

This has once again been a very successful year for Pegasus – feedback from all involved has been very positive. A visit from Social Services took place during the second week of the scheme and they were very impressed with what they saw. As we have now been at this venue for several years we are quick to set up and get going and parents/carers are happy with the ease of access and facilities on site.

Scrapbooks were once again given to the children at the conclusion of the scheme and provide a fantastic reminder of all the activities they have undertaken throughout the duration of the 3 weeks. Photos were taken in daily to be developed and staff worked very hard to produce high quality mementos for the children. The cost of the scrapbooks and photo development is high, however seeing the children’s reactions when receiving these far outweigh the costs! Once again, the play scheme was beneficial in many ways: All those who took part, children, staff, volunteers, and the committee had a lot of fun. It offered opportunities for the children to experience things that may not have been possible without the support and dedication of the committee of the play scheme.

The children were stimulated and stretched in activities, which developed their intellectual, physical and behavioural needs at the same time as having fun. They

were asked their opinions on activities and we will use this in our planning of next years' scheme.

Parents benefited from the support the scheme offered, enabling them to spend time with other members of the family and giving respite from the stress and pressure often associated with the care of a child with special needs.

The play scheme gave staff and volunteers both experience, and a better understanding of the needs of children with varying special needs.

### **Data from questionnaires**

#### **Parents/Carers were asked the following question:**

#### **Do you think Pegasus is value for money?**

Of 23 evaluations received, 100% replied with 'yes' and the following comments were made:

- ✚ Excellent value for money.
- ✚ Very good value.
- ✚ Excellent value for money – found nowhere else in this area.
- ✚ Yes definitely.
- ✚ Absolutely – I would be prepared to pay more.
- ✚ Excellent value for money. They get much more out of it than they pay for.
- ✚ Yes, extremely good value, activities are outstanding.
- ✚ Yes, it's okay. Maybe day 1 and day 15 could be £10.00 for half a day, rather than £15.00.
- ✚ Hell yeah!
- ✚ Excellent value, considering all the activities, transport and organisation that takes place.

#### **Did you find the staff in the group approachable? Did they deal with problems efficiently, through to a satisfactory conclusion?**

Of 23 evaluations received, 100% replied with 'yes' and the following comments were made:

- ✚ Very happy and approachable.
- ✚ All staff, including volunteers were superb.
- ✚ Staff take great care to ensure I (child) am happy.
- ✚ All the staff acted brilliantly every day.
- ✚ Absolutely – first class!
- ✚ They helped me a lot (Child reply)
- ✚ Yes, good home/scheme contact.
- ✚ We've not had any problems, but all the staff were very friendly and approachable.
- ✚ Excellent staff, could not have been better.
- ✚ Very professional, but empathetic approach at all times.
- ✚ All the staff have been great!

#### **What made you consider Pegasus as a childcare option for your child?**

- ✚ Because I think it is a dedicated scheme who caters for disabled children very well
- ✚ There is no other option for my adult daughter during college summer break
- ✚ Keeps \*\*active. She loves seeing everyone again.

- ✚ Originally the only scheme available.
- ✚ On advice of another parent about how great it is.
- ✚ Not as a childcare option, more of a social interaction option for \*\* through the holidays to prevent isolation.
- ✚ \*\*can enjoy things he could not participate in normally.
- ✚ The fact it was for children with disabilities and learning difficulties.
- ✚ Gives \*\* the opportunity to mix with others and to take part in activities that I wouldn't be able to do with her and to gain a bit of independence.
- ✚ Because they go out every day and she gets to socialise with other kids her age.
- ✚ Great scheme
- ✚ The excellent reputation and the hugely diverse and fun times they all have.
- ✚ Because \*\* loves the social networking.
- ✚ The care and activities provided are A1!
- ✚ Because \*\* thinks it's fun!
- ✚ The children all seem so happy.
- ✚ Ease of access/value for money/safety/happiness.
- ✚ Because I heard it had a good reputation and that there was a 1:1.
- ✚ So many activities that \*\* loves/excellent care

#### **Parent/Carer's were asked for any additional comments re Pegasus and these are some of their replies:**

- ✚ "You must be subsidised by the organisations that you go to because otherwise you wouldn't be able to do the things they do for £15 per day."
- ✚ "Thank you so much for all the care and thought that goes into the organisation of 'Pegasus' each year."
- ✚ "This scheme which has been running for over 20 years is not just good for the respite care it offers to parents, but also so rewarding for all who participate."
- ✚ "Thank you and well done!"
- ✚ "If funding for 2013 is a struggle, social services and KCC should find the difference due to the benefits to families of disabled children and young people".
- ✚ "I think it's a wonderful scheme, my son has really enjoyed it, I know he's going to be upset when it's over. Thank you so much – it's made his summer!"
- ✚ "As always, very grateful that a scheme like this is available to the dedicated and hard work of the committee and staff, and it's great that the volunteers enjoy helping the young people that attend. Once again great value for money – thank you."
- ✚ "Thank you very much for another enjoyable year! What would we do without you?"
- ✚ "Absolutely fantastic scheme – 10 weeks is a long holiday and this scheme has given \*\* stimulation and enabled her to meet new people and also allowed me to work. \*\* loves it and is always so sad when it ends."
- ✚ "A very professionally run scheme. \*\* always thoroughly enjoys herself and really looks forward to attending."
- ✚ "I think the children at Pegasus feel valued for who they are. The children are accepted by all the friendly staff and my children are always happy to attend"
- ✚ "Once again a massive "Thanks" as normal \*\*'s brothers were envious of all the fun he has had – thank you for all your hard work."

We always ask the staff and volunteers to evaluate the scheme too, as this is particularly beneficial when planning for future years. Data gathered from staff feedback is then shared with them and reasons for committee decisions in regard to certain aspects of the scheme are then made clear.

**Here are some of the feedback points from volunteer evaluations 2012.**

#### **How did you hear about Pegasus?**

- ✚ A presentation at my school
- ✚ Previous people who did it told me.
- ✚ My sister
- ✚ Through a friend
- ✚ My cousin comes to Pegasus (as a child)
- ✚ I did it last year because my friend had told me what a great experience it was
- ✚ My next door neighbour
- ✚ Online research
- ✚ Through a friend and newspaper
- ✚ Through one of the children from Aspen 2
- ✚ From my mother (who was a volunteer when she was a teenager)

### **Do you feel the issues covered at training day are enough to prepare you for the scheme?**

Of the 39 evaluations received 29 replied with yes, the remaining 10 did not attend the day.

### **Will you consider voluntary work in the future?**

Of the 39 evaluations received 35 replied with yes, of the remaining 4, 1 replied 'maybe' and the other 3 made no comment. The following additional comments were also made:

- ✚ I will, as all work I have done is voluntary and very rewarding.
- ✚ Yes, hopefully Pegasus again.
- ✚ Definitely, I missed it during the year so took up volunteering at a Primary School.
- ✚ Yes as I've enjoyed it.
- ✚ Yes it's very personally rewarding.
- ✚ Definitely after doing Pegasus.
- ✚ Yes, I find it very rewarding
- ✚ Yes, would do Pegasus without pay!