



Pegasus Playscheme 2011



Scheme Evaluation

Pegasus Play Scheme Evaluation

Summer 2011



Introduction and Dynamics

Pegasus 2011 saw a change of Venue from previous years with a move to Astor College for the Arts. The scheme ran from Monday 25th July to Friday 12th August inclusive, with daily hours for attendees set at 9:30am-3:30pm.

Children and young people were able to attend on either a full or part time basis, and we took approximately 12 children in each group each day; with a total of 62 attending across the course of the scheme. Our 1:1 volunteer helpers were once again members of the local community aged between 14-18; their task is to offer support, friendship and time readily to the children of Pegasus. On a daily basis approx 109 people (in 4 groups) were sent out on outings, this includes children, volunteers and staff. Over the course of the three weeks some 145 young people and Staff benefited in many ways by attending Pegasus.

This year, in order to save transport costs, the decision was made to reduce the number of groups from 5 down to 4, however the quantity of children able to attend would stay the same, as the 4 buses would be larger and in turn, more staff employed to deal with this change in group ratio.

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.

Staff members were invited to interview and required to attend a training day prior to commencement of the scheme.



Volunteer helpers were also invited to training day and equipped with the relevant knowledge and facts before the first day. All staff and volunteers wear a Pegasus polo shirt and identification badge whilst out representing the scheme – this demonstrates a clear image of who they are, they can be clearly differentiated from members of the public when on outings and they display obvious group cohesion.

CRB checks are mandatory and completed prior to the scheme for all helpers/staff/committee/drivers and any adult involved with the day to day running of the scheme over the age of 16.

Venue:

The move to Astor College for the arts has proved a positive one. The school is clearly happy to support the Playscheme and staff on site were friendly and very helpful. The rooms themselves were all easily accessible and along one level, with a separate room provided for changing and kitchen facilities. The toilets were on the level above, but access to a lift was provided and safe to utilise.

With the rooms being close to one another this allowed children the opportunity to mingle between groups to chat/socialise with friends and peers. There was adequate room for a reception area in the entrance foyer and access to mains power.

Drinking water coolers were hired from AquaAid and provided in each group room – so children could access fresh drinking water at all times – this does come at an additional cost however approx £450 for the 3 weeks.

The building was approachable for wheelchair users with ramp access.

Parent feedback on the new venue was positive with all parents stating they were happy with the building – despite the steep hill!

Fire exits in the building were clearly marked and a fire drill carried out demonstrated the children's ability to evacuate the building with efficiency at a time of 3 minutes 47 seconds.

There was outdoor space provided and children could access a fenced playground with the bikes/parachute/bats and balls etc and were safe, fun and away from cars/traffic.



Outings/Activities

Pegasus 2011 saw a full timetable of fun activities planned once again, including some rather new and adventurous additions to the original line up, including Sea Safari and Leeds Castle. All activities aimed to provide children with an accessible, fun and enjoyable day out, catering for a range of needs/wants.

✚ Swimming took place once again at Folkestone Barracks with Pegasus having sole access to the pool and changing facilities. The children enjoy this activity and it proves a good fair weather opportunity. This year, Group leaders were made aware of the opportunity to use the cafe on site for a lunch option following swimming, this was a very cost friendly option for a good lunch with a drink and a meal costing £2.75 a head.



✚ There were two opportunities for horse riding this year using the Hogbrook stables at Alkham and also the Alkham Valley Community Project (AVCP) facilities. Children seem to enjoy the horse riding and feedback from staff, volunteers and children is positive; the AVCP provides a horse and carriage which allows our children in wheelchairs to access and take part in the activity too. Unfortunately however feedback for this venue was less positive and groups were not given adequate time or attention here, with children spending too long on horse grooming and not actually having a go. The question will be raised to Hogbrook as to whether they are able to facilitate horse and carriage opportunities at their venue for 2012.

✚ Sailing at Westbere was once again well received and their facilities provide a hoist to allow all children to access the activity. This is a safe venue and all children are issued with life jackets and rigorous care is taken along the pontoon. Canoeing is also a popular day out with the groups and furthermore, this is an excellent activity for groups to bond and work together as a team.



The use of head torches in the changing facility proved a necessary tool.

✚ Maintaining our watery theme, Sea safari was a new addition to the timetable this year and was an activity coordinated by the Lifeboat station at Dover. It allowed groups to take turns on the Rib boat and lifeboat around the harbour. All children were once again issued with life jackets and there were strict guidelines to follow

when taking the children so close to the water. As the pontoon was rather long and without a handrail, it was decided that this activity was perhaps not suitable for the youngest group of children this year.

✚ The remainder of the activities Bowling, Leeds Castle, Pottery etc were all enthusiastically undertaken and children in all groups benefited in some way from these venues and opportunities.

✚ Our activities allowed the children and young adults to take risks in a safe environment.

✚ We also encouraged all older groups this year to go for a “Pub Lunch” to build upon their independent choices and encourage Healthy Eating lifestyle.

✚ Staff requested the opportunity to have 1 or 2 more free days in the future as they had good ideas for outings and would like to see these through.

✚ Once again the large majority of outings were either pre-paid or invoiced back to Pegasus so as to allow groups maximum time for enjoyment at the venues.

Transport

In light of the current economic climate, it has proved essential for Pegasus to look at ways in which it can save/reduce costs; as a result of this, the decision was made to reduce the number of groups this year to 4 instead of the usual 5 – which would in turn reduce transport costs for 2011. Importantly however, we did not have to reduce the number of children taken on to the scheme as the transport hired was 32 seater coaches.



The transport rented this year was once again from Regent Coaches – we have now used their company for a couple of years and it was nice to see some of their bus drivers for their second or third year with us.

Most drivers were supportive in assisting the groups on and off the buses and in loading the equipment onto the vehicles. Drivers were on the whole, easily contactable through the day, so Group leaders could exchange communication with them in case of an emergency or a change of plans.

A small issue which arose was in light of seatbelts on the coaches – all coaches were fitted with lapbelts as standard, however they did not all have 3 point belts, which some of the children required in order that their

car seat be held safely in place. The back seat in 1 bus was fitted with this style of belt and therefore the children in question were placed here; logistically this was not too much of a problem, but required checking on a daily basis to ensure the relevant group took the correct bus.

Unfortunately, we were not entirely happy with one of the buses which was provided to us, as it was clearly an old vehicle in Regent's fleet and as such encountered some overheating problems and the CD player was not always working which the children really do benefit from on long journeys, similarly, the attitude of one of the drivers was not acceptable on one day – relevant complaints were made to the manager of Regent in these instances. Regent also informed us that we may struggle to hire coaches from them in 2012 as they have been contracted out for the 2012 Olympics across the majority of the summer period. Something we will have to consider early on in our planning for Pegasus 2012!

Fundraising

Despite the struggle that charities are now facing in light of the current economic climate, an extremely hard, but successful year of fundraising ensured the scheme was able to run largely in its normal capacity with only minor cuts to costings. The scheme now costs approximately £70,000 to run each year and the role of fundraiser remains crucial to enable sufficient monies be raised. For every 10 applications for funds, often only 1 is successful which makes this not only disheartening, but also a huge demand on time. The scheme's treasurer is adept at ensuring we keep to a budget and that monies raised are spent appropriately. This year we have been the nominated charity for Dover College and also Natwest Bank in Dover. P&O ferries supported the scheme with a £1,000 donation and presented this during the scheme. Social services have this year also pledged some financial support to Pegasus.



Staffing/Volunteers

Following a successful bout of interviews, the calibre of staff was high this year and almost all staff were either currently employed or had a range of childcare experience on their resumes. As afore mentioned, due to a change in group dynamic, it was deemed necessary to employ an additional assistant group leader to support the smooth running of the group. In evaluations the majority of staff said that they felt this extra staff member was essential and enabled staff to work efficiently in pairs where necessary, for example at activities which required the group to be split in two halves e.g. Sea Safari, Horse Riding etc.

Staff attendance at training day prior to the scheme was mandatory and led by the staff coordinator with committee present. The training covered scheme organisation, medical issues, children's details, activities etc and also allowed staff to meet each other prior to the scheme and ask any questions, resolve queries etc.

At the scheme's conclusion, staff in their evaluations identified a divide between themselves and committee this year; this is perhaps due to the committee taking a back seat at training day as the staff coordinator led the proceedings; next year, the hierarchy needs to be clearly laid out for staff, the committee are their employers and as such a divide must be in place in order to maintain a degree of professionalism.

Staff were once again identified by their red polo shirts and identity tags which set them apart from the volunteers; this also made them easily identifiable to parents on a daily basis for communication/responsibility purposes. The day to day running of the scheme was managed by committee members who signed children in and out, organised venue requirements, restocked supplies, coordinated volunteers, managed communication etc.



Once again the volunteers worked tirelessly with the children of Pegasus and without them the scheme would not be able to run, they were professional and friendly with the children and worked hard alongside their group leaders to learn about the varying children's needs – with some even learning makaton in order to communicate with certain children. For many volunteers this was their 2nd, 3rd or 4th year and they have built some good bonds with the children. The volunteers are identified through their navy polo shirts and Pegasus lanyards which they wear proudly to represent the



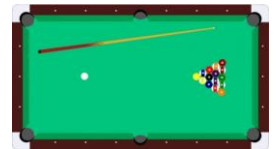
scheme. All volunteers were flexible in their roles and if they had to move groups, did so with no hesitation, relishing it as a challenge to meet and get to know new children. All received a certificate at the end of the scheme to enhance their CV.

Children

This year Pegasus took a total of 62 children aged between 8-25 years, onto the scheme. Children were organised into 4 groups largely by age (in some cases group dynamic was a consideration e.g. number of wheelchairs etc). All children were supported by a 1:1 volunteer and managed by a team of staff. The majority of children had been to Pegasus before and this was a returning year for them, for some of the older children this was their 15th, 16th year at Pegasus! For those children new to the scheme, the child coordinator met with the families to discuss the scheme and they attend on a trial basis for the first 3 days to ensure they meet the criteria of Pegasus. Children with a change in circumstances for example, those now requiring more than 1:1 support are unfortunately no longer eligible to attend – these children are assessed according to their individual needs as and when they arise. Pegasus aims to meet the needs of all its children where possible. Turning children away is the very last resort and alternative arrangements are made wherever possible. Once again feedback from parents was very positive and relevant data gathered (see appendix 1)

Youth Forum

2011 saw another successful year for the Youth forum, members aged 18-25 meet once a month at the pub to socialise, discuss their views on future Pegasus plans/ events/outings etc. The Youth Forum manages its own set of accounts, monies raised through fundraising, and this pays for trips, transport etc.



General

- ✚ Through the use of the Pegasus website, application forms for volunteers, children and staff are posted online and accessed with ease. This year almost all applications were downloaded and returned via the web, ensuring a fast and efficient turnaround for forms, clarity of details and fewer postage costs. The website is used as an extremely valuable tool in the marketing of Pegasus and for raising both its reputation and image. Parents were asked how often they use the site (see appendix 1 data).
- ✚ A successful fire drill was carried out during the first week of the scheme with everyone having evacuated the building in less than 4 minutes – quite impressive, as there were stairs to overcome and wheelchairs to manoeuvre.
- ✚ All groups carried with them our Pegasus leaflet explaining to members of the public, when asked, about Pegasus's involvement in promoting community acceptance.
- ✚ The first and last days were a success and an ice cream van and burger van were hired for each day (having these days on base significantly reduce scheme costs as there are no outings to pay for or bus fees to pay on these days). Children enjoyed the opportunity to bond between groups and took the chance to play well together on the bikes, with balls, using the play team etc; we even had a police and coastguard car for photo opportunities on the first day.
- ✚ Once again the children's photo albums were well received by the parents/carers and on the whole the staff rose to the challenge of completing these. Photos were taken by staff and developed on a daily basis to ensure staff could keep up to date with these as they can be quite time consuming! It is important that they are completed well, as the costs for printing are quite substantial – approx £100 a week.
- ✚ We also employed the skills of a young volunteer photographer who spent time with all the groups going out and about taking professional style photographs – these were mostly of a high standard and clarity. Parents were then given the opportunity to purchase these photos for a minimum donation of 25p per photo.

Once again, the play scheme was beneficial in many ways:

It vastly improved the mental health & emotional wellbeing of all who took part.

All those who took part, children, staff, volunteers, and the committee had a lot of fun.

It offered opportunities for the children to experience risk taking activities 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.

Encouraged voluntary work amongst teenagers, shaping their future.

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

The Pegasus playscheme committee maintains a positive attitude to the play scheme and plans are underway for the 2012 play scheme.

We have assigned

MJB and Co ORB

45 Balfour Road

Walmer

Deal

CT14 7HY

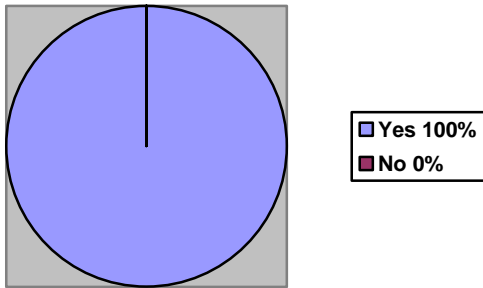
Tel 01304 821177 as our accountants for the scheme.

Data and quotes from 2011 feedback forms.

Parents (Appendix 1)

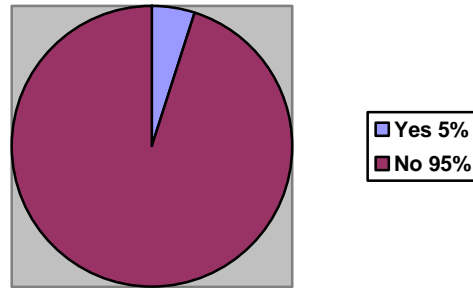
Graph 1

Do you think Pegasus is value for money?



Graph 2

Do you know of anywhere else in the area offering the same type of activities with 1:1 support?

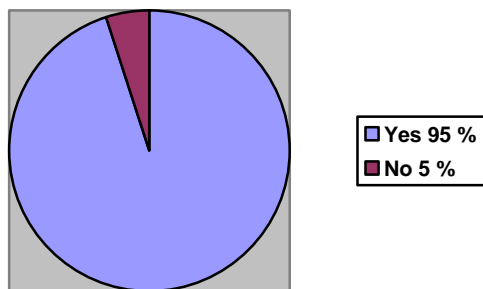


Additional comments (Graph 1) stated...

- “This is excellent value for money!”
- “Excellent value for money – in fact I cannot see how it can be done so ‘cheaply’, even with charitable support £15 a day for any child to have these experiences is such good value”
- “Definitely, the holiday club _____ used to go to was charging £25 for half a day because of his needs”
- “It is, in that the children do not have to pay for little treats (like ice cream) for themselves. They do not have to bring extra pocket money”

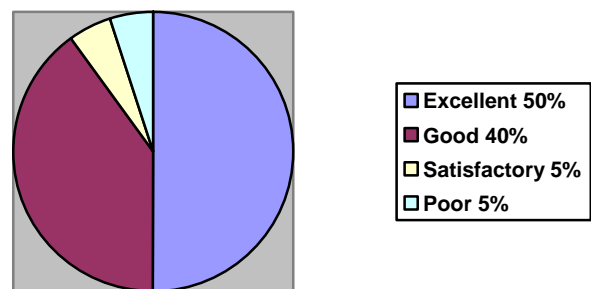
Graph 3

When applying this year, were you able to access child forms and criteria easily?



Graph 4

How would you rate communication with the scheme in relation to your child’s application before the commencement of the scheme?

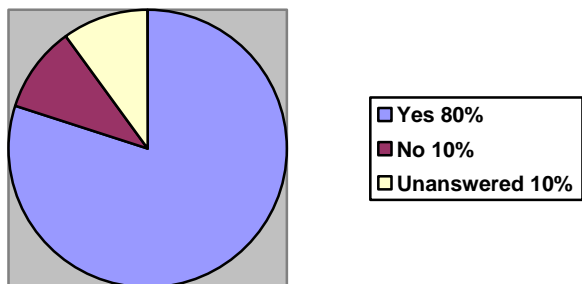


Evaluation of “No” answer (Graph 3)

“No computer – however paper forms were sent out to me”

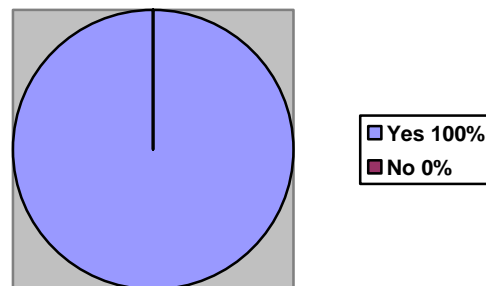
Graph 5

Does anyone else in your home benefit from the scheme taking place?



Graph 6

Do you feel Pegasus meets the specific needs of your child?



Additional comments to support Graph 5 data

- "I benefit as it gives me time to shop, clean house etc"
- "It provides respite for me, which benefits the whole family as I am more relaxed"
- "It allows us (the parents) to go to work, with peace of mind, knowing that our child is happy and safe. We haven't got family near and mainstream holiday playschemes make our child stressed and insecure as he doesn't get a 1:1."
- "The whole family, when _____ is safe and happy we can all relax a little"
- "Mum gets to do certain jobs that can't be done with _____ around; Her dog gets longer and more interesting walks and Mum gets time to chill. The neighbours also get a break from the noise"
- "I would not be able to work and his brother would not be able to get much of a break, I don't know how we would manage the long summer break without the playscheme"

Additional comments to support Graph 6 data...

- "Absolutely"
- "_____ likes the security of having a one to one as he feels insecure facing new challenges. He enjoys the activities knowing that there is no pressure on him if he feels afraid"
- "_____ is well looked after"
- "Both my children enjoy the scheme very much. _____ requires more looking after than _____ and this is done well."
- "It is very good that the same individuals are at the scheme each year so both _____ and they know each other"
- "_____ likes to be out and about socializing and he can do that with Pegasus."
- "Because it is 1:1 support. It is nice for her rather than being in a group. She gets plenty of time to chat in her own way and they keep her safe."
- "The staff are keen to find out how to best manage _____'s behaviour and they take good care of him"

Volunteers

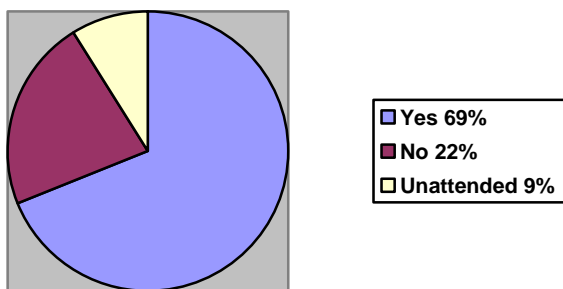
Volunteers were asked what made them apply for Pegasus 2011, here are some of their replies...

- “Because I love it!”
- “Because I thought it would be a rewarding experience”
- ”Been doing it for a few years now and it’s a habit!”
- “The children”
- “To help the children, have fun and something to put on CV”
- “Wanting to help people try new experiences”
- “It is rewarding and make new friends”
- “The fact that I wanted to help the children and improve my own social skills”
- “Experience to help in future career possibilities”
- “Had so much fun last year!”

Volunteers were also asked the following questions to support our future development...

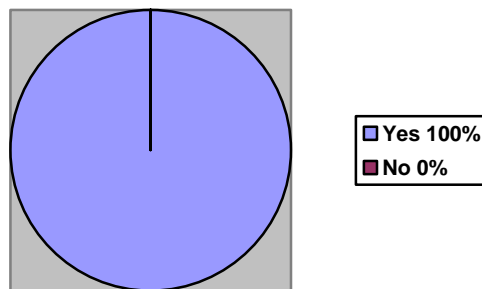
Graph 1

Do you feel the issues covered at training day prepare you enough for the scheme?



Graph 2

As a result of volunteering for Pegasus, will you consider other voluntary work in the future?



Evaluation of Graph 1: ‘No’ answers were as follows.

- “I have been copying the other volunteer’s methods to engage the children; it is tiring and difficult at first”
- “How to cope with speech difficulties”
- “I would have liked to know how to deal with children with certain disabilities”
- “Need to learn sign language basics”