

PEGASUS
PLAYSCHEME
2014
SCHEME
EVALUATION



OVERVIEW OF THE SCHEME

2014 marked 28 years since the start of Pegasus Playscheme. The scheme ran from Monday 28th July until Friday the 15th August inclusive. Pegasus strives to provide fun and professional day-care for the benefit of children with a range of disabilities and learning difficulties in the Dover/Deal area. Applications were swiftly fulfilled this year and places were offered to 47 children/young adults from the ages of 8-30. Each child is provided with a 1:1 volunteer (except the young adults in group 4 whose independence is encouraged); we have engaged 42 volunteers in total this year alongside our 16 full time staff members and 2 trainees. Once again, we were lucky to have a high percentage of ex-staff and volunteers re-apply ensuring some fantastic continuity for the children and lots of familiar faces!

VENUE

Astor College for the Arts in Dover was the base for the scheme and we had use of 5 rooms in the building, toilet facilities and an entrance area for our reception. This was plenty of room and ensured all groups had a base room and we could keep a room for the kitchen and supplies. All rooms could be easily accessed by everyone attending the scheme and there was ramp access to the main entrance. There was a caretaker on site daily who dealt with any problems we had and the site was opened early so that staff could access their rooms and prepare for their day in advance

The school continue to be happy and supportive of having Pegasus on site and we are made to feel very welcome.

13 out of 13 parent evaluation replies stated that they were happy with the venue.

There is a large accessible playground on the site which can be used by the groups; it is enclosed with a fence which separates it from the cars and coach parking area. They are able to use this for football, riding the bikes, outdoor games etc. It is also an invaluable space for the first and last days of the scheme when we have all children on site at the same time.

Within the building all fire exits are clearly demarcated.

Aqua aid was once again used to deliver water coolers and water to the site ensuring that we had a plentiful supply of cold drinking water.

Pegasus continues to be voluntary registered with Ofsted and meet their requirements that relate to safety, Pegasus follows guidelines when staffing to ensure we employ the best qualified people to provide high quality care.

TRANSPORT

We are now in our tenth plus year of using Regent Coaches as our transport supplier, we have built a good rapport with the company owner and the drivers and they are on the whole a reliable and efficient company to use. Coaches are booked well in advance of the scheme commencing to ensure availability. This year, coaches varied between 24 and 33 seaters, but they were large enough such that any logistical concerns were allayed. Once again the drivers were familiar to Pegasus and they embrace the scheme whole heartedly. They are comfortable 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. Positive relationships were built between the drivers, staff and children, they respond flexibly to the group's needs. The coaches continue to be one of the most expensive elements of the scheme however they are what makes the range of activities that we do accessible and the ownership of responsibility in regards to getting safely to venues is in their hands.



PEOPLE

On a daily basis we were sending out an average of 100 people to the various activities we have planned. We continued to run 4 groups, this year named after Disney films (101 Dalmatians, Toy Story, Tangled and Frozen – named by one of our young adults on the scheme).

Staff : We employed 16 members of staff and 2 trainees. All staff bar 2 had worked for Pegasus previously, either in a staff or volunteer capacity and their experience proves invaluable to the smooth running of the scheme. New group leaders are supported and mentored by experienced group leaders and daily staff meetings are held to discuss and alleviate any issues which may arise. All staff are paid weekly (wages were increased this year to ensure we keep in line with the minimum wage and other playscheme rates) Group leaders are all qualified to NVQ level 3 or above and assistants to NVQ2 or equivalent. References are requested for all staff and they attend interview (regardless of experience) and a staff training day prior to the commencement of the scheme. All staff and volunteers over 16 are CRB checked. A qualified first aider was present in each group. First aiders wore a green lanyard with their identity tag on to ensure they were easily recognisable in the group. All staff are recognised by their red uniform shirt.



Volunteers : 42 volunteers supported Pegasus this year, they were once again keen and fulfilled their role with professionalism, many of them have now been supporting Pegasus for a good number of years and as such slip into the role with ease. Staff support those new to the role and guide them in building relationships with the children and scaffold how to interact/befriend the children on the scheme. Most recognise the children and the children are keen to see the familiar faces of their friends for the summer again! Volunteers attend the training day prior to the scheme starting, they meet their staff and are told which groups they will be in for the scheme – there is minimal movement between groups so that bonds can be made and built on. All volunteers sign a code of conduct for behaviour and attend a weekly volunteer meeting. Expenses of £6 per day are paid to them on a Friday.



Children : Due to the need to plan early for the scheme, application forms were made available from the AGM in November and were then posted on the Pegasus website for parents/carers/social services to access. We operate a first come first served system for applications and we were full again by March; Payment for places is required with the application form to ensure that we can sustain running the scheme. This ensured we knew how many children we would need to facilitate relatively early on and that funding was guaranteed for our pre-booked



activities/coaches etc. Where possible we were able to include some late applicants. The inclusion of a 3 day trial period was maintained for children new 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 (all new children maintained their place on the scheme this year). Children were aged between 8 and 30 this year and were organised largely in age order across the 4 groups. We had many children who had previously attended and 1 or 2 new children per group. We took a total of 47 children daily across the course of the scheme.

Applications for staff, children and volunteers are in the majority completed online thus reducing our mailing costs. Where hard copies are needed they are sent out.

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Youth Forum : Alongside the 3 week scheme, Pegasus runs a Youth Forum –this is attended by any Pegasus members over the age of 18, they pay a yearly subscription and then meet once a month in the local pub for a social evening. This is run and organised by Angela Renders and Kim Bladon. The young adults choose the theme for their evenings and also organise activities as a result of these meetings e.g. bowling, quiz nights etc. Feedback form these meetings is always positive – they would like more regular meetings ideally!

Committee: Pegasus is run and coordinated by a committee including a Chair, Vice Chair, Project Coordinator, Treasurer, Scheme Manager, receptionist and other members. They meet throughout the year to organise and plan for the 3 week scheme. Every member of the committee has their own role to fulfil e.g. children, activities, accounts, fundraising, staffing etc and as a result of this the scheme is able to run smoothly. Communication between the committee is good and when a meeting can't take place and a decision is needed emails are sent to all concerned. At the AGM all committee members stand down and are then re-voted on for the following year, new members are always welcome, they are required to complete a year as a 'friend of Pegasus' before becoming a full committee member.

Comments from evaluations re staff:

- "Very helpful and seemed to understand my daughter."
- "Lovely caring staff."
- "Everyone cares about my child."
- "The staff do well to subside *'s fears"
- "Very friendly as always"

ACTIVITIES

As always at Pegasus, we provide a full and varied activity timetable consisting of a range of both pre-booked and free days.

This year, we had made some changes to our pre-booked activities to take into consideration some of the points raised from the staff/volunteer and parent evaluations last year. The activities coordinator pre-booked Bowling, Laser Rush, Horse Riding, the Cinema, Canoeing, sailing, the Vineyard and a Sea Sports day for the older group. Laser rush has always been enjoyed by all groups and this was often an activity which they chose on their free day. This year saw the introduction of the Vineyard (a half day activity) and an opportunity for children to go along and plant a bulb, share some cake and go around the gardens.

Brockhill Park was a chosen activity for some groups this year on their free days – the day included a range of outdoor activities, pond dipping, lighting fires and toasting marshmallows, drilling and designing wooden badges and making natural pencils – stripping bark and adding charcoal. Brockhill were extremely accommodating to the needs of the group and would tailor activities to suit the age of the children – this will definitely be an activity we look into booking for all groups next year.



The Bowling alley was very helpful this year providing an area for the groups to eat their lunch and putting on a DVD for them to watch whilst eating. Many groups would follow up bowling with a trip to the arcade next door, they were also very happy to welcome the groups and provided prizes and sweets for the children as an extra to the activity itself.

Our staff are very good at 'bagging a bargain' when they are out – they always ensure that the group get a good deal – even in restaurants, e.g. securing a menu of options before hand for a set price.

A new venue 'Mudpie' in Folkestone was trialled as an art option by Group 4– children could paint their own pottery and have a drink/snack whilst doing so; this was enjoyed by all.

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It was a shame that the scheme could not undertake swimming as one of its options this year, this was down to problems that the Barracks in Folkestone were having. Securing swimming at other private pools becomes problematic due to the need to provide our own life guard. Groups were discouraged from taking children to public pools as we have such high numbers – in the school holidays this could prove a challenge! We will look into alternative venues for swimming again next year.

Evaluation responses re activities:

- * enjoyed laser rush this year but has missed build a bear only because he is used to it. (This was completed before the group attended build a bear in the final week).
- I think all activities are excellent.
- Yes they are all beneficial activities and we are always looking to stretch his anxieties.
- If possible, bring back swimming. (This was commented on on several replies)
- Maybe less travelling to things, consider using Rippledawn Environmental Centre.
- Consider RHD railway as a new option.

OTHER

The first day was supported this year by the Dover Fire Station who sent along their fire engine with 'White Watch', they allowed children to shoot the hose to knock balls off their fire buckets, children could sit in the engine and sound the siren – we thank them for their support. We also trialed a new ice-cream van 'Mrs Softee' she was most accommodating and really enjoyed interacting with the children. Staff would like to see a change to activities for the first day to ensure active participation and engagement for all, possibly along the line of a summer day 'fete' style range of activities – led and organised by the older children and assistant staff. This will be looked into for next year.



Photo albums were this year replaced by 'Photo Collages' – the children of each group were presented with a framed photo montage of memories from their time at the scheme. These were created and made using publisher, this has proved a more economic option this year and reduced the pressure on staff.

We received a donation during the scheme from the Police Lost Property fund – a cheque was presented by Chief Inspector Mark Weller.

IN CONCLUSION

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 third week of the scheme and they were once again, very impressed with what they saw. We were also visited by KCC who came to assess us for some future funding towards the buses. It is worth noting however that funding for the scheme to take place is becoming increasingly more challenging to source; We are now costing in the region of £80,000 to run for the 3 weeks of the summer – this is a huge amount of money to find in these economic times and no money means no scheme! We are very thankful to the hard work and dedication of Sue Clark who works tirelessly to ensure we can accrue the funds for each year. Any ideas in relation to fund raising for the future would be gratefully received.

Once again, the play scheme was beneficial in many ways: All those who took part, had a lot of fun, experienced new things, and made some long lasting friendships—lots of happy faces!

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So what did the parents/Carers say?

- “Thanks to everyone who makes this possible.”
- “Please run for one week longer.”
- “Everything is very good.”
- “The staff are caring and helpful and professional.”
- “Thank you so much for including my daughter, it really helped relieve the anxiety of the long summer holidays for all the family.”
- “All *’s experiences have been excellent - * really enjoys the 3 week’s activities.”
- “Thank you very much to the Pegasus Committee for all their hard work throughout the year to ensure yet again another successful year – you’re all an amazing team!”
- “I have nothing but admiration for all involved in Pegasus. I would be lost without you! You give the children the chance to mix with other peers and the opportunity to do all the activities, some of which I would not be able to, thank you so much!”

What would you like to see changed?

- All seemed very efficient and seamlessly run (and good fun) – perhaps you could roll this out over other areas!
- “Bring back swimming!”
- “The initial thought of trusting others to look after my child is daunting so maybe a brief meeting before the scheme starts would reassure parents.”

Data:

When applying for your forms this year were you able to access the forms easily – 13/13 returned yes.

Do you think Pegasus is good value for money? 13/13 returned yes and made the following comments:

- “It is excellent value but Kent social services should contribute more to this scheme. I receive no direct payments from them when * is at Pegasus so they should provide more funding for it in my view.”
- “Yes, very good value, offering chances to try things my daughter would otherwise not have had the opportunity to try and teenage company.”
- “Yes, very good money considering everything they do”.
- “Absolutely, I’d be willing to pay more and think we should pay more as our children enjoy it so much and to ensure its survival”.
- “Very good, if I took * out for the day it would cost me £20 in food and icecream alone.”

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

- “I have no worries that * would be well cared for and that she is happy there.”
- “No alternative! But even if there were alternatives it would be the first choice as it is such a positive experience for my son.”
- “All the amazing activities and opportunities they are given.”
- “It’s the best there is!”
- “Somewhere for * to go to meet friends over the holidays and feel included.”
- “Been previously and * loves it!”
- “We found the activities good value for money”
- “My daughter has attended Pegasus since she was 8, she is now 22 – the smile on her face says it all!”