

Kent Friendz
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Spring 2016 Newsletter.

Edited by : Helen Gunderson

*Providing services
to people with
learning disabilities
and their families.*

Welcome to our Spring Newsletter

This Newsletter is about Kent Friendz and its service users and is provided for our service users and supporters. Therefore do let us know if you would like to put an article in the Newsletter. We hope you find the Newsletter enjoyable.

Calling all parents/carers!

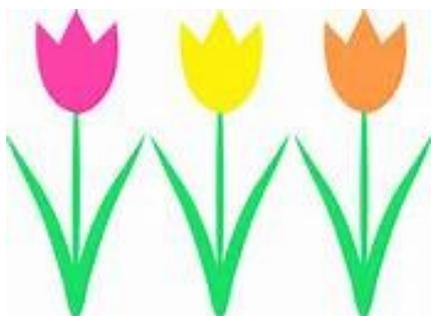
Friendz of Kent Friendz is a new group we are setting up for anyone who would like to get involved in helping Kent Friendz by fundraising, organising events and raising our profile. Joining the group is also a great way to meet other parents and carers in an informal way. We really hope that you would like to get involved and help us to raise vital funds for all our service users. If you are interested or would like more information please contact one of our Trustees Berit Thoresen on 01732 465811 or by email on berit_thoresen@hotmail.com

New Services

We are delighted to announce that Kent County Council have commissioned us to continue our existing services in Sevenoaks, Dartford and Gravesham for 2016/7 but in addition to provide services in Tonbridge and Malling, Tunbridge Wells and Maidstone. This represents a significant step forward in the development of our charity and we are pleased that we will be able to provide our services in a much wider catchment area.

In order to ensure that all our services continue to be provided at a high standard we have promoted Sharon Higgins as Operations and Administration Manager responsible for the delivery of all our services. Lauren Dolding, who most of you, know has been promoted to Senior Children's Services Manager, we have recruited Sarah Tredennick as Manager responsible for Dartford and Gravesham and Amelia Norgate as Manager for Maidstone. Charlotte Webber who you also know well continues in her role as Adult Services Manager but will also provide her expertise to assist in Children's Services, particularly young adults aged over 16.

We are very excited to begin this new initiative, meet new service users and staff. The services will begin this Easter which will see our charity grow; supporting more learning disabled young people and give their parents respite. Due to this expansion we are always looking for new sessional and voluntary staff members who would be interested in joining us, please let Sharon Higgins know if you know of anyone.



Easter activities for our Buddyz

1st April - Bowlplex and dinner

7th April - Rapunzel Rocks at the Trinity Theatre



Christmas party success!!

We all had a wonderful time at our annual Christmas Party at the Mercure Hotel, with lots of exciting raffle prizes won and some brilliant dance moves seen on the disco floor. Thank you to all those who came and enjoyed!!



Easter for our Children

Here are some highlights that we have to look forward to;

30th April - Hever Castle

4th April - Gravity party and lunch

7th April - Rapunzel Rocks at the Trinity Theatre and lunch

A visit from Santa on the train

The children all had a wonderful time at Christmas on the Spa Valley Railway with a special visit from Santa and his elves. With presents and mince pies the children had a happy trip along the railway line in Tunbridge Wells.



After School Club

We are delighted that After School club is continuing to grow and expand, with new children and new volunteers. The children all enjoyed a wonderful Christmas concert in which they received gifts and sang some Christmas tunes; with bells! After School Club is always so popular with the children and something we all look forward to every week.

Jumping Fun in Maidstone

One of the exciting Kidz trips in the February half term included visiting Gravity in Maidstone, which is a trampolining park with wall to wall trampolines. This was a new, fun activity for Kent Friendz and was enjoyed by all, staff and children alike! We look forward to future trips here again. The park provides staff who are trained in Autism as well as a special needs night on a Thursday for anyone who might be interested!

New Cars

We have recently purchased two new cars for our growing charity. They are Ford S-Max's and will come in handy with our new services across Gravesham, Maidstone and Dartford. Ford Lifestyle, Tonbridge has been very helpful and generous in making contributions to the purchase.



New Staff

We would like to welcome new members of staff,



Sharon Higgins
Operations and
Administration
Manager



Sarah Ward
Adminstrator/services
assistant

Sarah Tredenick (picture to follow)
Children Services Manager for
Dartford and Gravesham

Amelia Norgate (picture to follow)
Childrens Services Manager for
Maidstone

Extra Space

Due to our expansion of services we are clearing out our office to leave room for our growing organisation. This has meant that we have to move out a lot of play equipment! To combat our space issues we have invested in a container that now lives in the office car park, this provides us with a large space for further storage.



New Training

At Kent Friendz we always make sure our staff are kept up to date with their training and next month sees an update in our training programmes and introduction of new programmes.

Goodbye

Sadly we have had to say goodbye to Christine Baker and Emma Swain who has decided not to return after her maternity leave. We wish them all the best in their new adventures.

Happy Easter from us all at Kent
Friendz!

