

May 2024

WELCOME TO FAMILIES FIRST!

Families First is a small charity based in St Andrews, Scotland, supporting children, young people and their families with additional support needs across North East Fife.

We run Befriending, Youth Group, Schools Work and Family Support services, all with the help of our wonderful volunteers, supporters and donors!

BEFRIENDING

It's hard to believe that it's May already and most of our wonderful student volunteers are leaving us for the summer! Some befriending will continue with local volunteers, which, along with Holiday Activities in July, will ensure the fun never stops! We have been running at full capacity since last summer, with 44 children attending sessions every fortnight with their volunteer befrienders.



We have been exploring the [Botanic Garden](#), parks and beaches, expanding our brains at the [St Andrews Aquarium](#) and museums, rummaging through charity shops for

Beano annuals, playing football and tennis, chess and the piano, enjoying ice cream for birthday treats, drawing Warrior Cats, witches and pandas, making models, role playing (Doctors and 'Tooth Fairy'!), playing with cars and trains and cooking tasty pizzas, cookies and cakes.

It's amazing how much we can fit into a 90 minute session!



We love to hear the children and their befrienders chat and laugh together as they play - they have fun and learn so much from each other!

- Jan Clarke, Befriending Coordinator

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

STAINED GLASS EXHIBITION - 1 June, 10am-4pm, St Andrews Baptist Church, South St, St Andrews. Local artist Tony Jeavons is holding a sale of his recent creations. Buy a beautiful gift or add some colour to your own home while raising funds for Families First!

FAMILY DAY

Everyone had a fabulous time at our Easter Family Day, kindly hosted by [St Leonard's School](#) on 11 April. We always try to make sure there is something for all our children and families to enjoy, whatever their support needs, and this year we had face painting, a chocolate fountain, photobooth, candyfloss and arts and crafts. For the more energetic we had a bouncy castle, bungee run and space hopper races!



From my perspective, Family Days are very rewarding. All the work and planning is worth it when we see so many happy smiling faces. I have not laughed so much in ages!

This Family Day was funded by a [Nationwide Community Grant](#) with support from our generous local community. Morrisons, Sainsbury's and Tesco provided drinks and snacks for the Easter Fair, ensuring that parents and carers could relax knowing that all costs were covered.

We also received donations of Easter Eggs from [MIDAS](#), [St Mark's Church](#) and Nationwide St Andrews - enough for every child we work with, plus all their siblings, to receive a chocolate egg this Easter. **Thank you to all of you for your support!**



- Alexis Rinaldy, Family Support Coordinator

YOUTH GROUP

Newsflash! Our 'Equimotion' application to Youth Action Fife (Young Person-Led Funding) was successful; **well done IR!!** Our 4 Youth Groups have each spent 3 sessions at [Kinshaldy stables](#), learning all about pony care and stable work and how to safely lead the ponies in the outdoor school and forest. We hope this will improve wellbeing and mental health - parents have told us their children came home "literally jumping with joy" and "singing"!



- Kathryn Henderson, Youth Worker

OUR AMAZING VOLUNTEERS

Families First couldn't operate without its team of fabulous volunteers! This year our volunteers gave a total of **1665 hours** - an astonishingly generous donation of their time. We have volunteers working in Befriending, Youth Group, Transition Group, Family Support, Driving, Administration, Friends of Families First and as Trustees, and we thank them all for their enthusiasm and commitment!

Many of our student volunteers are graduating this June, so we would like to thank them especially for the time they have spent with us and wish them luck for their future! They have been wonderful role models for the children and young people they have worked with, and we hope they have benefitted too by gaining experience and, of course, had lots of fun! Here is what some of our volunteers have to say:



"I'm so happy to have started volunteering in **Befriending** this year as I really enjoy time away from the stress of uni and sharing incredibly privileged moments with my befriendee. We've gotten to know each other quite well and really love spending time discussing anime, drawing monsters and aliens or playing video games (although I admit I haven't been able to rival him at MarioKart!) I've also joined **Youth Group** and love being part of such a dynamic group of young people! Whether we're making pizza, doing lead work with the Kinshaldy ponies or attempting to build the tallest possible tower out of paper, we're always having a lot of fun".

- Sibylle

"I joined Families First as a **TRUSTEE** because I wanted to use the knowledge, skills and experience I had gained in work and life to support a worthwhile cause. As a trustee, I have



learned new things and gained a fresh perspective on life. There's also satisfaction in helping make a difference, sharing responsibility, and challenging ourselves to work through options and make decisions in the best interests of the charity. Everyone has something to offer, and the charity enables us to play to our strengths".

- Gillian



I like getting out and about with my **Befriendee**. Sometimes we're very active at the playpark or playing tig. Other times we are much quieter and doing craft, drawing, writing or baking in the centre. Going to the **St Andrews**

Aquarium or up to **Craigton Country Park** are favourite activities for both of us. Our times together are never boring and sometimes surprising. I often think I get as much positivity from our time together as my wee pal does! It's a privilege to befriend a young person in this way. Win-win all round

- Jane



"I have loved volunteering with Families First and working with the **Family Support** group. The staff are lovely and helping with the lunch group has been so rewarding!"
- Abbie

"I wholeheartedly appreciate Families First; every moment spent with this **Youth Group** has been amazing and meaningful. As I aspire to become a counsellor in the future, I often reflect on what makes connections

between individuals. A strong connection is about dedicating yourself fully to the moment and the person in front of you. That is the best form of social support I could imagine. Thank you for showing me a vibrant example, you are truly amazing. I loved carving pumpkins, making pizzas, and spending times on beach. I have made so many beautiful memories with youth group".

- East



CAN YOU HELP US?

We work very hard to secure funding for all our services, but it is a huge challenge!

If you can spare a one-off donation or give monthly to help us keep supporting local families we would be incredibly grateful!

Please scan the QR code or click [here](#) to donate by Just Giving. To set up a Direct Debit please contact us for our details. To volunteer or subscribe to the newsletter please visit www.familiesfirststandrews.org.uk, email oa@familiesfirststandrews.org.uk, or phone 01334 208086.

Thank you for your support - we look forward to hearing from you!

