

**May 2025**

## WELCOME TO FAMILIES FIRST!

Families First is a small charity based in St Andrews, Scotland, supporting children and families facing disadvantage and adversity 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

Every summer, many of our lovely Befriending volunteers graduate and the children have to say “goodbye”. This can be a challenge, particularly for children with additional support needs and those who have already experienced significant losses in their lives.



Our ‘Positive Endings’ programme helps children understand that it is natural to feel sad when someone leaves, and encourages each pair to make an individual plan, focusing on happy memories and a positive future. This helps the children build resilience so they are more equipped to deal with future changes in their lives.

We would like to tell you about three graduating volunteers and the children they support as they look back over their time at Families First and plan the best ever “Positive Endings”!

- Jan Clarke, Befriending Coordinator

### KINGSLEIGH AND L

Kingsleigh and L have formed a good friendship over the 2 years they have been together in Befriending.

#### Kingsleigh's best memory:

Walking to the park and just sitting and chatting to L for over an hour. L has become a lot more open over the past 2 years; I think she enjoys having someone to listen to her. I think we are all looking for someone who will sit and listen to us!

L says: “My favourite things at befriending are drawing, (especially ‘Warrior Cats’), and chatting with Kingsleigh.”



(continued overleaf...)

### OUR AMAZING VOLUNTEERS

Families First couldn't operate without its team of fabulous volunteers and we thank them all for their enthusiasm and commitment!



An especially big thank you and best of luck to all of our student volunteers graduating this June! You have been wonderful role models for the children and young people you have supported, and we hope you have benefitted too by gaining experience and, of course, had lots of fun!

We are now on the look out for new volunteers to help with driving and our Family Support service, providing 1:1 support or joining our lunch group - please get in touch if you are interested!

- Kirsten Watson, Volunteer Coordinator

### ANDERS AND M

Anders and M have been paired for 15 months and have formed an unstoppable creative partnership!

Anders said: “M is incredibly creative. When we first met, he needed activity options to choose from, but now he is more self-assured and independent and designs his own amazingly complex projects. We always think there's no way he can execute them, but they work out brilliantly! I can see M as a highly successful game designer in the future”.



**Anders' and M's best moment:** “Finding a Jack-in-a-Box in a charity shop after searching for 3 months!

**Positive Ending:** Anders and M will turn the Jack-in-a-Box into ‘Boxy Boo’ in time for a final ice cream!

**A final word from Anders:** I have loved my time volunteering as a befriendee, particularly all the opportunities for baking and getting creative”.



## KINGSLEIGH AND L CONTINUED

**L says:** I think Kingsleigh is now very educated on 'Warrior Cats' and a lot of games!



**Positive Ending Plans:** Kingsleigh and L will be going out for ice cream and then meeting L's new befriendeer to give her an intense workshop on the intricacies of the world of 'Warrior Cats'!

**A final word from Kingsleigh:** Through Befriending I have become more patient at connecting with people and I have learned new, out-of-the-box ways of connecting, such as through games and drawing. I have loved my time at Families First – it is the best part of every week!

## ALICE AND F

**Alice and F have developed a great connection over 2.5 years in Befriending, but F is moving on to Youth Group and Alice is graduating!**

They made great plans for their final 2 sessions, revisiting favourite activities from their past and making a memory board.

**Alice wrote all about it in her final two 'Session Reports':**

"It felt like one of our first sessions today as we did one of our favourite things - The Aquarium! We had a lovely walk and a chat as we went and as usual, I learnt a lot from you! I am so happy I got to see you again before Easter!"



"Today was a special session! It was just us in Rose Lane which was a lovely way to spend our last befriending session together.



We did arts and crafts and made a "memory board" with our best photos! We played some Mario that we love and then we went for some ice cream in the same place we went 2 years ago!

I am so proud of how far we have come together!"

## EASTER FAMILY DAY

We love our Family Days!

It is great to see our children and parents/carers meet up with old friends and make new ones, (and all the staff get to hang out together too)!

We were very lucky as the sun shone brightly on our Easter Family Day (hosted by St Leonard's School) on 10 April! Everyone had a wonderful time, whether relaxing and chatting out on the lawn or jumping around on the 'Whack a Mole' or "Fly Wall" inflatables! We also enjoyed face painting, a candy floss machine, chocolate fountain and arts and crafts - something for all our children and families, whatever their support needs!



At the end of the afternoon, all the children were able to choose an Easter Egg to take home courtesy of the 'Easter bunnies' at St Mark's Church, and the St Andrews branches of Nationwide, Morrisons,

Tesco and Sainsbury's. There were enough eggs for all the children we support plus their siblings, so a huge **THANK YOU** for these donations!

This Family Day was funded by a Nationwide Community Grant, supported by the fabulous staff at Nationwide St Andrews - **THANK YOU!!**

- Alexis Rinaldy, Family Support Coordinator



## DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

**Volunteers' Week Afternoon Tea** - 6 June, 1.30pm, St Andrews Baptist Church, South St, St Andrews.

Email vc@familiesfirststandrews.org.uk

## COME AND JOIN IN THE FUN!

If you would like to subscribe, volunteer, donate or fundraise, we would love to hear from you! Please email [oa@familiesfirststandrews.org.uk](mailto:oa@familiesfirststandrews.org.uk), visit [www.familiesfirststandrews.org.uk](http://www.familiesfirststandrews.org.uk), or phone 01334 208086.

**You can also donate to support our work with local families here or by scanning the QR code.**

Thank you!

