



Boomerang NEWSLETTER

October - December '24



VOLUNTEERING

with Sarah

October

To kick off October, we had 5 pupils from Morgan Academy come along to our centre to do some volunteering for the week. Duties included helping in our Cosy Café serving some tea and toast but also having sit down conversations with our service users, which they loved, helping to serve our lovely hot lunch meals to service users but also helping to maintain the kitchen by doing dishes, putting rubbish out and sweeping the floor. All pupils were lovely and very engaged, we can't wait until we get the next bunch!

Some of the team participated in Community Sighted Guided Training within our centre, the ladies who ran the course were so patient and fab! This training showed us the different stages of blindness and we even got to try on some super cool glasses which let you see first hand how a person with that type of eyesight would be seeing the world. Towards the end of the training, we were paired up with another staff member to be guided around the building with our eyes closed, again was super fun and I loved how we all trusted one another in that scenario.



We had about 50 families attend our Family Halloween Party which is just amazing. Had lots of spooky activities which included “mummy wrapping” best costume and musical statues (which was soooo hard to judge, noone wanted be the bad guy, so we recruited the kids that were already out to help us decide which turned out to be so funny. All the families and kids (and the staff and volunteers too) had an amazing time and the feed back was great. I'm looking forward to this years Halloween party. (pictures are on Facebook)

November – On the 27th and 29th of November I attended a training course called VAW (Violence Against Women). This training was absolutely amazing, such an eye opener and it was great to learn so much but at the same time it was also very overwhelming and hard to watch or speak about certain topics but the group that attended were amazing and we all leaned on one another. I can't express how much I appreciate doing training like this- I'm so much more prepared should I need to deal with a related situation in the Centre.

We had a few 'Corporate' Volunteer days throughout this quarter, with B&Q, BT, EE and Insight all encouraging their staff to spend a couple of hours volunteering with us... as you can imagine, there's always plenty to do and in December, extra hands wrapping was a lifesaver!

December – We had planned to do a Santa Run on the 1st of December but due to not getting very many numbers we had to cancel which was such a shame but we are hoping this year we can get those numbers and have a great day with everyone from the community!



December 4th I completed an 8 week course on the Open University around Understanding Autism which was very enjoyable to do and I've learned so much which again, I will put into practice within my role.

FOOD PROJECTS

with Sam

October was a busy quarter for the Larder! (aren't they all!)
Our amazing Larder Volunteers served 216 different people over this time;
helping to support 1644 families with a food value of £18,566.25. Thank
you to Linda, 'Landa and Moira!

Thank you too to the team at Tail End who have been donating kids meals
fortnightly for the larder which have gone down a treat, and delicious fish
for our Lunch Club and Larder too!

We were also lucky enough to have selection boxes donated for our
toddlers and youth parties- astoundingly, we had so many donated we
were able to pass some onto other local charities and also give them out
through our larder- the support we receive is just phenomenal!



In October we got the exciting news that we had been successfully
nominated by Morrisons Dundee and their Charity Champion to receive
just over £6000 funding towards a revamp of our Cosy Cafe!
We are so grateful that we were put forward for this and delighted to have
won! Work starts in January so our cafe will be in the Lunch Room for a
week or two, but the disruption will be worth it for a fresh, fun new cafe!



November saw our Lunch Club Menu move into winter-warmers; mac n cheese, stovies and all our lovely soups are perfect for these colder months!

We did have a wee Autumn Afternoon Tea which was just lovely- the fancy crockery and bitesize foods are just a wee bit special and everyone had a great time!

And then came the Festive Furore... December passed in a blur between our service users and volunteer lunches - we've never seen so many pigs in blankets before!

We hope everyone had a blast and can't wait to reveal what we have planned for next year... but we'll wait until the Easter Holidays have passed at least before we start talking Christmas again!



YOUTH AND FAMILIES

with Sophie

October kicked off with 'Green Health Week' and both the toddlers and youths loved the opportunity to do get outside and be creative!

We spent some time revitalising the Sensory room- its much better for purpose now and the little ones love it. This was supported by Cash for Kids who also donated some money to update the kids games for Games Group, which the attendees picked out themselves.

We also had a very generous donation of school uniforms and halloween costumes from Tesco- these were distributed to those in need- and we still have some if anyone has taken a stretch over winter.

Holiday provision was as, lets say, energetic as usual - its great fun planning what to do with the kids- they have such a great time and leave buzzing! Dundee Bairns kindly support this with some funding and food provision over the school hols!

We finished up the month with our massive Family Halloween Party, it was fab to see everyone having a great time and the costumes were so inventive!





November was lovely and calm- and let Sophie prepare for her departure the following month- we interviewed several people and in the end, the job went to Kaitlyn, who some of you might have seen when she was a student here... she's got big shoes to fill but we're sure she'll take it all in her stride.

We welcomed Scrapantics in to help the art-group make Hoolie Lanters- there were nessesies, and unicorns and heilan coos and they all looked fantastic!



December brought us... CHAOS! But in the most positive way- we had a party a day, just about, and loved every minute! We especially love getting the bouncy castle out, but think the kids might have been even more excited to meet THE REAL SANTA!

We had tonnes of presents donated by kind local people and businesses which meant that every toddler and child received a Christmas gift from Santa, and we even had some to spare which we were able to pass onto other charities and those who were in need.



DEVELOPMENT

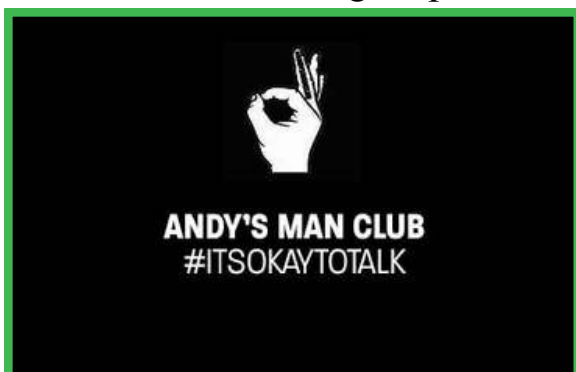
Groups

with Alison &
Menuka

Our groups have picked back up after a bit of a quieter summer, with a new 'Hoy' group on Mondays (alternating with Karaoke and Book Club) And two upcoming groups; Sewing, on Mondays 10-12pm (BYO Machine if you have one) and Tease and Tone, Burlesque Fitness on Fridays 6-7pm Our photography group went so well this Ocyober that we're looking for funding to do more...would you be interested?



Several groups are advertising for new members; including the art group, reminiscence group, dominoes & bingo, knit & natter and the LGBT+ group



It was lovely to see all of our groups celebrate the festive period- variously with pizza, cake, and a Bumper Christmas Karaoke



We're all ears if there are any groups you feel are missing- you can drop a note in the comment box, speak to one of the staff, or come along to 'Friend's of Boomerang' which next takes place on March 26th at 12pm

Events

October kicked off with our Annual General Meeting (AGM) which gave us a chance to tell our members all about the past year, plans for the year ahead and saw our Board of Trustees voted in; the trustees are



Helena Carl



Mike Brown



Lisa Croll



Darren Kane



Denis McGurk



Jennifer Simpson



Derek Hart

The end of October was a bundle of fun with our Halloween Party- it was great to see kids and adults alike being silly and having a great time.

There were more parties in November when we held our first ever PeaBuster night, inspired by the reminiscence group- everyone had their fill of chippie chips and buster peas, then danced the night away!

We ended the year's events with our festive fayre- the centre was buzzing and not just from the vast quantities of sweeties being eaten - Santa was a massive hit with the kids and people picked up plenty of Christmas Gifts from the fabulous stall-holders. We so appreciated Dundee University and The National Literacy Trust for coming along too and providing entertainment and free books. We loved spending some quality time with our Lunch Club and Volunteers at their Christmas Lunches, and even managed to organise a Staff Lunch... as you can see we were delighted to end up at the square on the rides.



Engagement

We have had several really successful drop-in's in the Cosy Cafe; Yorkshire Building Society gave a presentation on Managing Finances in the Cost of Living Crisis. In December, we also had the return of Coffee With a Cop- this was well attended and our cafe patrons had so many interesting questions to ask the local team.

Alison and Carrie were invited along to The Dundee Fairness Leadership Panel's third annual conference Never Standin' Still in the Discovery Point & RRS Discovery. This was an amazing look at the work that has been done locally to reduce poverty, and also a stark reminder of how far we have to go yet- we both came away with so many ideas and great new connections.



Fundraising



We've been so lucky to have our Cafe picked for a freshen up by our amazing Morrisons Community Champion- we can't wait for everyone to see it!

We also put out a call-to-action to fundraise for a replacement lift- as many of you know, it's been out of order on and off for years, and permanently since July so we are so happy to say that between 3 generous funders and all of your amazing fundraising efforts, we have been able to order a new lift and expect it to be installed in March- Isn't that amazing!

If you were in the Cafe you'll have seen us helping people or maybe taken part in the DCC Consultation for the 25-26 Budget. We so appreciate everyone who took time to fill in a response- DCC received over 3000 replies- so here's hoping they're listening to us!

Coming up soon...

Upcoming Events



January 25th 12.15pm Burns Lunch



February 12th 12.15pm Valentines Afternoon Tea



February 28th 6pm Prize Bingo



March 8th 12pm International Women's Day, Selfcare Saturday

March 21st 6.30pm St Patricks Day Party



Upcoming Subroups

January 29th 12pm Volunteers

This can be attended by any of our current volunteers and is the ideal place to discuss ideas, suggestions, training etc

February 5th 12pm Youth & Families

This can be attended by anyone who uses our stay & play or youth groups, or the guardians of those who do

March 26th 12pm Friends of Boomerang

This can be attended by anyone who would like to have a say on Boomerang in general, from group suggestions to having a wee moan, come along and tell us whats on your mind.

Other News...

DofE

We will be starting our Duke of Edinburgh programme in January, looking for youths aged 12-16 who would like a FREE space- this is a brilliant opportunity for learning skills, building confidence and making friends. If you'd like to take part please contact sarah@boomerang.org.uk

52 in 25

We have begun a project collecting stories from people in and around dundee, we're hoping to speak with one person each week in 2025- if you'd like to take part please contact carrie@boomerang.org.uk

MESSAGE FROM THE CENTRE MANAGER

So here we are, another Christmas come and gone; it seems like most of the people we're speaking to took the opportunity to really rest and relax, 'coorie in' as my Granny would say!

It was much needed for us at the centre, what a busy few months it has been! The highs have been sky high (funding for a new lift...WOW!) and the lows have only inspired us to work harder, do more and be the best we can be for absolutely anyone who walks through the doors.

No doubt we have a challenging 2025 ahead with funding constraints, fewer staff and more attendees than ever; but we are ready to raise to the challenge, and hope you'll be right there alongside us. If the overwhelming support, cheerleading and generosity of the people and businesses of Dundee that we saw in the weeks before Christmas are anything to go by, we have a great force behind us. We're entering 2025 with excitement, motivation and determination-

Carrie Reid

