**WELLSPRING WEST SUSSEX**

**ANNUAL REPORT 2015-2016**

During 2015-16 Wellspring West Sussex continued to provide information to families of children with disabilities and special needs through our newsletter, website and Facebook page. We also delivered creative arts workshops to children with special needs and their siblings.

We published one edition of the newsletter in 2015 which focused on Special Education. This newsletter was funded by the Henry Smith Charity and contained information for parents on the changes to Educational Health Care plans and the local SEND Hubs. We were very pleased to include an article from a young reader with special needs about her experiences of starting a new school. This edition also had stories and art work by pupils from Oak Grove College.

We were unable to produce a second edition in 2015 due to financial constraints, however we kept our website and Facebook page updated with information on events happening across the county. Our website receives 30-40 visits per month and our Facebook page has 68 people who “Like” it, meaning that they receive news as it is posted. The Facebook page is also a very useful way to “Share” news and events from other websites and groups.

We received a grant of £7580.40 from Awards for All which will enable Adam Gellibrand to provide music workshops and Chris North to offer a new programme of poetry sessions over the next year (2016-17). Part of this funding will also be used to publicise the workshops in the first newsletter of 2016.

With the remaining funds from the Alchemy Foundation, I have provided 5 places for children with special needs and their brothers and sisters at the Craft Club I run from my home art studio over the last year. An 11 year old girl with learning delays attended the Flower themed club from April-May 2015. At Seaside Craft Club in June-July 2015 a 6 year old boy with developmental and learning delay and his 5 year old sister attended and at the Christmas 2015 club 7 year old twin brothers, one with Down’s Syndrome attended. All the children really enjoyed attending the club and I received extremely positive feedback from parents.

One parent commented *“Craft Club is such good fun for the children and parents. It is a safe place for my son to express himself creatively and have fun!!! He learnt new skills and I was able to see him develop socially by mixing with the other children. The setting is very relaxing and unthreatening. My son always wanted to go.”*

Over the next year we will look at reducing our newsletter from A4 to A5 to save on postage costs, and try to find new sources of funding for the newsletters which is difficult due to the ongoing nature of that.

We have received funding from Crawley (£1300) and Worthing (£250) Lions Clubs which will go towards the production of our newsletters for 2016. We also received a donation of £94.00 from Sidlesham Women’s Institute which were the proceeds from their harvest auction and a donation of £30.00 from Janet Shanks, a distant relative of mine. Other funds came from small donations and quiz winnings. We raised £78.19 via Easyfundraising.com where supporters can “earn” donations for Wellspring by shopping online and £66.77 from Localgiving.com. We would like to thank everyone who has supported Wellspring West Sussex in the past year.

Lizzie Baily

Chair – Wellspring West Sussex

January 2016