**WELLSPRING WEST SUSSEX**

**ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021**

Throughout a very different year (2020-21), Wellspring West Sussex adapted the ways we provided our services to families with disabled and special needs children and young people through our newsletters, website and Facebook page as well as the creative arts workshops. The second half of 2020 continued to be challenging but we were pleased with what we achieved.

Due to restrictions, we did not managed to produce a newsletter in 2020, however our first edition for 2021 was printed at the end of March (2021) and then distributed during April. This edition was titled “Lockdown Life Stories” and I was really pleased to have articles from three West Sussex families who described the challenges they had faced as well as happy times. We heard from twin brothers about their student life. Adam Gellibrand and Chris North had articles about how they had adapted their work to be online and accessible to children and young people at home. My pages described the year which included a Wheely Wonders day in August 2020. The newsletter was funded by the Thornton Trust and contained a paid advertisement from Southern Mobility Vehicles.

We have kept our website and Facebook page up to date with news of support services available and events happening across the county as well as relevant national information on Covid-19. The “Coronavirus Updates” section on our website remained in place. The website received 259 visits through the year and our Facebook page now has approximately 180 people who “Like” it and are regularly updated with events and news shared. Followers of the Facebook page can contact us through the page and Share information with us which may be used in newsletters. Issue 1 for 2021 of the newsletter was posted on the website when it was published and an email was sent to our online mailing list of 71 contacts.

Unfortunately my Craft Club in the art studio was unable to take place this year but we were able to run one Wheely Wonders day in August 2020 funded by the Headley Foundation. We welcomed 11 children and one young person, all who had attended Wheely Wonders days in the past. For most of these families, this was the first time they had left their homes since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.

During the morning Forest School activities, participants were able to try sawing a log to make a medal. This was adapted to every child’s ability and needs, and it was fantastic to see one of the boys sawing from his wheelchair while another was held in a standing position by his carer.

In the afternoon, families sat at socially distanced craft tables where each child created a flower made with pipe cleaners and decorated the pot to stand it in as well as designing a butterfly to hang up at home. It was lovely to hear everyone chatting and reconnecting with each other while absorbed in the activities.

Funding this financial year came from the Thornton Trust with a donation of £500. Through Easyfundraising.com where online shoppers can “earn” donations for Wellspring, we raised £16.70.

In the next year we hope to secure more funding to help us continue running Creative Arts workshops and Wheely Wonders days as well as covering costs for printing the newsletters, post and packaging. We would like to find more businesses who wish to advertise in the newsletter and on our website and pay the monthly website fee. We will keep our mailing list updated to ensure it is complying with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) laws.

We are extremely grateful to everyone who has supported Wellspring West Sussex in the past year, and have enabled us to continue running during a different year.

Lizzie Baily

Chair – Wellspring West Sussex

November 2021