



# Opportunities

## The Newsletter from the Forest of Dean Children's Opportunity Centre

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Welcome to the first issue of Opportunities of 2011 – I can't believe it's this time already! A lot has happened since the last edition so this issue is packed full of updates and news of forthcoming events, as well as Book Reviews and a delicious Easter Recipe for you to try. If you have anything you would like to see featured please contact me using the details on page 4.

*Louisa*

### World of Difference

Regular visitors to the Centre may have noticed that our Volunteer Receptionist, Louisa Davies, has been around more often than usual. Louisa, who has been volunteering at the Centre since May 2009, was one of 11,000 applicants who, in November 2010, sent off an application to the Vodafone Foundation's World of Difference Programme which gives grants to volunteers across the UK enabling them to work full time at their chosen charity for a period of two months. At the end of January, Louisa was informed that she had been selected as one of the 500 successful applicants and was awarded the funding to work at the Centre as Fundraiser. Louisa is one of only four people in Gloucestershire to be offered the grant.



Louisa (holding the Gloucestershire sign) with other winners from the South West and WOD Ambassador, Gok Wan

Louisa began her placement on 15<sup>th</sup> March following an Induction Day in Birmingham where all 500 winners were able to meet each other, the team behind the programme and World of Difference Ambassador, Gok Wan.

### Recipe Section – one of Marilyn's favourites!

#### Raspberry and chocolate waffle pudding

A lovely chocolate dessert that is ideal for Easter

A variation of a bread and butter pudding but much more yummy!!!!!! Enjoy x

**Ingredients:**

- 1 large bar of white chocolate (or milk/dark)
- 1 pack of sweet waffles
- 3 eggs
- 1 large carton of double cream
- 1 tbs plain flour
- Raspberries (or any fruit of your choice)



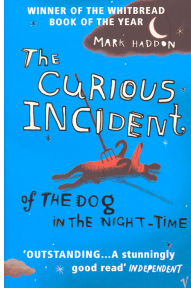
**Method:**

1. Warm oven to approx 190 (slightly less for fan ovens)
2. Cut waffles up into bite size pieces and place half in the bottom of a Pyrex dish
3. Place half of raspberries on top of waffles
4. Break up chocolate into small pieces and lay half on top of the raspberries
5. Place rest of waffles, raspberries and chocolate in dish
6. Whisk eggs and add to cream with the flour
7. Pour on top of waffle mixture
8. Place in oven for approx. 20 – 25 minutes

Delicious served warm but can also be served cold.

## Book Review

Opportunities will be featuring books from the Book Library. All books are owned by the Centre and are available to borrow for **free**. Please ask at reception for more information or drop in and take a look at the wide range of books available.



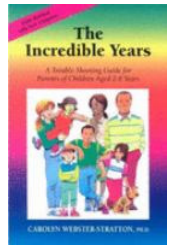
### **The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time** By Mark Haddon

*The Curious Incident...* is a murder mystery with a twist. The victim is a poodle named Wellington whose untimely death is investigated by fifteen-year-old Christopher Boone. Christopher is not your usual teenage detective; he describes himself as "a mathematician with some behavioural difficulties," which affects the way he conducts his investigation, and how he narrates it. As he struggles to find out who killed Wellington, Christopher uncovers another mystery that threatens to unravel even bigger secrets about his neighbours and even his own family.

Highly acclaimed and commonly recommended as a way of understanding people with Asperger's Syndrome, although this is never explicitly stated in the novel itself. Author, Mark Haddon stated on his website that the book is not specifically about Asperger's and he is not an expert on the subject. Haddon says instead, "if anything it's a novel about difference, about being an outsider, about seeing the world in a surprising and revealing way." Either way, it's a moving, sometimes funny, story that stands up to repeated readings.

### **The Incredible Years** By Dr. Caroline Webster-Stratton

Aimed at parents of children aged 2-8, *The Incredible Years* is a valuable handbook that provides guidelines for parents to help prevent behaviour problems from occurring and also offers strategies to promote children's social, emotional and academic ability. The handbook provides very good advice on establishing good foundations for successful parenting and looks at how to effectively communicate and solve problems. Perhaps the most useful aspect is the section that deals with 'common problems' ranging from dealing with disobedience, to sleep problems and how to help you child cope with their fears.



Written by clinical psychologist and professor Dr. Caroline Webster-Stratton and based on her 25 years of research with over 3000 families, this book also supports the Webster-Stratton Incredible Years parenting training programme but is still a handy read on its own.

## Playscheme



February Playscheme was an action packed three days! As well as the usual games and toys at the Centre, there were trips out to places around Coleford, including the greengrocers, the library, the church and a chance to investigate the local area.

Gary Davies, with his drum kit, was a welcome visitor to the Playscheme where he demonstrated a couple of 'tunes.' The children were able to have a go and were encouraged to make as much noise as possible!!

The children also had different opportunities to do cooking during the week. If you have any simple recipe ideas you think would be suitable for the children to have a go at in the next Playscheme, please contact Kelly Bishop at the Centre!

The next Playscheme will run from Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> – Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> April and Monday 18<sup>th</sup> – Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> April. There will be a Family Day to Perrygrove Railway, Coleford on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> April from 10.30am.

Costs for the Family Day are £6.20 for an adult and £4.20 for children over the age of 3 (under 3s are free). Playscheme is fully booked but if you would like more information about the Family Day please contact Kerry Smith at the Centre (see page 4 for contact details)

### **Landy Rally 2011**

In September, Mike, Jenny and Alun Miles will be taking part in the Landy Rally a European 4x4 Charity Drive to raise funds for the Centre. They will start in Holland on 14<sup>th</sup> September and set off in their Land Rover Discovery 300tdi to complete the 3,500 mile road run through 11 countries in 9 days.

Check our next edition of Opportunities for more information!

## Friends of the Centre

The Friends of the Centre are the newly named Fundraising Committee who have been very busy over the last few months with various fundraising ideas and events. Many thanks go to all those who supported us at these events and a special thank you to those who donated goods, prizes and their time to make sure everything runs smoothly.

The **Christmas Fayre** was held at the Centre on Saturday 11th December. There was the chance to do a bit of Christmas shopping - choosing from a gift stall, Christmas Decorations, cards, handmade chocolates and a whole stall of genuine Lush goodies at bargain prices. There was also a tombola and a raffle with some fantastic prizes. Children were able to join in some Christmas craft activities and see Father Christmas. Exhausted visitors were then able to enjoy homemade soup and rolls and drinks. The Fayre and the Christmas Raffle raised nearly **£1000!!**

In December, local girls Jess (aged 11) and Sophie (aged 14) released a specially recorded **charity CD** in aid of the Centre, which previewed at the Christmas Shopping Evening in Coleford on 2nd December. Their album, *Jess and Sophie: Sing for the Children* covers eleven songs as diverse as *Ave Maria*, Leona Lewis's *Footprints in the Sand* and Elton John's *Your Song*. Copies are available at £6.99 from the Centre. To place an order please contact the centre on 01594 837552 or e-mail [louisa.davies@childoc.org.uk](mailto:louisa.davies@childoc.org.uk)



Jess and Sophie:  
Sing for the Children

The Friends of The FOD Children's Opportunity Centre held a Jumble Sale at Lydney Town Hall on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> March. This was a great chance to grab some bargains - from childrens and adults clothing to toys and bric a brac before relaxing with a cuppa and a cake! Many thanks go to everyone who supported us on the day and helped us to raise **£304!!** A special thank you to those who donated 'Jumble' and those who helped sort through it all to make the sale possible.

The Friends have been running a series of Guess the Name of the Teddy (and Puppy!) competitions at a variety of local shops and businesses across the Forest. So far this has raised a Grand Total of **£434.56**. If you haven't had a go yet we still have Bears around so keep an eye out.



Our thanks go to all those who have helped in any way with these competitions: **Terry & Pat Graham** and Customers at **Whitcroft Post Office** for raising **£35**, **Becky** at **Polish Nail Salon** for donating a bear and her staff and clients for raising **£42**, **Debbie Lawton** and customers at **Taurus Crafts Gift Shop** for raising **£37**, **Gibsons** for donating a bear, **Dennis & Sue Lee** and customers of **Parkend Post Office** for raising **£21.30**, **Miriam & David Phelps** at **Forget-Me-Not-Flowers** for wrapping our bears, Staff and Customers of **Lydney Leisure Centre** for raising **£22.00**, **Sue**



**Allen** and the rest of the staff and customers of **Yorkley Post Office** for raising **£103.63**, Staff and Customers of **White Hart, Cinderford** for raising **£68.55**, the staff and customers of **Lower Lane Super Stop** for raising **£36.53** and the staff and clients at **Changes Salon** for raising **£45.23**

## Looking Ahead...

We've got some exciting events coming up in the next few months:

The next big event will be the **3 Children's Charities Bike Ride** on Sunday 8th May from Beechenhurst - choose between a 25 Mile Bike Ride, 10 Mile Walk & a 3 Mile walk. BBQ available with stalls. If you would like to participate then please contact Fee on [3ccbikeride@gmail.com](mailto:3ccbikeride@gmail.com) or phone 07908136547 for a sponsorship form.

Other events over the next few months include:

29<sup>th</sup> May - Garden Party

25<sup>th</sup> June - Charity Auction and Ball

2<sup>nd</sup> July - Summer Fun Day

Keep an eye on our website at [www.childoc.org.uk/news\\_events.asp](http://www.childoc.org.uk/news_events.asp) for more details about these events over the next few months.

If you would like further information about these events or are interested in joining the Friends of the Centre, please contact Louisa on [louisa.davies@childoc.org.uk](mailto:louisa.davies@childoc.org.uk) or 07824458610.

## Three Peaks Challenge

Six members of Glaxo Smithkline and two drivers will be taking on the 3 Peaks Challenge and John Shaw nominated us as their chosen charity. We wish them the best of luck with this - they are hoping to raise over £2.5k. We are pleased to help by loaning them the use of our Mini-Bus for this event.

Take a look at the Three Peaks site <http://www.3peakschallenges.co.uk/> for details of what they will be doing!

## Opportunities

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[www.childoc.org.uk](http://www.childoc.org.uk)

**Support for children and families  
with special needs**

### The Benefits Adviser Service

[www.direct.gov.uk/benefitsadviser](http://www.direct.gov.uk/benefitsadviser)

A question and answer site providing online advice about different benefits and a way of seeing how individuals 'what if' scenarios could impact benefits.

### New website for carers at [www.netbuddy.org.uk/](http://www.netbuddy.org.uk/)

A site for carers of children and others with learning disabilities to exchange tips and ideas.

**Disabled Children: A Legal Handbook** from the Council for Disabled Children can be downloaded free from <http://tinyurl.com/5teaxux>

### PATA [www.pataglos.org.uk](http://www.pataglos.org.uk)

Offers lots of information for parents and also provides training course.

## Staff List

### Who's who at The Opportunity Centre?

Marilyn Smith - Centre Manager

Gordon Cruikshank - Finance & Facilities Co-ordinator

Hayley Badman - Lead Early Years Practitioner & Family Support Worker

Kerry Smith - Deputy Early Years Practitioner & Forest School Leader

Kelly Bishop - Early Years Practitioner, Playscheme Leader & Family Support Worker

Ann Richards - Creche Worker

Phil Sargeant - Minibus Driver/Volunteer Creche Worker

Glenn Egan - Minibus Escort/ Relief Driver

Georgina Ford - Trust & Grants Co-Ordinator

Paula Smith - Receptionist/Administrator

Louisa Davies - Fundraiser

Louise Powles - Cleaner

Lin Fewes - Cleaner

## Donations & Thanks

**We would all like to give a huge thank you to the following for their very kind and generous donations over the last 3 months:**

**Beale Garage**, Coleford, for their **£100** sponsorship of our minibus, **Adrian Haines** at **Arty-Type** for donating posters and printed stationery, **Martin Secombe** at **Am-pm Design & Print** for printing our November newsletter, **Brian & Bernice Reeks** for raising **£13.96** in their collecting tin, **Spirax-Sarco Engineering plc** for their donation of **£1000** towards the Parent Support Group, staff and customers of **Forest Tackle** for their collection of **£25.24**, **Steph Goeting** for her donation of **£500** towards our minibus costs, the **Garfield Weston Foundation** for their donation of **£5000** towards our pre-school sessions, staff and customers of **Chris Peters Butchers** for their collection of **£15.25**, **Andrea Pendrey** for collecting **£293.60** at her party, **Julie Burton** and the staff and clients at **Changes Salon** for raising **£33.07** through their Christmas Eve Staff Fancy Dress and for donating hair and beauty gifts for the raffle at Miss Felicia's Cabaret night, **Mr King** from the **Studio Cinema**, Coleford for the donation of two free tickets for the raffle at Miss Felicia's Cabaret night, **Vanessa Morgan** and her colleagues at the **Jobcentre Plus**, Coleford, for the donation of **£20** collected from their Christmas raffle, **Ann Howell** and the members of **The CAMEO Group** for the donation of **£50** in lieu of Christmas cards, **Jane Burreis** at **Scoops Cards** for collecting **£14.52** in a collection tin in Coleford, **Lisa** at **Bootylicious** for the donation of two bracelets and **Jackie** at **Celestial Adornment** for the donation of a gift voucher as prizes for the raffle at Miss Felicia's Cabaret night, the **Royal Forest of Dean Rotary Club** for the donation of £500 towards staff training, **Mr. Harris** and the **Waterboard Club** for raising **£379.80** towards Summer Playscheme Family Days, **Lucas and Gemma Meek** for their donation of Teddy Bears which have been very welcomed by the children, **Sandra Huggins** and the **Travellers Rest**, Ross-On-Wye, for donating **£61.50**, **Julian Miller** and **Class Telecommunications** for their donation of **£50** in lieu of Christmas cards, **Lucy Smith** and **Jordan James** on behalf of **RFDC** for raising **£24.80** bag packing at Tescos, Lydney and a further **£102.03** from other events, **Ben Llewellyn** and his chainsaw(!) in helping us to prepare our Forest School site, **Wendy Ford** for donating **£10.38** of her loose change in a collecting tin, **Mary Thurston** for allowing us the use of the OV in Lydney to store the jumble ahead of our recent sale and **Hannah Teague** for completing the Forest Half Marathon on behalf of the Centre.