

eastparkpatter

Your newsletter for East Park



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LOCKDOWN EDITION

FOR ALL HEROES WEAR APES

east Park heroes

#ClapforCarers

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Some of our favourite lockdown activities



A massive congratulations to Domanic, who during the middle of the pandemic cheered us all up by winning The National Autistic Society's 2020 Christmas Card competition - #EastParkisProud!

Arts & Crafts Galore



As hairdressers and barbers shut,



our staff had to quickly adapt to new roles!

Home Made Cinema!



Cheese!



I'm Lovin' it!

Each house was allocated one East Park vehicle to avoid cross contamination - our young people did great jobs of keeping the vehicles clean



The boys in one of our houses love their weekly McDonalds. With Covid-19 pandemic resulting in all McDonalds restaurants being closed, it meant the boys could not enjoy their favourite meal. Not wanting the young people to go without, staff decided to get creative and make the boys their own happy meal boxes - which involved A LOT of cardboard and colouring in! Staff bought the ingredients of what the boys would usually get in their McDonalds and set it up as a surprise for them. Krishna, Ewan and Alexander gave a whole new meaning to 'happy meal!', they loved it!



Stop the Bus!

John's favourite thing to do is go on the bus, especially the number 61. During lockdown John was missing his bus trips and it was making him a bit sad. So staff decided to surprise John by bringing the 61 to him! Staff got busy making their own 61 bus - there were chairs for seats, a bus stop and a bus driver! John loved his own bus and it really cheered him up! "It was great, my favourite thing was holding my ticket and being a good passenger on my favourite bus"



Staff demonstrated their



creative sides with our young people



Lots of time to relax!



Rainbows of hope spread across the world



Lots of Sensory Play



Who doesn't love a treat?



A Snapshot of Lockdown in Our House

Written by Jamie-Lee English, Support Worker.

The young people in our house coped and adjusted extremely well during lockdown. As well as continuing with schoolwork at home the young people participated in lots of at home activities. The young people enjoyed exploring different foods of the world during their own 'Come Dine With Me' experience - taking turns to cook, serve and score each other's dishes. Everyone made great use of the garden, decorating it with chalk drawings, having fun with paddling pools, sprinklers, the trampoline and sand. The young people and staff even completed an obstacle course as part of our very own Sports

Day too! Everyone appreciated the local community more by going for daily walks and local drives. Lots of artwork was created including rainbows for the windows. Clapping for Carers outside each Thursday night, along with the neighbours, quickly became a fun routine for everyone. There's even been 3 lockdown birthdays! One of the birthdays was 'EastParkFest' themed with a Disco Dome and glow sticks!

Everyone's favourite part of lockdown however was the young people being reunited with their families who they so dearly missed.



Written by Shannon Stewart, Support Worker

The boys in our house coped very well with lockdown. To help the boys we put some coping mechanisms in place. Some of the boys benefitted from having a lot of structure and predictability throughout their day, therefore, key workers decided to make schedules which the boys could follow Monday to Friday from 9am to 3pm, just like they would whilst in school. The schedules included the boys' own every day routines as well as suggested activities such as; Old Mac Donald sing-a-long, matching and sorting games, painting, colouring in as well as many others. Staff also created Bucket Time (an activity which is completed in school) and

educational games using jigsaws, colouring books and other in-house resources. Many of these activities promoted the 24-hour curriculum which was of great importance with school being closed. Great use was made of the garden and the garden equipment when the weather allowed - bubbles, messy play and the hammock were always being used! The boys also enjoyed getting out on local walks. Alexander and Krishna showed off their culinary skills by helping staff to bake! The boys also enjoyed intensive interaction with staff when engaging in 'boo' and rough and tumble. Singing and dancing to their favourite music was another highlight as well as getting comfortable on the sofa to watch some films. Skype video calls from families were a big hit and emotional at times! We were

glad to get back to some sort of normality when school returned and we are so proud of our boys!





This is Me!

Despite restrictions still being in place after the release of Lockdown, Skye House were determined that they would celebrate Marcus' milestone 21st birthday and make it a day for him to remember. Staff knew finding a venue would be unrealistic mid July, therefore decided a garden party and a party bus was the way forward, especially as Marcus continues to this day to speak of his experience on a party bus 3 years ago - what better way to celebrate his 21st and make this another unforgettable memory.

The vision for Marcus' party came from his love of musicals particularly the Greatest Showman. Staff invited those closest to Marcus, keeping in mind the limited numbers allowed due to the pandemic.

Staff made circus themed decorations, arranged for Marcus' siblings to attend which of course due to lockdown restrictions, was even more special after not being able to see each other for months. A party bus which included music

and lights was an enjoyable sensory experience for Marcus and some of our other young people. To Marcus' delight everyone surprised him by dressing up too! The main man Marcus being ring master of course! On arrival back at East Park Marcus was greeted with a bouncy castle, buffet and a garden party (thank goodness for the nice weather!)

Being in lockdown had a negative impact on our young people's social development due to not being allowed to socialise with other households or attend community-based activities which are routine for our young people. Therefore, staff's focus was to give Marcus a positive, unforgettable experience and celebrate his birthday just like we do every year.

Although Marcus would have loved all his friends to be there, our main ambition for his birthday was that to him it felt like a normal day, being surrounded by loved ones, friends and fun which we definitely achieved – Happy 21st Marcus!



Rainbow Pine Cones



Two of our pupils thought it would be a nice idea to create some kind of present for the other classes in East Park to let them know how much they were being missed. After discussions, the pupils opted for a nature art gift that would incorporate the worldwide rainbow theme of lockdown. After some research, the pupils opted for pinecones that could be painted in a rainbow design. Some very large Pinecones were dried out in class and special paint pens were borrowed from the art room. After three days of hard work, ten magical rainbow pinecones were ready to be delivered to each class. As there were three spare the pupils chose to give one to our head of education, head of care and our maintenance department as a special gift. This activity allowed pupils to engage in outdoor learning, nature art and teamwork. Well done to all involved!



Learning at East Park in the time of COVID-19

On 20th March 2020, schools across the land closed their doors as the reality of the pandemic set in. Here at East Park, we followed our contingency plan, and learning support workers from school and workmates were immediately redeployed to our residences, to ensure that staffing levels remained high and to provide educational support for our children and young people who depend so heavily on the structure and routine of school. Teachers worked from home to prepare the highly individualised materials required, and we wrestled with Zoom and other digital tools for teaching and learning and communicating with each other.



We created home learning packs for all our learners, and made socially-distanced visits to all our day pupil families to offer support and resources. Staff were deeply concerned about the impact of the school closure on our young people, and after a lot of risk assessment and careful planning, we were able to provide some sessions for day pupils from 20 April. Although this

worked well, we began to worry about the impact of a 6 week summer break after so much disruption. So we decided to stay open for the first 5 weeks of the summer holidays, offering day pupils 2 days each week in school.

Over the summer, we went for long walks in local woodland, cooked up a storm with our Lunch Club, conducted spectacular science projects and took part in 'bootcamp' fitness sessions. We gave our courtyard garden The Den a facelift, cared for our hens, Ginger and Moondust, and kept our creativity edge sharp with Art projects and Fischy Music sing-a-longs. With so much to worry about away from school, staff enjoyed the Summer Extended Learning Programme ALMOST as much as the young people!

By the start of the new term, lots of people were already used to being in school and so with a few adjustments, we were delighted to welcome all our children back for a 5 day week. Like everyone else, we have regularly updated our approach to take account of the latest guidance and advice. The aroma of hand sanitizer and soap can be caught gently wafting on the breeze wherever we are learning.

This term, classrooms look a little different. We have invested in lots of sensory resources, and our fabulous Sensory Path has been incredibly popular. Class teams have been working in 'bubbles' to reduce the risk of cross-infection, and pupils who are able to wear masks are being supported to do so. Our Forest School is back up and running, and we have a really exciting residency with 'Out to Play' about to start... As the situation unfolds world-wide, we will adapt and grow as we support our school community.



Redeveloping our Den.

The East Park Den has traditionally been our planting and gardening area. However, over the last year it has been home to our beloved hens Ginger and Moondust. As you can imagine The Den's planting area became a bit mess (and we are being polite here!). As a result of lockdown the hens were moved to our fundraiser Kim's house for looking after which gave us the chance to redevelop the whole of the Den. A new specially built area was made which is safe for our two hens and includes their coop, perches, planters and bark to dig in which only takes up a third of the Den. The rest of the area was cleared out and cleaned by pupils and staff, which involved a real team effort. Our planters and pots were refilled with compost and pupils chose new plants, fruits and vegetables to plant. Within the space of two months our Den was transformed into a thriving garden area that is peaceful and relaxing and has two safe and very happy hens. The life skills learned and developed by pupils as well as the sense of achievement will remain with them for a long time.





“Teaching during lockdown was several things...it was hugely fun, a privilege, important for our young people and helped my own mental health getting out to keep to some tiny sort of normality”



“I really enjoyed capturing such magical moments on camera!”



“I appreciated teaching during lockdown, it gave me a little normality and it was great to know what a difference we made to our pupils”



Thank you so much to every single person, community group and corporate who has helped and supported us during these very difficult and uncertain times. We really appreciate your generosity, you have helped us to make sure that we continue to support our AMAZING children and young people ... THANK YOU!

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individual