

## Family Learning Month 2008 in South West Surrey

During October 2008 there were three differently-themed family learning activities held across five venues in the South West of Surrey, each lasting two hours. The aim was to attract the whole community.

Each was different and the variables numerous; venue, timing, activity and cost to name but a few.

In each SLLP priority area, we have a small 'Lifelong Learning' group which meets regularly to activate learning and progression opportunities for the local community. This partnership is our strength.



Family Art and Scrapbooking at Loseley Fields Children Centre, Binscombe

### Background/Contextual Information

In each of the three Community Learning Partnership (CLP) areas in the South West of Surrey - Guildford, Waverley and Woking - we have small sub-groups in each of our priority geographical areas. These 'Lifelong Learning' groups meet regularly to activate learning and progression opportunities for the local community; they are facilitated by the SLLP Community Learning Adviser. This partnership approach makes for easier working and more achievable progression routes. Each involves Surrey County Council Adult and Family Learning representatives and Local Library staff, Children's Centre Managers, Community Development Workers, nextstep and Business Enterprise Gateway. According to area, other partners include the Sheerwater/Maybury Partnership, the 'Let's Read' Charity, the Watts Gallery, the Lightbox, residents, youth workers and health visitors.

### Activities

- In Guildford, there were music and storytelling sessions in two Children's Centres; we used 'Spud & Yam', a lively and inspiring Caribbean/Irish musical combo for morning and afternoon sessions on a Saturday. The sessions were interactive and quickly broke down the adults' inhibitions, who played instruments with as much 'joie de vivre' as their children. The age range was toddler to grandparent, as three generations of some families took part; a total of 30 families attended.

Stories were developed along with song, and parents were encouraged to continue this at home.

Guildford Grove Children's Centre was just about to open and used the activity as an introduction to the venue for the local community.

- In Waverley at Loseley Fields Children Centre, the Watts Art Gallery provided volunteers with photography equipment who supported one of Family Learning's creative teachers to run an art and scrapbooking workshop which was "All About Me". Parents and children sat around tables and inspired and learned from one another (see picture at top of page). 26 families attended with a total of 42 children. Scrapbooking encourages the maker to tell a story about themselves and the results were sometimes quite personal to the family. This event was very inexpensive.

Nextstep and Surrey's Early Years and Childcare service attended and raised awareness of their services.



Music and Storytelling at North Guildford Children's Centre

- Two music and storytelling sessions were held in Sheerwater and Maybury, Woking at New Monument (3-11) and Broadmere (7-11) Schools. 'Reading is fun' was the message. These sessions form part of an on-going campaign to encourage reading and improved literacy, and we all work closely with the schools, which carry out preparatory work with the children. The event was called 'Pirates Day' and involved dressing up, competitions, quizzes, treasure hunts and of course story-telling. 26 families attended with over 60 children.

The previous event was 'Frog Day' with an author storytelling and art workshop; 'Let's Read' donates books to every school child in the ward as well as contributing new books to the school libraries on a termly basis. The term before Frog Day, the school was given many books by the author and the children knew all about him, his stories and his illustrations.



Pirate Day at New Monument School, Maybury.

### Key Achievements and Outcomes

Over 80 families attended the five sessions. Approximately 30 of the parents had below Level 2 qualifications. At one of the venues, all 17 families were ethnic minority families and many of the adults had ESOL requirements. Work is progressing to encourage participation in classes.

At Loseley Fields, there is now a regular drop-in coffee morning, and the ten parents with below level 2 qualifications are progressing onto adult sessions delivered in the centre.

### Success Factors and Good Practice

Collaboration of the members of each area Lifelong Learning subgroup makes lighter work of the events, and the joint resources and specialist knowledge and capabilities of organizations and individuals, adds up to a much more meaningful and effective event. Working together offers flexibility and better reactivity to the needs of those taking part, especially when planning further learning opportunities. Other services can raise awareness and encourage engagement.

### Key Challenges

Funding is always a major issue as adult learning funding streams are so targeted, and not at all universal, and many centres find it difficult to work in this way. Gaining other funding can be very time consuming and need long lead-in times.

### Lessons Learned /Transferable Tips

Marketing the event needs to be done face-to-face as much as possible by people who the community know. Visits were made to school assemblies and talked about in the street by the Community Development Worker with residents. Existing groups with not necessarily any connection to the venue were visited. Residents' Associations were involved.

### Next Steps

It is January 2009, and we are currently planning for Adult Learners' Week in May. Other plans include a young parents group, bitesize learning opportunities for adults, scrapbooking groups and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) course.

**For more information contact:**

Tel: 07748 804078

**Sian Sangarde-Brown**

Email: [sian.b@ntlworld.com](mailto:sian.b@ntlworld.com)

Web: [www.surreyllp.org.uk](http://www.surreyllp.org.uk)