

OF INTEREST

- 'Social Pedagogy for Approved Foster Carers'. Development sessions for Foster Carers led by Foster Carers. To book contact: Clare Freeman, 01629 538427, clare.freeman@derbyshire.gov.uk. Run from 9:30 – 2:30 the dates are: Monday 15th June in ; Thursday 22nd October and Saturday 5th March.
- Celebrate Jean-Jacques Rousseau's visit to Derbyshire 250 year ago on Sunday, 28th June 2015, 10am to 2pm, at Wootton Cricket Club (Shawcroft Farm, Wootton DE6 2GW). Rousseau explored ideas which led to social pedagogy. The event is jointly sponsored by University of Derby and there will be a planned walk, children's activities, stalls etc. Find out more at: www.rousseau2016.org.uk

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Creative cultural activities: a spectacular magic

In 2013 I took part in a project designed to encourage 'hard to reach families' into cultural activities. The funder's (NIACE) purpose was to show how adult education impacts on adult learners who often link the experience to empowerment, health, participation and wellbeing; this project was about evidencing those impacts.

We worked with 'hard to reach' dads and their children aged 4-7 and with three artists to make the cultural activities immediate and responsive. We were very lucky in our choice of creatives, Creative Forum and Tan Draig, who worked a spectacular piece of magic which they attributed to a, 'social pedagogic' approach. I was hooked.

The dads were initially ill at ease but after only six sessions they themselves talked about the fantastic change the project had

made to family life. They had learned that being a dad was not about keeping your children quiet



"..being a dad was not about keeping your children quiet and out of mischief but getting 'stuck in'..."

and out of mischief but getting 'stuck in' and 'having a go'; they learned about sharing the creative process and the joy of achieving together, to notice their children and to experience resilience to set-backs. We reflected on what was changing, and why, and what the dads wanted to do next. Their families and their children's teachers all agreed with the impacts the dads identified. And, thanks to NIACE, it was all evidenced.

This year we re-ran the

project with a different school and different artists and this time, with 'The Mighty Creatives' funding, the purpose was to engage children in creative activities but, to test the previous method, we worked with families. Once again the participants were families whose children are likely under achievers, parents who the school found hard to engage; unemployed and low in confidence. By the end of eight sessions the parents were reflecting on how family life had changed, how much they enjoyed doing these things with their children and, once



Steering and Strategy groups



Creativity and
campfires

The first meeting of the social pedagogy strategy group was held on the 13th May. This group has representatives from the grass-roots steering groups and also from CAYA management and it looks to address barriers and issues that will help move forward the embedding of social pedagogy throughout CAYA. Once the group's terms of reference are agreed I will share these online.

The Fostering and Residential steering groups are looking forward to their next meeting on the 19th June at the Eco-Centre.

As well as the usual meeting addressing creatively the challenges of exploring social pedagogy practice they are also planning a Wild-camp experience for steering group members who want to stay on for the campfire fun. Finger crossed for good weather.

There is a role for anyone to join in. If you are interested in supporting practitioners to develop social pedagogy get in touch through the contact details at the end of the gazette and I can put you in touch with the steering group leads .



Creative cultural activities...continued

"..in fact, without much digging, we unearthed a richness of skills and stories; the families have a huge amount to offer "

again, they felt empowered to take on the project and try to run it for themselves. In fact, without much digging, we unearthed a richness of skills and stories; the families have a huge amount to offer and it is very hard to remember how 'flattened' they were when we first met them. Creative Forum captured this reflection in a short film which you

can access through this link: <https://youtu.be/wKkoVzaJkGA>

Derbyshire is a leader in using social pedagogy with children in care but, after 10 years of offering

family learning to low achieving families, I am convinced that it is also a fantastic tool for families. Struggling families can quickly find their purpose, parents hone their parenting skills and become more confident first pedagogues and children take part in the activities at home which support learning and development. I am very keen to continue this experiment with more schools; social pedagogy supports children's development, family relationships and the relationship between parents and teachers.

There is a caveat, when families are involved with creatives the principles of social

pedagogy seem to be in harmony with the activity. However, this is not necessarily a natural outcome when school timetables and teachers get involved. If we can go forward with this experiment it has to be a two way process; in the same way that children and parents are changed by the experience, teachers and school cultures need to change to facilitate an enabling environment. There is much to learn through reflection but I have huge hopes.

Photographs by Paula Moss

Article by:

Sarah Burkinshaw , Policy and Research Division. Email: sarah.burkinshaw@derbyshire.gov.uk

...parents hone their parenting skills and become more confident



Building Bridges: Family Recourse Workers develop family spaces



...another activity created boxes which represent people in the family relationships.

Building Bridges is a group developed and facilitated by the Family Resource Workers at Chesterfield North MAT (Multi Agency Team). Amid all their busy caseload work they put their heads together and identified that many of the people they work with needed similar support to develop good family life and family relationships.

This was the genesis of Building Bridges. It is a group which runs for six weeks with each group supporting up to 8 families with children from 6 to 12 years old. Each session seeks to improve family relationships by providing a shared life-space for children to spend positive time with parents or carers. Grandparents have also been involved and each group's activities are developed flexibly to best meet the needs of those involved.

From making healthy snacks together to creative craft ideas the team set clear objectives around family relationships. They put a lot of energy into developing the activities and promoting an atmosphere which means it is stress free and creative for those involved. One activity explores the triggers for family disputes by building a picture of a volcano and cutting and pasting onto it what might erupt. Another activity created boxes which represent people in the

family and their relationships to each other. The sessions focus on listening to each other and thinking about complex issues but they also major on the simple act of having fun and sharing positive experiences together. This helps parents who may be struggling, in their role as their child's primary pedagogue, to better see their child's strengths and to fortify their relationship.

Evaluations at the end of each six weeks are invariably very positive with parents attending saying:

"...being around other parents in a similar position has made me feel less alone."

"These sessions have helped me and my daughter's relationship and the workers involved in building bridges are excellent, caring and understanding, helpful and it is all genuine."

"doing this has help me to help rather than to take over."

"The group really help in saving a relationship which was spiralling out of control."

And children attending have said:

"It was fun making this together" and "The group was amazing I just wish it went on longer."

Social pedagogy recognises the team's use of the common third to help strengthen relationships' Also the key focus on spending time together in a shared life-space and allowing child, parent, carers and workers to interact as equals. They have fun together whilst addressing and achieving a change in their lives. It also underlines the work in MATs

which is often about the subtle art of supporting the social pedagogy in others, such as parents.

Other professionals know the team's work well and referrals come from areas such as CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services). They see the group as a helpful stepping stone on from interactions such as family therapy.

The team know they could do so much more if the groups could continue beyond the six weeks. However, Paula Harrison, Tracie Spencer and Nick Dentith, who have developed and run the sessions, ensure they deliver positive outcomes for the families and children involved. What motivates them is seeing families change from blaming the child or young person, who is all too often seen as the source of problems, to valuing the child's company through enjoying positive time together.

Many thanks to the team for sharing their story.

Social pedagogy recognises the team's use of the common third to help strengthen relationships, the focus on spending time together in a shared life-space and allowing child, parent, carers and workers to interact as equals...



University social pedagogy course is continuing to develop

Another 25 CAYA workers are now in the final assignment stage of their course and should hear the results very shortly. Everyone's hard work on the course had made it a real success and having now

evaluated the University course and highlighted this accomplishment we have been approved additional resources to continue the link with University of Derby for the extension of the programme. In

principal the approval allows another 100 places and we will be recruiting to these opportunities in the next few months. Watch out for more information or contact me through the details on page four.





Derbyshire County Council

Simon Taylor, Senior Staff Development Officer (Social Pedagogy)

e: simon.taylor@derbyshire.gov.uk,

t: 01629 532 598, m: 07812 666 553

"Working together to support and inspire children, young people and their families to be the best they can be; safe, health, happy, learning and working."

Stay in touch

If you have any comments about the gazette or would like to know more about the development of social pedagogy please feel free to get in touch. Also do make contact if you would like to highlight your own or colleagues work developing social pedagogy.

Disclaimer: we hope this provides useful and relevant information, but we cannot guarantee that all source documents referred to have been checked and verified. We cannot accept responsibility for actions or omissions taken after reading this bulletin. Nothing in this bulletin is intended as a substitute for expert, professional or legal advice.



'What's love got to do with it?'

Social Pedagogy Development Network in Edinburgh

Recently the Social Pedagogy Development Network (SPDN) met in Edinburgh. There was a huge demand for places and a last minute venue change was needed to accommodate everyone. Clearly the theme of 'what's love got to do with it?' must have struck a chord.

The event stimulated reflections about the meanings of love and explored different aspects of love that seem relevant within a professional context. Hard questions were asked, such as, why does love matter, what is its role in practice and how can we critically engage with it without turning 'love' into an empty phrase or a taboo word?

The key note speaker explored ideas found in Gary Chapman's book, "The Five Love Languages": looking at how these might help practitioners understand love in a professional context. The languages are: gifts, quality time, words of affirmation, acts of service, and physical touch. Chapman argues that people naturally give love in the way that they prefer to receive love. Thus the languages can be a useful reflective metaphor when thinking about our own and other peoples' approach to affection, love and emotion connectedness.

Many of the workshops explored this further and contributions from around the country helped highlight how social pedagogy is evolving across the UK. You will shortly be able to find a more comprehensive outline of the Edinburgh SPDN here: www.thempra.org.uk/network.htm

