



# LWFCI-UK

LAY WITNESSES FOR CHRIST INTERNATIONAL - UK

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## Newsletter and mid-year highlights 2022/2023

**LWFCI-UK** is a non-profit organisation and registered Charity, in the UK, which operates in Bromley and Orpington.

We reach out to children, young people and adults from the local communities in order to positively impact their lives, through various programmes. Our goal is to create a welcoming and inclusive environment where everyone feels comfortable and valued. By bringing people together from different walks of life we learn from each other and create a more vibrant and connected community. We particularly seek to reach the children and parent/carers of the SEND community.

Our programmes include **Destiny Children** which is the creative social club for children with special educational needs and disability. Destiny Children also offers a **support forum group** for parents/carers both in person and online via our WhatsApp group. **This project is currently funded by BBC Children in Need.**

**LWFCI Sports Clubs** during the past years has consisted of a weekly, **Saturday Football** club and a **midweek Basketball** session for the under 16s.

**Short Breaks and HAF (Holidays, Activities, Food)** activities have become a regular school holiday feature of our organisation in partnership with Bromley Children and Families Voluntary Sector Forum and London Borough of Bromley. ShortBreak specialist provisions offer respite short breaks, enabling children and young people with disabilities to have enjoyable experiences away from their primary carers, contributing to their social inclusion and personal and social development. The breaks also provide the parent/carers of children and young people with disabilities with an invaluable break from their caring responsibilities.

**As this is our first newsletter since 2019 we have much to catch you up with.**

**We aim to capture the highlights of our past year up to end of May 2023**

# Highlights Of Our Project Work

- **Destiny Children - Monday Club** We provide 2 hours of creative & social activities for Children with Special Educational Needs and disabilities giving carers a break whilst their child is fully engaged and safe. This takes place **weekly** at Mountfield Community Centre in the St Mary Cray area of Orpington **from 5pm-7pm**
- Our **Family Support Group** has continued to run as and when needed but, due to lack of funding is not as regular as we would like. Since November 2015 we had been running monthly groups supporting families with children with a range of disabilities such as Autism, ADHD, speech and language difficulties as well as other learning disabilities. This important support group has become one of the COVID casualties. and we are desperate to get this back to it's monthly timings but now need staff to support the demand.
- **Destiny Children - Wednesday Club**  
Since COVID this has been a lively, online Zoom session. When we receive more funding we will resume our two hour face to face but we have a regular cohort of children who love this online SEND youth club and have been with us for over two years now. We will continue to have a Zoom, SEND Youth club as it is very popular and we have seen the social benefits
- We have arranged many incredible **Family Day Outings** and coach trips for the beneficiaries of Destiny Children's Project and also for Clarion residents as part of the educational and fun activities which we run during school holidays.
- **Inclusive football** - Football is for pan-ability boys and girls aged 8-14 years, running every Saturday from 2 - 3.30 at Harris Academy in Orpington. This class is free to all Clarion residents, or £1 per session for all other residents. Our football club has been going from strength to strength with a weekly turnout of approximately 22 boys and girls. After listening to feedback from the children we made changes to the timing of the session and this is now on Saturday afternoons ensuring our youngsters get their Saturday morning lie-in!
- **Inclusive Basketball** for young people up to age 16 has been running successfully on Tuesday evenings, in Bromley, from 5.30pm - 6.30pm. Expanding the programme to include 17-24 year olds is our desire but securing the funding for this age group is proving challenging
- **Short Breaks and HAF (Holidays, Activities, Food)**  
We have been running Short Breaks and HAF during school holidays, in partnership with Bromley Children Family Forum and London Borough of Bromley for the past 3 years. The popularity of these free, full day sessions for parents of children with severe SEND has meant that we always have a waiting list. Thanks to funding we are able to offer a high percentage of spaces to children that require 1:1 support and personal care.
- **Easter 2022**  
Great organisation made Easter an incredible time for the children with multiple activity days for even our most severe SEND children. Using St Philomena's school in St Mary Cray meant we had lots of safe, outdoor space too which the children made the most of.
- **Christmas Party 2022**  
Another incredible Christmas party in Bromley where more than 100 children enjoyed the festivities whilst their parent/carers had a chance to socialise with other SEND parents whilst their children were being entertained and fed.

# Update of Destiny Children & Family Support Project

## Overview of the Project



- Our family support group has resumed but we need funding. We aim to provide carers with information and support when we meet, sharing personal experiences, sharing things that are working well with our children, signposting opportunities or organisations or even individuals we have found helpful, enjoying guest speakers, and meeting with other mums of SEND children being part of a network. The Project was running monthly since November 2015, supporting families with children with a range of disabilities such as Autism, ADHD, speech and language difficulties as well as other learning disabilities. This important support group is only able to meet sporadically now. We are desperate to regain a more regular time but we need to expand our capacity to support the demand.



**Destiny Children and Family Support project** is managed by LWFCI-UK and led by a team of staff and volunteers, the majority of whom are themselves parents or carers of children with special needs and learning disabilities.

Since COVID our Bromley Monday session, previously 5-7pm at Bromley United Reformed Church, has moved to Mountfield Community Centre in St Mary Cray. Due to there being no outdoor space at the Bromley site this was essential during COVID. Mountfield offers enclosed and safe outdoor space which is perfect for the warm summer evenings. The photos tell the tale..... Thank you Clarion for this community space.

- Since COVID hit, our Wednesday club is now, still, an online Zoom session where the children enjoy sensory activities, singing and social activities, interacting, discussing their week and receiving support and guided play. We have continued to provide our weekly sessions of creative, social activities for Children with Special Educational Needs giving carers a short break.





# THE PROJECT AND ITS IMPACT

- Destiny Children and Family Support Group continues to grow, with the number of attendees increasing as demand for our specialist provision ever increases. We need more staff to support this demand and are always looking for potential funders of our projects.
- The positive outcomes and personal development we witness through our clubs is heartwarming. The project aims to increase social communication and bonds between these SEND children, making friendships and connecting parents. They learn through play. Many of our children have no other clubs that they can attend due to their needs. To see these children engage with both the staff and the other children is very special.
- Children and Young people learn to connect more during social activities and Family Fun day outings, which encourages friendships. Parents and children get to spend quality time, in the presence of others who share their struggles, whilst enjoying themselves and relaxing.
- Children take turns in choosing play. This is an essential social skill that teaches them to be patient and considerate of others, helping build empathy and understanding. Learning to compromise and negotiate are also important skills for building healthy relationships. Through Arts and Craft activities we encourage self expression and creativity.









# Pet Therapy

One of our holiday staff organised for Beth and her therapy dog, Pepsi, to pay us a surprise visit in October 2022.

Pet Therapy has been shown to reduce stress and anxiety, helping to improve social skills, as the presence of animals can help children feel calmer.

Stroking a pet can relax children and alleviate their anxieties.

Pets need feeding, grooming and exercise, helping us to understand needs. Being 'needed' promotes a 'can do' attitude in other areas too, such as listening. Pets can listen and pick up on children's feelings; they may even alert special children to their own feelings.



# Our Wednesday Zoom Sessions....

Destiny Children's Wednesday Club is now an online Zoom session. During Lockdown it was for two hours; the first hour being sensory play and an arts and craft project with all materials being bought by the club and delivered to each household by volunteers. Due to the cost Zoom club is now just one hour on a Wednesday. It attracts a regular group of between 7 and 10 children who love the routine. Children learn to listen to others, ask questions, share their own ideas and engage in discussion which involves turn taking.

Our regulars really look forward to their Zoom club. We talk about upcoming events, the weather, how everyone is feeling and how their week has been then we go on to play bingo. The winner of bingo gets to choose a prize.

After bingo we play an online game called Blooket. This is a fun game stealing gold from others whilst learning new information and learning how to lose. A few children have come from crying about losing to clapping others when they win. Playing these games and interacting with friends has been great for learning life and social skills. After Blooket we have a wonderful sibling of one of our members who has a great singing voice and volunteers her time to sing with the children. They each choose a song and everyone sings along karaoke style!

Our Zoom club is a great opportunity for our members who cannot access the face to face activities and has become something that the young people really look forward to. It has been an amazing forum for friendships to blossom as time is allowed at the end for socialising.



# Family Support Forum Group

- The Family Support Forum Group is a safe space for parent/carers to come together to exchange and share information and experiences as well as to discuss common issues.

We try to arrange for professional guest speakers to attend meetings in order to provide information and support to our members. Attendees had the opportunity to network with each other and relax without the interruption of their children, who were busy learning and engaged in creative social activities at Destiny Children Club.

In July 2022, we had a joint collaboration event (Embracing Diversity) with Your Voice and Health Social Care which was an open event to families from ethnic minority backgrounds who have children with special needs and disabilities in Bromley. Our members had opportunities to share ideas with other parent/carers and hear relevant information from senior members of Bromley Council and NHS representatives who were the guest speakers of the event giving opportunities to ask any questions about SEND Services in Bromley.



**DESTINY CHILDREN & CARERS SEN CLUB**

**VIRTUAL PARENT & CARERS SUPPORT FORUM**

VIRTUAL MONTHLY PEER SUPPORT FORUM MEETING FOR ALL PARENT AND CARERS OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES . ON THE 1ST MONDAY OF EACH MONTH FROM 11AM-1PM ON ZOOM

**Parents & Carers' forum**

Are you a Parent of a child with special needs or a carer of someone with disability? If yes you are invited to our monthly Virtual parent and Carer forum. Running on the 1st Monday of each month from 11am-1pm

The forum is led by parents with different professional guest speakers every month to empower carers with knowledge to improve health, wellbeing, emotional resilience and share valuable information on how to deal with challenging issues as carers, tips and shared experience to support each other. We also provide weekly SEN Club for children and young carers.

Start Date : Monday 19th October from 11am-1pm on ZOOM.

To join in, please contact us on  
Tel: 0203 583 3005, Mob: 07950746544,  
email: info@lwfc.org.uk,  
Web: www.lwfc.org.uk

Free for all including Young Carers aged 16 years and plus.

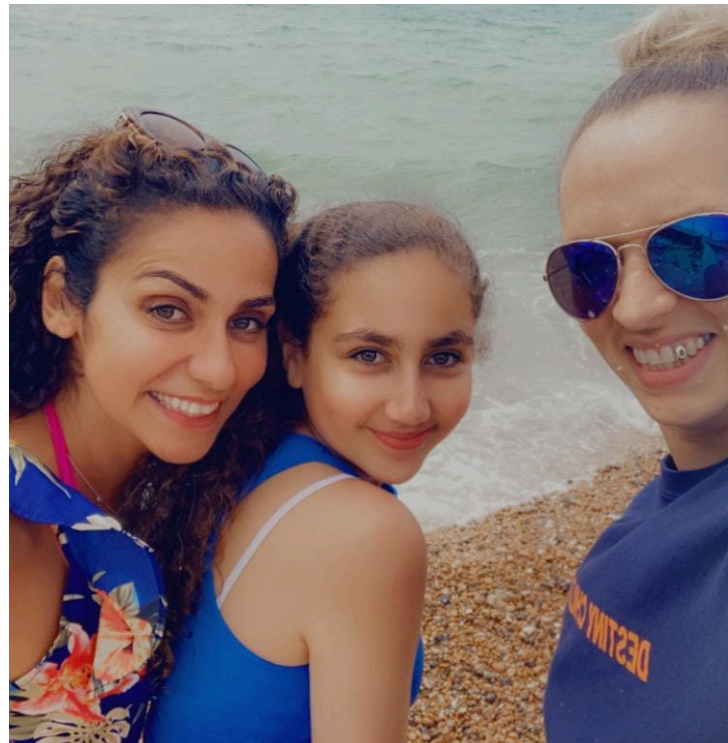




# Family Day Outings and Educational Day Trips

- We organise amazing day trips and outings every year as family day coach trips, travelling together with our children and families to various destinations and activities for our members, as part of our Destiny Children and family support programme.
- It is always rewarding to witness the sheer joy and excitement of the children and their families on an enjoyable day out. Children and parents get the opportunity to socialise with each other as well as with other families, which is evident in the following photos .
- Thanks to Bromley Children & Families Voluntary Sector Forum some of the children from Destiny Children SEND Club were able to experience swimming at **WEST WICKHAM SWIMMING POOL**. The whole teaching pool was for the private use of the SEND group. It was an unforgettable experience. Many children attending had never been in a swimming pool before! The excitement in the water was tangible and even the lifeguards were touched by the happiness on display from both children and adults. The children were hungry after their swim so we walked to **Scotts Kitchen** in West Wickham High Street to enjoy a delicious lunch. Some of the young people had never experienced eating in a restaurant before and the hire of the venue by BCFFORUM made this possible.







# Trips Continued...

- Clarion Housing gave us funding for a **Coronation themed** event so we went to **Forest School at Lullingstone Country Park**. Thanks to Bromley Children and Families Voluntary Sector Forum we were able to hire a coach and staff and even buy a hot snack for everyone. The day included making mini crowns for the tiny, toy animal kings that we raced down the river on handmade mini rafts. We also made and cooked food on a campfire and for many it was their first time at a Country Park. We don't think it will be their last!
- More than 70 people were able to enjoy this day out in the beautiful Kent countryside and many parents as well as children put on their wellies to wade into the river for a regal raft race.
- Thank you to the Lullingstone Country Park Rangers for such a memorable day









# Inclusive football for girls and boys

- Football is for all boys and girls, whatever their ability, aged 8-14 years, running every Saturday from 2pm -3.30pm in Orpington, at Harris Academy Football ground. This class is free to all Clarion Housing residents, or a £1 per session charge for all other residents.
- Our football club has been going from strength to strength with a weekly turnout of 22 boys and girls participating





# Short Breaks and HAF





## Short Breaks and HAF updates

During half term in February we had 2 days of enrichment activities with the lovely **Ying Ying** who engaged our children in **Tai-chi**. We also had **Zumba dance** for the 1st time with **Marnie Carr** and the amazing **Captain Fantastic Children's Entertainment** and **Zebadee Kidz Parties** who provided our children and young people with sensory and classic entertainment. Sport was included with **basketball** and **football** and our own in-house activities such as **sensory play, arts and crafts** and many more activities were led by our amazing staff Lay Witnesses for Christ International UK #destinychildrensenclub. ShortBreaks allows our children and young people to engage with their peers whilst at the same time giving respite to parent/carers of children with special needs and disabilities in Bromley.

In October 2022 we ended the week with a surprise visit from the **London Fire Brigade** of the Orpington Fire Station. Our children were overjoyed to see the firemen and the fire engine and asked many questions.

During the summer of 2022 our HAF summer scheme participants enjoyed **tai chi, face painting, football, basketball, team building games, arts and crafts, water play, film time, dancing with Magpie dance, dressing up** and most importantly **social interaction** with each other and **building friendships**.





# Inclusive Basketball for young people in Bromley

## Active Kids In Action!

➤ The aim of our sports activities is to develop fitness, confidence and self-esteem as well as improving physical and mental health.

➤ Our Basketball sessions allow young people of all abilities to play basketball. They learn to be part of a team, developing their social skills and good behaviours, promoting sportsmanship and fitness in a non-competitive environment.



# End Of Year Christmas Party

- We ended the year by hosting our usual Christmas party for all our families including siblings, carers and grandparents with entertainment supplied by Zebedee Entertainment and Captain Fantastic .
- The children took to the stage to entertain the adults with singing and dancing. One of our young people even wrote his own Christmas message which he confidently shared with everyone from the stage.
- We would like to acknowledge the incredible generosity of the Indian Community and Mortgagekart and Asha from Kent Women Interfaith Network who kindly donated so much that we could provide hot meals, including both African and European dishes, with enough funds left over to buy all the young people a Christmas gift which was joyfully received from Santa.







## Testimonials and feedback quotes from participants.

"I find this support very helpful. This definitely helps as both my boys have special needs so gives me a little bit of respite on occasions. I would like to say in a few words here, that short breaks activities have been a great way to help my son's physical and emotional wellness. He always looks forward to it each time there's a break from school and I could tell his confidence is high and he's always happy to attend those activities"

"I would like to point out what wonderfully inspirational and supportive people you are. You offer a wide range of activities,.clubs and groups and have to say I would be totally lost without you. My child constantly looks forward to all events and has made great relationships throughout. The support and friendship that your company provides is priceless and to have a child with special needs without you this would be truly hard to find. Keep up the great work your amazing and thank-you xx

*"...to let you know how grateful I am for being able to access your provision. My son has profound needs and this the only organisation that provides activities he can easily access. He also gets 1to1 and personal care that other organisations don't provide for short break. Well done to all the team."*

"My 2 children with ASD have been attending different times the short-break activities provided by Jennifer and her staff at LWFCI-UK and I have to say that without their help, I wouldn't have received the support needed. They provide high standard caring for children with disabilities considering that all the staff is highly trained and experienced first-hand both professionally and personally."

*"There aren't any other short-breaks group providing activities exclusively for children with SEN so therefore their activities are extremely important for the community"*



## Resources and how to connect with us.

Our office address is : LWFCI-UK, 20 Widmore Road, Bromley, BR1 1RY.  
Tel 0203 583 3005, Email: [info@lwfc.org.uk](mailto:info@lwfc.org.uk)

Donation link on to support this project on Global Global giving:

<http://bit.ly/2zMBWeE>

Website: [www.lwfc.org.uk](http://www.lwfc.org.uk)

<https://www.facebook.com/LWFCIUK>

<https://twitter.com/LwfcUk>

**THANK YOU TO ALL OUR SUPPORTERS, FUNDERS, STAFF, VOLUNTEERS  
AND MEMBERS FOR ALL YOUR HARD WORK. YOUR SUPPORT WILL  
ALWAYS BE APPRECIATED . TOGETHER WE ARE MAKING  
A HUGE DIFFERENCE IN OUR COMMUNITIES.**

