

Learners' Barbecue Event

It was a good do on Saturday! Useful information stands and very impressive presentation about the Learning Buddies. The food was good too! Altogether an enjoyable and helpful event ... Liked meeting people and the quiz gave you a chance to speak to people ... We're able to find out what's on offer.

SOME LEARNERS' COMMENTS

On Saturday 28 May, over 100 learners came along to the CLAN Learners' BBQ. We had information stalls about other learning opportunities, a quiz with prizes, a presentation by the Learning Buddies and some yummy food to finish it all off.

Information stalls were provided by Workers' Educational Association (WEA), Stevenson College Edinburgh, Community Based Adult Learning (CBAL), Second Chance to Learn (2CTL) and Adult Education Programme (The City of Edinburgh Council).

The planning group designed and took charge of the quiz. Congratulations to the winners - 3rd prize (book token) went to the Pennywell Playsacks, 2nd prize (HMV token) went to Pamela and 1st prize (PlayStation) went to Kayann.

The Learning Buddies gave an excellent presentation about the exciting work they have been doing promoting learning to community organisations. If you would like to find out more about the Learning Buddies, please get in touch with Rosemary Byfield (rosemary@clanedinburgh.org).

Irene, Debs, Jo and Katy did a fantastic job of helping to plan the event by designing the invites for learners and creating the quiz. The group are keen to invite more learners along to the meetings - so please ask learners if they would like to get involved and help to plan another event. We usually meet on a Saturday morning. Contact Lorraine. Tel: 0131 270 6072. Email: lorraine@clanedinburgh.org

What could be better and what's next?

"Better microphone, bigger room, more organized seating and tables. Hearing more from other students, e.g. the Learning Buddies. Small groups, something to involve everyone, regular social events (not just once or twice a year), trips, a play, a participatory event, a social event with workshops."



e-news

E-News, CLAN's email newsletter, was launched this month and we hope those of you who have already received it found it an informative read and a useful addition to Beans. The purpose of E-News is to share helpful information quickly about what CLAN including learners are doing in Edinburgh, about the national literacy scene and about the support CLAN can offer. We will publish E-News fortnightly (on Mondays). With this frequency, some editions will be slim, others bulky! If you wish to add any comment or submit an article for inclusion in E-News, or if you would like to subscribe to the newsletter

email: enews@clanedinburgh.org

or tel: 0131 270 6072

e-news

DYSLEXIA

Dealing with dyslexia

"The first time I was able to read something, I was about twelve and a half. I was in the car with my parents and we were driving into the village where we lived when I saw the sign that we'd passed many times before. The letters on the sign had always been a mixture of shapes but on that particular day I could read it. At just thirteen I read my first book and felt a real sense of pride at completing a whole book. It was hard but I was very determined". (Carl Barber)



Determination features highly on Carl Barber's list of attributes. He has had to overcome huge personal difficulties to get to where he is today and it is this determination that has helped him to succeed in areas which at times he thought impossible.

Carl was diagnosed with dyslexia at the age of forty. Until then his life had been fairly chaotic. Like many dyslexics Carl became disruptive at school and was put down a class resulting in him becoming very introverted. At the age of ten he couldn't read or write and had no sense of numbers. His parents tried to help by giving him 'Look and Learn' magazines. "I enjoyed looking at the pictures", laughs Carl. When he started at secondary school the pupils and teachers were far less expecting of his condition and he had a rough time. During his childhood years he was sent to various professionals to try and discover what was wrong with him. At no time was dyslexia diagnosed but opinions ranged from hydrocephalus to the idea that he was so clever he couldn't cope with simple things. One child assessor said that he had a 'lazy mind'.

Carl left school without any qualifications. After attempting a secretarial course, where he got up to 60 mistakes a minute with his typing and a stint working for his father's business, Carl did nothing for at least ten years. He eventually found work as an auxiliary nurse and this gave him the confidence to apply for a job as an illustrator with the Scottish Wildlife Trust. Despite his difficulties with reading and writing Carl's artistic talents shone through and he was fortunate to have a boss who could see his potential.

Carl eventually came to some conclusions himself about his condition and these were confirmed by an Occupational Psychologist who diagnosed him with dyslexia. The Psychologist suggested he go to Stevenson College to take the DAST test but after years of having to deal with medical and educational authorities which had resulted in increased isolation Carl could not see the point by now, or face any more assessments, so declined.

"I was relieved to finally have a name to my condition though. I worked out ways to overcome my disability and found that there is always something I can use. Electronic calendars have been a revelation and software in general has been a great help. Travel caused me a lot of anxiety, due to poor comprehension of timetables, platform numbers and signs. Asking for directions was useless. By the time the person had finished the first sentence I would have forgotten what they had said and would not have understood anyway. Of course I never let on. Thank goodness those days are in the past". (Carl)

Carl now runs his own graphics company 'CJB Training and Design' and is a Director on the board of Craigmillar Ability Network. He feels he is very fortunate to have found his way even though trying to live in the 'able world' as he calls it caused him two nervous breakdowns. But he admits, the psychological damage inflicted by medical and educational people amongst others, was for a long time as debilitating as the actual disability.

2nd Chance to Learn and Craigmillar Ability Network have been the biggest help in building up his self-confidence and educating him about disabled rights and empowerment. He is grateful for their help and for the tremendous support from his wife and son. "My wife must have been crazy for marrying me and putting up with my weird ways and chaotically bad memory!", says Carl.

Carl wanted to share his long journey as he feels he has won his battle of self confidence and learning to be positive when all the odds were stacked against him. He'd like to tell other people who are in a similar position that there is a way out, you can succeed.



A new CLAN Challenge Fund Project 'Powerful Literacies' will be developing and piloting materials for learning about literacy in the context of participation in the Scottish Parliament.

As part of the project, we want to talk to focus groups of learners about how they learn about the Parliament, what they feel they need to know and what issues interest them. We hope to set up the focus group meetings before the end of term and would be very glad to talk to any learners who might be interested in taking part. We can invite learners to a focus group as individuals or meet with learners in an existing group. For more information, contact Catherine Macrae. Tel: 0131 652 3938. Email: catherine@clanedinburgh.org

Stevenson College Award Ceremony

Four CLAN students celebrated their achievements earlier this month at the Stevenson College Awards Ceremony at the Queens Hall, Edinburgh.

The CLAN New Learner Award for Literacy went to Mary Doig. Mary has only recently started learning with CLAN but by working extremely hard on her reading and spelling, her confidence in her abilities has grown and she has achieved a great deal.

Nichola Neil accepted the CLAN New Learner Award for Numeracy. Nichola had lacked confidence in her maths skills but with a combination of effort and commitment she made tremendous progress.

The CLAN Continuing Learner Award was presented to Michelle Clelland. Michelle started CLAN classes with little confidence in her abilities but as she made tremendous commitment to her learning by attending every single week, her skills improved. Michelle then progressed to the Adult Returners' Course but she continues to attend a CLAN group in the evening.

Finally, ESOL student Nusrat Ayub was presented with the CLAN ESOL Literacy Award. Nusrat received the award for her perseverance with her learning and the increase in her study skills and confidence. She is extremely proud to have received the award, her family are delighted and a video of the ceremony is on its way to Pakistan!



Photo: Nicola Neil (left) Michelle Clelland (centre) and Mary Doig (right).

This unique project funded by Clydesdale Bank was featured in last month's Beans and has received recognition from a variety of sources. The Evening News ran several articles on the Learning Buddies and they have been invited by Learning Connections to speak at Murraysfield Stadium on International Literacy Day (8 September). The group will also be heading up to Inverness on 14 September to speak at a meeting of the seven North of Scotland literacies agencies including the Highlands and Islands.

If you would like to read the Evening News article on the Learning Buddies go to <http://edinburghnews.com>



Photo: Learning Buddies Tanya (left) and Tam (right), Malcolm Chisholm in the centre.

Learning Buddies Celebrate!

Friends and family of the Learning Buddies were amongst those who attended a special awards ceremony at McDonald Road Library last month to celebrate the achievements the Learning Buddies had made to promote numeracy learning to others.

Malcolm Chisholm, Communities Minister, presented the awards and Councillor Ewan Aitken, Executive Member for Children and Families, and Aileen Nimmo, General Counsel of Clydesdale Bank, spoke at the event.

Councillor Aitken commented, "Everyday tasks that many of us take for granted, such as helping your child with homework, filling out forms and dealing with bank statements can be a daunting prospect for some adults living in Edinburgh but the partnership between CLAN and Clydesdale will go a long way in addressing this. The Learning Buddies should be congratulated on their hard work, commitment and enthusiasm in encouraging new numeracy learners".

The Learning Buddies gave a presentation of their work and two of the group, Jeanette Cousland and Pam Burns gave us a taster of the talks they had been doing to the groups.

Jeanette said, "I started on a learning course 18 months ago after I found out I had a form of dyslexia which meant that I was unable to recognise numbers properly. I felt very apprehensive about joining an adult learning programme. I thought it would be like going back to school which I hated as a kid. But I soon realised that maths didn't have to be a task and could be quite fun. Your self esteem just rockets once you get the chance to learn at your own pace. I've really enjoyed going out to groups and talking to people about my own learning experience. I've got so much more confidence now and I hope I've encouraged other people to go back to learning."

Irene Swankie, Clydesdale's Community Affairs Manager, added, "People and the communities in which they live are the very heart of our business and we take our responsibilities towards them very seriously. We are therefore delighted to work closely with CLAN to support such inspiring Learning Buddies as they encourage others to improve their own numeracy and literacy skills. It is only right that their endeavours should be recognised at such a high-profile event and I would like to wish them every success in the future."





Clydesdale Bank Funds Family Learning Numeracy Projects



Family Learning in Edinburgh is involved with four exciting new numeracy projects funded by Clydesdale Bank.

A trip to Edinburgh Zoo provided the inspiration for the idea behind 'A Jungle Adventure'. This numeracy game is being developed by the Family Learning Parents' Group at Brunstane Primary School with Family Learning Worker Barbara Middleton. The game is aimed at pre-school children and Primary 1s and will be launched at the school on the 28th June. Devising the game has given parents the opportunities to develop their own and their children's understanding of maths in a fun and relaxed way.

Barbara is also working on a calendar with a group of parents at Niddrie Mill Primary School.

Family Learning Worker, Beth Blue runs the Play-a-long Maths project with parents from St David's and Pirniehall Nursery class in Pilton. Play-a-long Maths is about promoting, developing and building up children's mathematical vocabulary skills through playing fun number related games and puzzles each day with their parents/carers." The project will culminate in an event on 29th June.

Over at Craighour Park Primary School, Caroline Anderson is also working on the Play-a-long Maths project with parents of Primary 2 children.

All of the parents' involved in the groups stressed how important it was for them to spend quality time with their children and have fun! The funding from Clydesdale has enabled them to learn new skills and brush up on their own learning skills, build stronger links with their children's school and value education as a lifelong process that directly affects the quality of their lives.

The Living Memory Association training is designed to help anyone who wants to work in reminiscence. The cost for a one-day event is £55 for organisations (£30 concessions). Lunch is provided. Training will take place at the LMA, 101 St Leonard's Street, Edinburgh, on the following Fridays:

24 June	1 July	22 July
9 September	23 September	4 November
11 November	25 November	2 December

For more details or to book a place contact John McCaughie. Tel: 0131 667 0761. Email john@livingmemory.org.uk

WEBSITES Reading for Information

Most of the material that adults come across in everyday life is fiction rather than non fiction so students are often working on reading newspapers, junk mail, web pages or leaflets. The following sites offer useful theory and ideas on effective strategies for reading for information.

www.big6.com/showarticle.php?id=45

This article, aimed at tutors, covers key words, skimming and scanning and taking notes. Specifically, it describes the 'Trash and Treasure' method of taking notes and explains how you might teach this to students.

www.squires.fayette.k12.ky.us/library/research/reading.htm

Squires is a US web site aimed at school learners, but it does offer students a clear, step by step guide to reading for information. It covers key words, skimming and scanning and taking notes in the context of a research project.

www.altn.org/webquests/websites

In the last issue of Beans the idea of web quests was discussed. This site offers a web quest about reading web sites. The material explores: Who is the author? Is the information accurate? Is there bias? When was the website made?

JOB VACANCY

Adult Literacies Worker - Voluntary Sector £18,441 to £25,527

An enthusiastic, imaginative literacy and numeracy worker is required at Edinburgh University Settlement. The successful candidate will be a graduate who is experienced in teaching English as a Second Language as well as helping adults with few or no qualifications to develop their literacies skills. In addition, he/she will have the ability to help in the development and administration of the literacies programme at EUS.

Job description and application pack available from Kate Brock, Edinburgh University Settlement, Building 3, New Parliament House, 5-7 Regent Road, Edinburgh EH7 5BL. Tel: 0131 550 6805. Email: kateb@2ctly.org.uk

Closing Date: Friday 24 June. Interviews will be held the week beginning 18 July.



The next edition of Beans will be out in July. If you would like to contribute, send your items to Fiona Holmes, CLAN Edinburgh, 1-3 Canon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5HE. Tel: 0131 270 6073. Fax: 0131 270 6074. Email: fiona@clanedinburgh.org Web: www.clanedinburgh.org

MORE BYTES