

The Furnival Newsletter



New beginnings

Following the sad closure of our Cellar Space project last February we made the decision to move from our original building, which was no longer suitable for our needs, to The Furnival Community Space, a much smaller but adequate space next door. This gives us a solid base in the heart of the community we serve and means we focus our resources on those who need it.

Creative English

We have now been running our Creative English classes for three years; these have formed the basis of strong relationships with the community around us. We run women only groups as we recognise the need for this and welcome children, as this makes our groups more accessible. Our twice-weekly groups have been accessed by over 300 women so far and each week we welcome new faces as word spreads among friends and families.

Creative English is a community-based language programme which builds confidence and belonging through fun, laughter and role-play of everyday scenarios.

www.creative-english.org.uk

Our learners come from a wide range of countries: Somalia, Yemen, Syria, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Algeria and many others. Some women are newly-arrived and others have been in Sheffield for several years, but for many reasons have not had the opportunity to learn English.

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In January we were commissioned to run the Welcome to Sheffield programme by the Sheffield City Council FACES (Adult Community Education) department, with funding from the Controlled Migration Fund. Their support and recognition of our contribution to language learning in North Sheffield has made a big difference to our reputation and sustainability.

Some quotes from our community:

"This group helps me so much – thank you."

"I have made lots of friends and know more of my neighbours now. Before, I would just wave at my neighbours but now we know each other better and we talk and support each other."

"We support each other in this group, if someone is ill we help each other with shopping and medication."

"We are always encouraged in the classes, it gives me confidence to go out and speak to others, using the English I have learned. When I came from Pakistan I was pregnant and you gave me confidence to speak to my GP."

A local family enjoying the activities

Covid-19 Response

We were of course stopped in our tracks in March due to the coronavirus pandemic, but we were determined to continue to support our community at this difficult time.

With children at home for a prolonged period it was a priority to provide our families with the resources needed to occupy and educate their children at home.

With the support of the South Yorkshire Community Foundation Covid-19 Response Fund we were able to provide over 50 Stay-at-Home Fun Bags packed with quality resources and activities.



From the community:

"They loved everything, the boys are making slime and my daughter is colouring while we are all trying to do the puzzle"

"Thank you for everything you have done for me and my family, they love the toys you brought them."

"My son likes playing on the yo-yo, now all my kids are happy, thank you."

"Thank you, everybody was happy and smiling with the toys, now my kids are not bored they are very, very happy"

"A big thank you for your special gift. God bless you more and more, my children say a big thank you"

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Creative English on Zoom

During April we started to look at how to continue the provision of English language learning and started our first on-line Zoom Creative English classes. This was a learning curve for us all and we helped our learners to access zoom and supplied some additional devices to support families who were limited to one smart phone, which was also being used for the children's schoolwork.

The topics for the sessions were adapted to reflect the new environment and the challenges being faced whilst staying true to the aims of supporting the wellbeing and integration of newly-arrived and migrant people in the North of Sheffield

Our learners reported feeling more connected and supported at a time of stress.

Creative English for families over Summer

Having completed our delivery of Creative English up to early July, we continued our work with our learners and their families during the school holiday period, looking at creative ways to encourage learning together and sharing of ideas.

We provided Zoom sessions throughout the school holidays, some of which were aimed at the whole family, so the children joined in the learning with their Mums.

We learned about housing: describing different types of housing such as flats, terraced houses and semi-detached, learned the vocabulary for windows, doors and furnishings, and designed our own dream homes.



We chose six amazing picture books - one for each week of the holidays - and distributed them to the families for our Summer Book Club.



Mums and Dads read to children and children who are starting to read shared the stories with their parents and siblings. The stories were read over and over again. Each book had a linked activity and pictures drawn by the children were shared to their WhatsApp group.

Autumn Groups

This term we have started a new Book Club, a Craft Club and a weekly cook-along class, all on Zoom. We are all enjoying learning how to cook a new dish each week.

This helps engage more learners and appeal to different interests and learning styles.



Toy Library

We run a wonderful Toy Library of educational books and toys from our new community space. We delivered as many items as possible to our families as lockdown started and since September we have been pleased to be able to welcome families to use the Toy Library again with covid safe visits to our Community Space.

Peaced Together

We are very excited to be working with Peaced Together on a programme to run a creative arts group for women with English as an additional language. Peaced Together encourages women to reflect on their lives and set out on a personal journey from brokenness to hope. Following a period of training this Autumn we hope to deliver our first course early in 2021.

Community Garden

With funding from Soil Association Food for Life Get Togethers, we embarked this year on a journey to develop a Community Garden by our Community Space. This was done differently due to lockdown but we were still able to grow several crops and deliver the fresh produce to local families. We look forward to local families getting involved in more growing and the establishment of a community orchard in the coming year.



We strive to respond to the needs of the community around us and are grateful for your help and support for our work

Best wishes for 2021

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