

NEWS BULLETIN

April 2019

Len Wins Volunteer of the Year Award!

We are thrilled that our Chair of Trustees, Len Preece, has won the Neath Port Talbot Mayor's Volunteer of the Year Award. We are so proud!



Len works tirelessly every day at Canolfan Maerdy – he set up the free fresh food hub and is the main transport of the food, going out every evening between 8 and 10pm to collect and bring back surplus, unsold food from supermarkets in Ammanford and Pontardulais for the local community to collect. He is also the 'Registered Person' for our Lots of Tots Nursery, passionately caring about the welfare and rights of children. Additionally, he carries out numerous tasks at the centre, such as ensuring we get good financial deals for our electric and telephone, helping to maintain equipment at the centre, feeding into Consultation documents and chairing our Board meetings and providing strategic direction as part of his role as a Trustee.

The Award is extremely well deserved; despite being a retired gentleman of many years, Len works full time on a voluntary basis at the Centre. However, alongside this he is also a local community councillor and Chairs the Rural Development Plan Committee.

Well done and a huge thank you to you Len and Congratulations from us all!



New Community Transport Service

Introducing Sacha Petrie, the new Community Transport Development Co-ordinator for the Upper Amman Community Car Scheme.

Sacha's role will be to develop community transport services for residents living in and around the local villages in the Upper Amman Valleys

In partnership with D.A.N.S.A., charges are subsidised and transport is available for



individuals and groups directly from their homes. To register your interest in the scheme,

become a volunteer driver or for further information, contact Sacha on 07938 071 9638 between 10am and 4pm, Monday to Friday, or email her at communitytransportcm@gmail.com.

Maggi Dawson

As one new member of staff joins our team, it is with great sadness that we say farewell to one of our long-standing Trustees.



Maggi Dawson has been a stalwart for the Centre since she joined Welsh Language classes with the then Amman Valley Enterprise almost 30 years ago. She remained dedicated to the ethos and worked for the organisation as Director, then became a Trustee and was subsequently a founding Board member of Canolfan Maerdy. Following a career in youth work and as a leading light in Adult Education, Maggi spent the last 8 years of her working life as CEO/General Secretary of the Workers' Educational Association in Wales. As testament to her dedication to lifelong learning, for her services to community development and education in Wales, Maggi was honoured with both an MBE and more recently an OBE.

Since retiring in 2015, Maggi and her husband Richard have enjoyed living part of the year at their other home in Crete. However, as they now spend longer periods there, she has made the decision to step down as a Trustee. Nevertheless, Maggi will not be completely cutting ties with Canolfan Maerdy as she has kindly offered to continue helping with writing funding applications and providing general advice and support from a distance. Our grateful thanks to Maggi for all her help in the past and continuing support in the future.

Now, please turn over and read the rest of our news ...

Lots of Tots Nursery



New term, new planning in place, Growing has been our theme and the children have had lots of fun digging for vegetables and fruit in the tough trays and having a market stall selling fruit and vegetables. There have been a number of fun things to celebrate e.g Dydd Gwyl Dewi, World Book Day, Comic Relief, Mother's Day. The children particularly enjoyed having 2 little lambs visiting them from our Sue B's farm and some of the older children even got to visit the farm itself.

Holiday Club

Our Holiday Club was very busy for the first week of the Easter Holidays. The children made the most of the lovely sunshine and had lots of fun and exercise in our outdoor play area. They particular enjoyed the Easter arts and crafts activities, with lots and lots of chocolate galore!! Messy play session was great fun and the children enjoyed playing with group. Don't forget to book your child in for half term and the summer holidays – charges are as follows:

7.30am to 6pm = £32.50

9.00am to 3pm = £21.50

7.30am to 1pm = £16.50

1.00pm to 6pm = £16.50

All meals, drinks and snacks are included.

Easter Fayre

Canolfan Maerdy's Lots of Tots Nursery held their Easter Fayre on 13th April. It was such a fun day for the community and children were entertained by the Easter Bunny and our local clown, Mr Crumble. In order to help us raise funds for Canolfan Maerdy, children took part in a sponsored 'Toddle Waddle' around the Trotting Track, enjoyed lots of different stalls including a lucky dip, cake stall, bric-a-brac and glitter tattoos and the café was open serving

delicious pulled pork rolls and hot dogs. Children enjoyed an Easter Egg Hunt, different fun games with prizes, a disco and an Easter Bonnet Competition. They were



also rewarded with free ice cream and a visit by the local Fire Service who brought their engine, hosepipe and uniforms for the children to try on. Overall, we raised over £700 for our charity, which

will be put towards replacing flooring in the nursery. A huge thank you to everyone who supported us, especially those individuals and organisations who provided raffle prizes, made cakes, donated bottles and tins for various stalls and the staff who volunteered their time to organise and run the event.

Emily, Sacha and Caroline achieve their Level 5 qualifications in Childcare

We are very proud that during the past year, three of our senior Nursery staff have all achieved their level 5 in childcare. Emily Stewart and Caroline Howells, Deputy Nursery Managers and Sasha Worton, Room Leader, have all worked exceptionally hard alongside their full time day jobs to achieve this notable qualification. Well done to all three of you!



Emily Stewart



Caroline Howells



Sasha Worton

Busy Rascals comes to Canolfan Maerdy

We are delighted that since 9th May, local parent/carer & baby/toddler group, Busy Rascals, hold regular weekly **morning sessions each Thursday** at Canolfan Maerdy between **9am and 11am**. (This is in additional to their afternoon sessions Mondays and Wednesdays in GCG Community Hall.) The charge is just £1.00 per family and gives local parents/grandparents/carers and the children a lovely opportunity to socialise during a morning, have a cuppa/snack, lots of fun and share problems and stories.



30 Hour Childcare Scheme



So many working parents are unaware that they can receive **FREE CHILDCARE** in our Lots of Tots Nursery if their child is aged 3-4 years. The Welsh

Government is committed to providing 30 hours per

week of combined early education and childcare for working parents for up to 48 weeks of the year and parents can choose the nursery they would like their child to attend. To be eligible, parents must be working a minimum of 16 hours per week at the national minimum wage or more (in a two parent family, both parents need to be working and a lone parent must be working). For more information, speak to the Nursery Manager or Deputy Managers who will also help you to register your child.

Autism Award



Canolfan Maerdy/Lots of Tots Nursery have been successful in achieving the National

Autism Society's Autism Spectrum Disorder Awareness Award. A huge well done to staff for accomplishing this important accolade.

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- ⇒ Is your child aged 0 to 11?
- ⇒ Does your child have additional needs?
- ⇒ Are you unemployed and claiming benefits?

If so, you may be eligible to access funds to assist with the cost of childcare fees and travel costs.

For further information, telephone our Nursery Manager, Anna, on 01269 826283 or call in to Lots of Tots to see her.



Parents Group

The Parents Group met on **Tuesday, 7th May** in our café. It would be lovely to see you at the next meeting – why not pop along and find out the news? All parents are welcome to come along, enjoy a cuppa and some cake and chat about all sorts of things relating to the children. It also gives nursery staff the opportunity to chat to parents about new developments the nursery would like to (or sometimes need to) introduce, giving parents the opportunity to provide ideas on how things can be achieved and also provide their thoughts and support for fundraising initiatives. Watch out for the date of the next meeting to be published on Facebook and on the Nursery Parents Communication Board.

Fundraising Events for Lots of Tots

We are hugely grateful to Emyr Jones, one of our local community members, for organising two fundraising events. He has offered to donate 50% of the proceeds to our children's nursery. Both events will take place in **Tairgwaith Community Hall** as follows:

Saturday 4 May, 8.00pm

– **Quiz Night**

(Team of 4 pay £10 per table)

Saturday 1 June, 1pm

– **Big Huw Memorial Darts Event**

(Doors open at 11am)

Entry costs £10 including special raffle draw)

Can you help?

We desperately need a **watertight, outdoor storage** for our children's nursery equipment so that we can rotate toys for children to enjoy a range of themed experiences



throughout the different seasons. Our existing outdoor wooden storage shed is now unusable. Does anyone have a new or almost new **metal shed approximately 10' x 10'** that they would be willing to donate to the nursery? If anyone can help, please get in touch with our Nursery Manager, Anna Rowlands or Deputy Managers, Emily or Caroline.

Community Food Hub

We are very grateful to our 'dynamic duo' Terry Pugh and Geraint Davies for helping to create a wonderful space for our food hub. With new stands kindly donated by an anonymous member of the community, the food is now beautifully displayed and is easier to see. Every day between 9.30am and 4.30pm, local people can call and collect **FREE** delicious fresh and chilled food and flowers kindly donated by local supermarkets - Tesco Stores through its Fareshare scheme, Lidl through its Neighbourly scheme and the Co-op through its Foodshare scheme.



During the past year, our volunteers have collected and delivered to us more than **15 tonnes of free food**, which has been distributed to the local community, equivalent to **31,000 meals** and as far as the prevention of landfill is concerned, we have accomplished an **environmental saving of 47,000 kg of Co²**. This is a remarkable achievement by our dedicated volunteers - a **HUGE THANK YOU** to them (especially to Len Preece who started up the initiative) and the supermarkets for helping us to help those who are experiencing a period of financial hardship.

Maerdy Youth Group

As well as their evening sessions, the Youth enjoyed day time activities during the school Easter Holidays. This included crafts, cooking, sports, a visit to the cinema and quizzes. Members also took part in Llandeilo's BGP Estate Agents, 'Design Your Own Easter Egg' Competition. Five of our members were runners up – Congratulations and 'Well Done' go to Ella-Louise Lewis, Joel Clifton, Ashley Lewis, Ethan Grace and Kirsten Watkins.



Maerdy Youth meet every Wednesday and Thursday evening between 5.30pm and 8pm and pay just 50p for weekly subs. They also meet for

sessions during the day time during school holidays.

Currently, membership is for young people aged between 11 and 18 years but if over 18s are interested in meeting, we are willing to set up separate sessions for them.



The group enjoy a whole range of fun activities including music, dance, cooking and craft sessions, trips and residential stays. A trip to Drayton Manor Park is currently being planned for June and new members are always welcome. The session activity programme for May is currently being finalised and will be published as soon as it is available.

For further information, contact Becky or Hannah on 01260 826893 or email admin@canolfanmaerdy.co.uk

We are recruiting ...

We are looking to appoint three **new members of staff**.

Food Hub Cook/Nutritionist

20 hours/week

Administrator/Volunteer Organiser

16 hours/week

(The closing date for these positions is 21st May)

Operations Manager

25 hours/week

Volunteer Trustees to join our Board

(The closing date for these positions is 24th May)

We are **looking for people** who **know the area** and are aware of its challenges, are **impartial, reliable, responsible, proactive** and enjoy **helping others** in the community. We need people of **high integrity** who are **dependable, proactive** and **able to devote time and energy to the organisation**.

Are you interested? If so, please get in touch on 01269 826893 or email gill@canolfanmaerdy.co.uk for an application pack.

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