

March 16<sup>th</sup> 2010  
Johnstone Action Group



*Hear No Evil, See No Evil and Speak No Evil  
Otherwise known as Jess, Lesley and Tom.*

Flexi-Care's 7<sup>th</sup> and final booking (for the moment!) for Buddy Beat arrived on March 16<sup>th</sup> and the venue was Thorn Primary in Johnstone, where The Johnstone Action Group, or JAG, meet up once a week. JAG is another Flexi-Care group for adults with learning difficulties.

The Buddy Beaters were:-

- ✓ Jane Bentley
- ✓ Tom Chalmers
- ✓ Lesley King
- ✓ Jess McMillan

We arrived at the school for the 7-9 club meeting in time for it opening and very quickly the group had arranged a circle of chairs, for one of their organisers is a chap called Tom (which caused our Tom a bit of confusion at times) and he helps with the Linwood Action Group and had been with us when we held a workshop there on 17<sup>th</sup> February. For those who haven't been inside Thorn Primary, it is match-box sized and with 30 club members, volunteers and carers in the room, it was a tight fitting drum circle in the dining hall.

The group seemed eager to get going and Jane introduced herself and spoke a little about Buddy Beat and then introduced her 3 willing slaves, Tom, Lesley and Jess. Jane began with the throwing of the inflatable globe to get everyone's names and with such a large crowd this lasted a full ten minutes. From there, Jane demonstrated the different djembe, shakers, frogs and tambourines. She then invited everyone to

pick their own and this went smoothly. Jane began by letting everyone beat away as they pleased and showed them how to follow instructions for playing loudly and softly, starting and stopping and first off they were very good at this. Out came the Stick of Power and Jane conducted the circle and then asked for volunteers to do the same. Caroline was first up and she seemed to get a kick out of the control it gave her and she was quickly followed by Christopher, Billy, James and Anne with Jane gently coaxing them along. Next up Jane started off Rhumble Tennis which metamorphosed into Rhythm Tennis and one of the group was Tommy, who sat with one of Jane's new tall free-standing drums, and he showed excellent rhythm. Back into a jamming session and the noise certainly filled the small but high ceilinged hall. Keeping that going, it was the turn of just the drums for a minute and then solely the percussion instruments. Then the party favourite, with the men versus the women which Jane repeated once, and it was most likely a draw. One of the JAG members was Christopher and he sang almost non-stop every time the group played together and his repertoire included Rolf Harris' "Tie Me Kangaroo Down Sport" and The Farms "Altogether Now", and he had rather a good voice. So that took us up to a well-earned break for 25 minutes and we sat with a can of pop and chatted. One of the chaps was Robbie and he asked Buddy Beat Tom where he came from. Tom replied "Paisley". Robbie digested this and then asked Jane where she came from. Jane replied "Glasgow" and a look of horror came over Robbie before he uttered "Oh my God!"

Jane began the 2<sup>nd</sup> period with a mighty rhumble that raised the roof. Splitting the circle into two we then had one half playing and the other listening and they were all very kind to one another and politely applauded. Jane then asked for just the frogs to play and the peaceful croaking of 4 frogs filled the busy room. Jane asked for the tambourines to take over, but the group decided they just wanted to play and suddenly it was a free for all! Jane then regained control and split the group into 4, and each one took turns to play for twenty seconds or so, and some of the JAG faces lit up at their chance to perform. JAG Organiser Tom stirred things up by loudly by declaring that "The Linwood group was better!" which brought a chorus of denials and he was soon put in his place. Jane then ended things off with her mysterious instrument, The Hang which as usual brought out some oohs and aahs and Caroline thought it was a space ship and Robbie asked if there was a bomb in it. Jane demonstrated and the group seemed happy to sit back and take in the soft relaxing notes. Jane then suggested two come up at a time for a shot of The Hang but this quickly translated into six at a time huddled round it.

And that was the end of another Flexi-Care workshop. It had been great fun, as had all the workshops. Each was different in their own way and each had their own personalities, giving us some laughs and this helped make them all very rewarding especially when we saw the happy faces and eagerness of the group members. One thing is for sure, and that is that we have all made many new friends during our time with everyone at Flexi-Care!

Words by Tom Chalmers  
Photograph taken by Jane Bentley