

March 2nd 2010

Paisley Action Group

The very next night after our WRVS success, Jane's busy drumming world continued with her latest Flexi-Care booking. So, On March 2nd, we went to St Catherine's Primary in Paisley's Gallowhill. We had been there before on October 2009 for Jane's 1st Flexi-Care booking, when we held a workshop for half a dozen or so teenage boys with Asbergers.

Paisley Action Group is another club for adults with learning difficulties and it was a healthy turnout with 24 members and carers. From the start you could tell that they were eager beavers and were raring to go.

The Buddy Beat were:-



Jane Bentley- She's Got the Whole World in Her Hands



Tom Chalmers



Jess McMillan

We placed all the drums in the centre of the large circle and Jane quickly introduced herself and Tom and Jess too. As normal, we gave a short demonstration on drumming, showing the group how it is done with a pinch of stopping and starting and this went down very well. Jane then produced her famous inflatable globe and used this to get to know everyone. It was thrown across the circle to someone and when they caught it they would say their name out loud before launching the globe to someone else. Jane then took her drum and demonstrated how to hold it and how to get the different tones from the skin. Next, she went around the circle, allowing everyone to bang on the drum while telling everyone something that they liked whether it was a colour, or a sport or food and this created a certain buzz of excitement.

The group were waiting for the word to get stuck into the drums, but Jane kept them waiting by introducing everyone to the Boomwhackers. There was enough for two Boomwhackers each and Tom and Jess handed them around the circle. Jane began with starting and stopping and then asked Tom to lead the group. He did this a few times and then Jess had a go too, and the group quickly got rather slick at it. When Jane asked if anyone in the circle wanted to be the leader, there was more than one volunteer and we had firstly Marcia, then Fraser and finally Gordon, who sat beside Jess all during the workshop and they quickly became friends. Jane then regained control and took it to the next stage showing the group how to instruct a circle in how to play loud and soft. When again the question was asked for volunteers we had Iain, Marcia a second time, Tom's new friend David and Gordon again. This went down a treat and Jane then threw down the gauntlet- men versus the women! Jane led the women for a short spell and the men were very supportive in their boos and catcalls! Tom then took charge of the men and the women showed how good they were at rubbishing our efforts! When the hilarity settled back down, Jane informed the group it was time to get drumming.

Jane firstly demonstrated the shakers, tambourines and frogs. When Jane gave the word they attacked on mass, having clearly spied out which drum or percussion piece they fancied most. We jammed for a minute and then Jane once again challenged the sexes with Tom taking charge of the boys and Jess with the girls and this was received in the same supportive vein as the Boomwhacker Challenge. Jane then split the group into two, having one half play and one half silent before having a noisy two minute jam before breaking for a well earned tea-break. Tom had been sitting beside group member David, who seemed to know everything about the group and was an invaluable source in name supplying, got off his seat and his foot was caught in the strap. Tom's drum keeled sideways and hit David on the leg. He turned to Jess and uttered "I came here to have fun, not to get injured!" and impish Jess suggested that he should sue Tom!

Suitably fed and watered during a twenty minute break, Jane began the second half by holding a short copycat session, demonstrating a good half dozen or so rhythms. Jane then asked Tom to hold The Stick of Power and he used this to pick one of the group at a time to play whatever they wanted and then everyone would copycat it. This lasted a good ten minutes with such a big group and the room was filled with raised hands and "Me! Me!" when The Stick of Power was doing its magic. When we thought that everyone had had a go, on- the -ball David announced that two of the carers hadn't had their chance, and we soon remedied that.

Jane then surprised Tom and Jess by taking a break from the drums and initiating group singing. She sang a line at a time of an African tribal chant called "Oleo!" and after a few moments, the group were happily singing along and drumming at the same time. That was a lovely break from the norm.

To close Jane then split the circle into two halves once more. This time the half that wasn't playing were to get up and dance and the group embraced that to the max, particularly Peter, who had earlier told Tom and Jess that he was 52 this year, had just become an uncle and told and showed us his impressive dance moves.. We then swapped over and the other half got their chance to strut their stuff.

One of the carers stood up and thanked Jane for coming along and in a neat touch then thanked Tom and Jess too. The group had clearly enjoyed themselves and some of them were happy to help us pack things away and as we left we were thanked by many of them.

That was an excellent Buddy Beat night out, and we all went home for a well earned rest!