



Flexi-Care Friends

As far as events/workshops go, Buddy Beat had been approached last year by a local organisation called Flexi-Care with a view to booking Jane for possible drum activities for their numerous groups. Flexicare offer support for boys with autism and Asbergers and also for adults with learning difficulties and run a number of clubs all year round in all corners of Renfrewshire. Jane held three workshops last year for Flexi-Care which went down a treat, and some members of Buddy Beat attended to lend a hand. This lead to Jane getting a bumper booking for 7 night-time workshops spread over February and March, and this is what happened...

16th February 2010

The Anchor Gang

The first came on February 16th and was held at the Anchor Centre in Paisley for The Anchor Gang, a club that meets once a week for young boys with autism and runs from 6.30-8.30

The Buddy Beaters were:-

- ✓ Jane Bentley
- ✓ Tom Chalmers
- ✓ Jess McMillan.

There are 6 boys in The Anchor Club- Steven, Lewis, Daniel, Angus, Ayaz and Aziz and they had 5 young carers/volunteers. The Club had a quick get together at the start before joining us for drumming. Jane asked the first boy, Daniel what his name was and with a little background drumbeat, she sang his name and welcomed him to the workshop. Jane then went around all the boys and they seemed to like this special treatment. Perhaps Jane should do that for us all every Thursday morning!

With introductions over, Jane invited the boys and staff to pick a drum. Jane has been very busy and productive of recent and had with her five newly purchased drums, all beautifully coloured and styled. That created excitement and once everyone had settled back down Jane began by showing the boys basic rhythms. The noise was too much for one of the boys, Steven and he sadly left the room. Jane then started a game of copycat, and the Club responded well to that and Jess took up the mantle next, and was then followed by Tom as it worked around the circle. The boys looked delighted to get the chance to make up their own little beat and revelled when they heard it played back to them. One of the boys, Daniel, quietly and politely asked if he could take one of the drums home with him! Next, Jane played a short beat and then pointed to someone else in the circle to take up the mantle and this seemed to delight and excite the boys.

Jane then brought out the Hang which brought out some “oohs” and “aahs”. Jane gave a quick demonstration and the lulling sounds seemed to sooth everyone around the circle.

Then Angus and Lewis moved out the room to vent their energies on some other activity, leaving Daniel, Ayaz and Aziz. Jane asked the three of them if they would like to get down on the floor with her and play the Hang which they loved. Still using the hang and including the drums, Jane began a story telling exercise. This lasted a full ten minutes and Jane began with heavy and slow beats on the drums, saying that “There once was an elephant that was walking through the jungle and who did he meet?” Daniel shot his hand up and said “A Power Ranger!” which caused a few giggles and we then created this story of the elephant and Power Ranger in the jungle. Daniel wanted them to meet a UFO and if the Hang resembles nothing else it is surely a flying saucer. The UFO came down and the aliens played their lovely tunes for the elephant and Power Ranger!

And with imaginations somewhat exhausted we broke for brain food and munched crisps and slurped juice. The boys mainly wanted to play in their gym area after that, and the second half of the workshop took on a new twist, for it began with just Daniel, a carer and Buddy Beat.

So taken with story-telling, Daniel wanted more and we were suddenly in the Wild West with tiny cowboys and giant cowboys with a supporting cast of Skinny Bob and One Eyed Jess (with only Tom and Jess in attendance, it ain't difficult to work out which one was which!). After that Daniel created another tale where a bear met a UFO and it was full of alien bears that had come to visit. So after 15 minutes, a satisfied Daniel bowed out and Ayaz came back into the room. We drummed together and Jane introduced the Stick of Power and Ayaz was quickly conducting us, making us louder and softer in turn. He seemed to like this control over us and was smiling all over and his carer Kerry was eager to try too. After that, we drummed some more and Ayaz suddenly had 4 drums around him, and with Jane's help, was soon playing them all. He was then renamed "Four Drum Ayaz." Lastly, Ayaz wanted to make up his own story and using two of Jane's drumsticks, he created a man with long legs and bulbous feet who couldn't help but fall of cliff edges (the drums).

We finished up a little earlier than expected but it had been good fun and once again different from anything before. The boys seemed to enjoy themselves, particularly Daniel and Ayaz and Daniel was very keen that we returned for more drumming the following week!



Princess Jane



One Eyed Jess



Skinny Bob

Words and pictures by Tom Chalmers