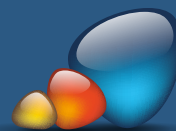


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**Pebbles**  
Nurture. Develop. Flourish.



APR - JUN 2022

# Welcome to the Pebbles Newsletter

Welcome to this new issue of our quarterly newsletter, we hope you enjoy the reading!



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## Our trip to Poland for the refugees

With the Russian invasion of Ukraine forcing millions of people to flee their much-loved country, we decided to play our part in supporting the refugees.

In April, we joined a convoy departing from Fife, Scotland, with our two school minibuses and four volunteer drivers to deliver donations to Toruń, Poland, where over two million Ukrainians took refuge.

So many of our colleagues wanted to take part in this mission that we decided to go a step further and donate £50 for each volunteer, totalling **£1,450**, to Oxfam DEC (Disasters Emergency Committee).

Here are our fabulous team members who delivered the donations to Poland:



## Opening remarks

by CEO Michael Walsh



**June is here already, and in the relatively short time that has passed since the last newsletter, quite a lot has happened.**

The team of four that took our two minivans to Poland in support of the Ukrainian refugees did a great job, providing much needed supplies. I am delighted at the overall response to this effort across the business. Everyone involved did an amazing job.

We are now spending considerable time on improving some of our homes to ensure all of them deliver the familial, nurturing, and welcoming environment that is unique to Pebbles.

Mark Williams, Director of Operations, and I will be looking to make more visits soon to see where we can continue to improve and add support.

Although staffing is a UK-wide issue, we are doing pretty well as a company on this front, but we will keep looking at ways to improve and attract and retain talent.

On a lighter note, there are some events coming up in the next month or two, including charity walks such as 'The Three Peaks', and I look forward to congratulating those who will take on this challenge.

**Thank you for trusting us to care for your children and young people, we will continue to ensure that every child develops and flourishes with us.**



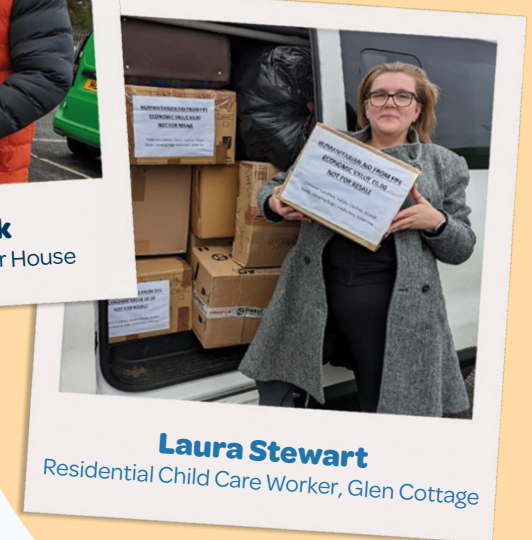
**Stephan Purdy**  
Residential Child Care Worker, Ruby House



**Luke Chadwick**  
Registered Manager, Amber House



**Jade Vallantine**  
Registered Manager, Whispers House



**Laura Stewart**  
Residential Child Care Worker, Glen Cottage





Our drivers started the long but rewarding journey to Toruń with a big smile on their faces and crossed France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Germany, before arriving in Poland on the third day.

They were welcomed by local voluntary groups and US soldiers at a disused factory, converted to a warehouse for humanitarian aid. Our team members formed a chain with the presents to help unload the vans and sort the donations.

**Their assistance was received with great gratitude, and it was made clear by the people at the aid distribution centre that the donated goods would have been hugely helpful.**



Stephen, Jade, Laura, and Luke also made important acquaintances by meeting the Marshal, who in the region is the equivalent of the First Minister, and his officers, who offered them coffee and biscuits, and the possibility to ask questions about the situation. The Marshal also gave each of them a gift bag as a gesture of gratitude for their help.

The evening reserved for them yet another touching moment. Our volunteers were invited to a reception in one of the oldest buildings in the city, where they met some Ukrainian refugees and learned more about the injustices of war.



**“ We met three amazing women, two of whom are also mothers. They’re all refugees and are truly inspirational.**

**They fled their country with their children, leaving their husbands and brothers to fight in the war. Words can’t express how emotional it was to hear their stories, and we feel honoured to have helped in the smallest of ways! ”**



## Therapeutic Parenting and the importance of connection

*Words by Joy Wakenshaw, Head of Care Practice at Pebbles Care*

I am delighted to share that we successfully completed the initial training in Therapeutic Parenting with the Core Group of trainers, consisting of Area Managers, Cluster Managers, Psychology, and Learning and Development. It was also really encouraging to see Mark Williams, Director of Operations, and Julie Hedge, Commercial Director, participate in part of the training and to feel their support.

More recently, training has been delivered within clusters to our Registered Managers, mainly by Area Managers and the respective Cluster Managers. In some areas, training to Deputy Managers and Residential Child Care Workers has already started. Well done to everyone who has played a part in this.

Our journey is underway, and the common themes of Therapeutic Parenting are becoming communicated. Our learning is highlighting the importance of relationships and connection with those young people we care for and, of course, each other. We are now more aware of how relationships serve as the conduit for growth and change in every one of us, as we realise the importance of creating a sense of connectedness with those around us. After all, we are social creatures!

**“ The sense of the importance of these relationships has been reiterated and, more importantly, experienced by us during our training as we spent time together feeling the sense of belonging and developing a deeper appreciation of the fact that residential child care really is ‘all about the relationship.’ ”**

Child Psychiatrist, Dr Bruce Perry says that for children and young people experiencing trauma, the best predictor of their present mental health and wellbeing is their current connectedness. That is powerful! We all need to feel a sense of belonging, yet modern technologies increasingly reduce opportunities for togetherness and the opportunity to develop a sense of connectedness through the powerful medium of

human relationships. Although the use of Microsoft Teams during Covid was a bit of a lifeline, how many of us expressed the sense of loneliness of not being face to face with others? We simply missed the sense of belonging that comes from connection. Meanwhile, for our young people during lockdown, their homes were awash with creativity and interaction. The feedback from care teams showed that having more time together significantly improved the quality of relationships.

More recently, I’ve been thinking about those young people we care for who spend hours on their mobile phones, tablets, or watching TV. Let’s face it, a lot of us do. How do we balance the preoccupation with technology with the need to have and enjoy human interaction, especially when it is so important for those we care for? How lonely might they still feel, and what can we do about this? Having safe and secure relationships with others impacts on all areas of our lives. The connection we experience with others is a strong factor in building resilience and is key to early years development.

I recently read that the feeling of connectedness is strongly linked to better health and wellbeing. Such caring connections can impact positively on blood pressure, the immune system, and stress hormones. I think that the more we learn, the clearer it becomes that connection is key.

We are all different and experience connectedness differently, but we all need to feel a sense of belonging that comes from it. Some of us enjoy the positive feelings of being with others, whilst others may feel connected to one or two people, or a cause or activity that is meaningful to them. As we have been looking at the zones of resilience as part of our Therapeutic Parenting training, we realise this. The challenge for us is to ensure that these connections foster a sense of belonging for those we care for.

Our challenge within our homes is to continue to develop a stronger understanding of why connection is important and to ensure that we actively consider how we can improve connectedness with those for whom we care, and with each other. Embracing the Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity, and Empathy of Dr. Dan Hughes’ PACE Model is not a bad place to start.







## Keeping Siblings Together

**Keeping siblings together is part of our commitment to supporting children in care to flourish; being close to family members is crucial for every child's happiness, development, and sense of identity.**

S. and J. are an example of two siblings with a wonderful bond who recently became part of our family at Tanglewood, where they are now developing and growing together. Their social worker provided some incredible feedback, and we are delighted to share it here:

“ I would like to say a massive thank you to all the team at Pebbles for supporting them to settle in and continue to progress. S. and J.'s past experiences, as well as having to move away from family and friends, have strongly impacted them, and building trustworthy relationships with the care team has enabled them to be open about their wishes, feelings, and views. ”

“Moving to Pebbles was a huge step for S. and J., which implied separation from their family and friend network, education settings, and leaving their local area. However, an introductory visit was completed by the managers to meet the siblings before the move; this enabled them to learn about the team and see photographs of their future home. A letter of introduction from the care team was also arranged.

The warm and welcoming Pebbles' approach has undoubtedly supported the siblings to settle into the new environment. The home has a lovely 'warm' and 'homely' feel and it was the little touches, i.e., the bedrooms' decoration, toiletries, etc., that did not go unnoticed by S., J. and me.

S. and J. have been supported to quickly access local activities that help them build friendship networks too, something that for S. was very important. Pebbles has also helped them to maintain contact with their family, bringing them to their area of origin and supervising contacts as required.



## Celebrating the Jubilee

**Our children, young people and team members found astonishing ways to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.**

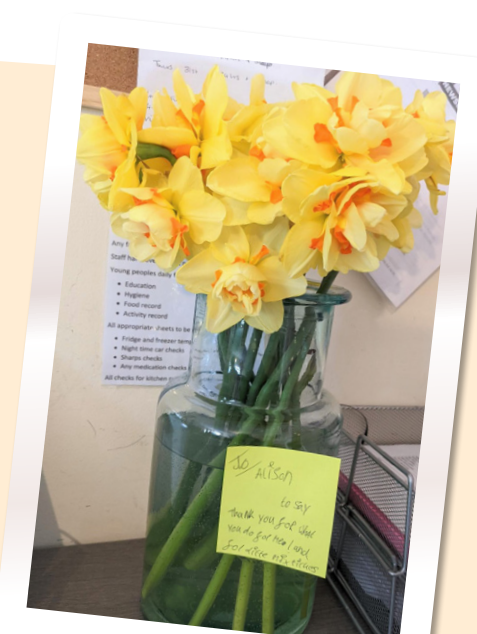
Along with enjoying fantastic parties in our homes, they also shone through wonderful acts of kindness. Three students from our Dunfermline school organised a 'royal' coffee morning, raising **£140** for the Macmillan Cancer Trust, and one of our young people at Jasmine House baked for the local elderly care home. We are extremely proud to support these incredible human beings.

## A heartwarming surprise

Alison List, Registered Manager at No. 57, received the most heartwarming surprise when she found these beautiful daffodils waiting for her on her desk one day.

They were bought by a young person to thank her for everything she does, and Alison was overwhelmed by this moving gesture.

These flowers remind us of why we do what we do, and that our everyday actions of nurture and love mean the world to the children and young people in our care.







## Blane Cottage get together

Our Blane Cottage team enjoyed an amazing night out, where having fun was a top priority. Here's what the team told us about their time together:

**“One Team, One Dream.”**

Ryan

**“Excellent night to  
reconnect the team.”**

Helen

**“Everyone  
scrubbed up well.”**

Jane

**“It was nice to spend  
time together outside  
of the work setting.”**

Angela

**“I had a  
fantastic night.”**

Andy

We all work relentlessly to brighten young people's lives, and it is fantastic when our teams find the time to be together outside of work, building meaningful relationships with each other. Bowling was such a great idea!

## Drawing with 'Pride'

We love supporting our children and young people to freely express themselves with no fear of judgement or obstruction towards acceptance. We embrace diversity and want to see everyone thrive in our care and education.



June is National Pride Month, and we are delighted to share M.'s fantastic drawing, produced for CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services) LGBTQ+ Awareness Week.

We are extremely proud of M.'s progress and feel privileged to support this young person to take part in the CAMHS activities and express themselves in so many beautiful ways.



## A new learning opportunity for our psychologists

Our fabulous team of specialist in-house psychologists always look at ways to develop their skills and expertise and recently enjoyed attending a training on 'working with survivors of abuse' with SAY Women in Glasgow.

Our psychologists love providing learning opportunities to the care team too. They strive to empower everyone to do an amazing job, and so they booked some of our Residential Child Care Workers into the upcoming 'managing disclosures' training.

It's amazing to see our team members develop as part of our family, and we'll keep encouraging this as much as we can.

**“It was a fabulous two days and  
complimented the work that we do in our  
therapeutic activities and individual therapy.”**

Sharron Reilly, Head of Psychology





## Surprise party at Tanglewood

**We're honoured to be part of our children's lives and create great memories for them.**

A young person at Tanglewood recently turned 16, and our nurturing team organised a surprise party, which even included a disco dome in the garden! Young people from other homes joined the celebration too, making the day truly special for our birthday star.

## Walking towards brighter futures

**We have some great news of progression and development to share from our young people.**

At Tanglewood, D. joined an outdoor fitness session, whereas R. joined a local rugby group and attended the cadet camp in June, with his very own Army Cadet uniform. One of the young people also received their first job offer, making everyone extremely proud of them.

F. from Thistlebank has been working with NCAT, which is a community-based organisation, and was accepted for an apprenticeship in Forestry and Woodland with the East Ayrshire Council. Our young person demonstrated an amazing work ethic, and this has certainly paid off.

It's such a joy to support our young people to walk towards brighter futures, and we're extremely proud of their achievements.



## A young person developing nurturing skills

We are delighted to introduce you to Johnny Quack Sparrow and Yolkahontas. S., our young person at the Paddock, took eggs from the home's chicken coop, incubated them, and had two lovely baby chicks.

**S. has mothered them from their birth, demonstrating fantastic nurturing skills. A huge well done to S.!**



## An exciting trip to Euro Disney

Our caring team at No. 57 recently organised a very exciting trip to Euro Disney. The two young people and two team members who went to Paris had a fabulous time together and great memories were made.

**Our teams go above and beyond to make the children and young people in our care smile, and it's always fantastic to see what amazing activities they're able to put together.**



## Follow us on Social Media for latest news & updates

We are sharing many happy news, inspiring stories, and heartwarming updates from across our teams and young people. Follow us to stay up to date on our latest news.

[Facebook](#) [LinkedIn](#) [Instagram](#)







## Our Commissioning Team is **growing**

**Laura Roxburgh recently joined the commissioning department, progressing from a Residential Child Care Worker role at Forth Craig, and is a wonderful addition to the team.**

She started her career in care as an early years' practitioner whilst living in Abu Dhabi, and said:

"When I moved home to the UK, I wanted to continue my career in care and saw a great opportunity to work as a Residential Child Care Worker at Forth Craig. During my nearly three years there, I learnt and completed my Therapeutic Parenting training and SVQ3 and could not have done it without the guidance of my managers, Sheena and Lorna, who mentored me with all their experience and knowledge.

The best time I had at Forth Craig was through the first lockdown, which was challenging and lots of fun trying to entertain four teenage boys who were only allowed out for an hour a day. We did many in-house activities; spa days, bootcamps, cooking challenges, and we made Forth Craig our very own Big Brother House. I thoroughly enjoyed my time there.

**I saw my colleagues progressing within the company, and I liked that Pebbles encourages and supports growth, which gave me the urge to pursue the opportunity within the Commissioning Team. ”**



TO All Staff at  
Forth Craig  
Many thanks  
from us all for  
everything

## Moving on from our care

The family of J., who moved on from Forth Craig, gave the team these beautiful flowers and a card as a sign of gratitude for their priceless support.

Lorna Higgins, Registered Manager, commented:

**“ The team have shown incredible commitment, compassion, and dedication towards J. and I am very thankful for their hard work. ”**

We wish J. all the very best for a bright future ahead.

## A beautiful bond

Everyone at Pebbles focuses on building genuine, trustworthy, and non-judgemental relationships with our children. They become role models, and their gestures of affection have a powerful impact on someone who might not have received much love and appreciation before.

The heartwarming note and 'mother's day' card from a young person to the home manager at Murraythwaite are examples of the beautiful bond between our young people and their care team.

**“ Jo-Anna, you are the best manager I could have, especially when you text me late at night to ask me how my day was and to update me on things. I couldn't have asked for a better manager or care team; I love you all. ”**



## Final thought

We hope you enjoyed this newsletter issue and as a closing, we'd like to share with you what A., who recently left Jasmine House, told the team:

**“ Thank you for your love, trust, support, patience, care and all round just being a rock for me. ”**

