

THE HARMENY HERALD



The Magic of Harmeny

IN THIS ISSUE...



WELCOME TO THE spring edition of the Harmeny Herald! I am delighted to be writing my first editorial, and have had so many interesting and moving experiences during my first eight months as Chief Exec, I hardly know where to start!

I guess a good place to start would be to try to explain what I have experienced and observed time and time again since I started... I'll try to explain the 'Magic of Harmeny'...

I could talk for hours about the dedication, enthusiasm, passion, creativity, flexibility and good humour of our fantastic staff group. I could wax lyrical about the wonderful grounds, with the beautiful natural woodland, home to wild deer, squirrels, badgers and abundant bird life!

I could marvel at the dedication of our Estate Management team who did an unbelievable job clearing what seemed like a never-ending deluge of snow.

I could sing the praises of our amazing Outdoor Learning team, who offer a vast array of adventurous and environmental activities and whose talent and energy knows no bounds.

I could enthuse endlessly about our Learning and Development Team, who contribute hugely to the development of childcare practice within and beyond Harmeny.

I could describe as best as I could, the sense of community which is created through the caring and trusting relationships staff build with children, brilliantly organised whole school events and wonderful weekly Children's Meeting.

I could list countless examples of remarkable achievements, which the children here may never have thought in their wildest dreams were possible.

I could do all of the above. But even though I would give it my best shot, I'm still not sure I would really do it justice. So, instead, why don't you hear it and see it through the eyes of the children, staff and Friends of Harmeny, through the wonderful stories, articles and photos contained inside.

The Harmeny Vision Statement, right, provides a vital reminder of our primary purpose here at Harmeny – to strive to ensure that everything we do is geared towards the needs of the children we provide a service for. As we face the many external challenges ahead, I am confident that if we keep this focus, we will continue to evolve and develop as an organisation in the most appropriate way, whilst also maintaining what makes us truly unique. I hope you will agree that this edition of the newsletter captures a flavour of what makes Harmeny not only a magical place but a very special community – a community I already feel very proud to be part of.

I hope you enjoy this edition of the Herald – as always, we would be delighted to receive any comments or feedback! With very best wishes.

Neil Squires, CEO

The Magic of Harmeny

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"The work at Harmeny starts with the child; it structures itself around the needs of the child; it strives to help the child achieve the successes of childhood and thus lay the foundations for reaching his or her potential as an adult. The community which is Harmeny is committed to this challenge."

Harmeny Vision Statement

Education Staffing Changes

I WAS ASKED TO WRITE a little about the changes we have had recently to the teaching team in Harmeny! As most people will know by now I am no longer a teacher in the Falcons as I have taken up the position of Principal Teacher.

Whilst it is an exciting opportunity, it is also quite a thought to move out of the classroom I have occupied for over four years with some great classes and no longer have a group of children to teach every day! That being said, Kerri McKay started in January and I have no doubt she will be a fantastic teacher for the Falcons class and future classes to come.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff, parents and carers who have supported the work I have done as a teacher and the wonderful children I have taught. I look forward to meeting the parents, carers and professionals I do not know who are involved in all the children's lives and supporting the good work that Harmeny does.



**Laura Davidson
Principal Teacher**

Warm Hearts In Arctic Conditions

During the last weekend of November, we experienced a huge snowfall that blanketed Harmeny in up to three feet of snow. While this was a fun and memorable time for the children of Harmeny, it proved to be a challenging time for our staff.

However, despite this, our dedicated team worked hard to maintain high spirits and continued to offer the highest level of care. Staff demonstrated flexibility and an eagerness to make sure that the children's experiences remained consistent.

Our creative staff also continued to offer the children a variety of learning experiences by taking

advantage of the snow. When the weather began to improve, we organised a number of trips, for example, to The Scottish Deer Centre at Cupar.

As the seasons change and we move into spring, we look forward to another year of continued growth and success in Harmeny.

Craig Paul, Residential Manager



ALL CHANGE AT HARMENY PIT CREW...

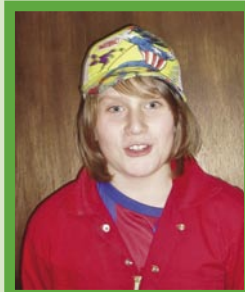
WITH THE NEW TERM and the New Year, came a new technician for Harmeny Pit Crew (HPC).

Christian, who had been with us for over a year moved on during the holidays, but only after sussing out the local bike workshop which is very close to his new home. He took with him a leaving gift containing some tools and manuals which we hope will aid his future in the baffling world of bike mechanics and he knows we're only ever a phone call away.

Into the gap steps Ronnan, who has several projects underway already, one of which is to support wider staff cycling at Harmeny by designing a bike parking stand. This stand will be created from old unserviceable bike frames, which meets our three key priorities to: **REDUCE, RE-USE AND RECYCLE!!**

Who knows what the weather is going to do, but we do know for sure that cycling will be back soon and we're keen to help everyone get on their bikes where we can. When we say everyone, we really mean it, as some of our reconditioned bikes may see a new life in Malawi over the next year or so!! There really are no limits!!

**Kyle Strachan, Harmeny
Outdoors Manager**



Girls Just Wanna Have Fun!!

The Girls Group is a time when all the girls at Harmeny get together to have lots of fun. The group gives us an opportunity to make great friends with the other girls. Every week we have a chat over a snack, do an activity and play some games. One week we decorated cookies for a special person in our lives. We really enjoyed this and looked forward to giving them to the people who we made them for. We love running games. Our favourite game is Duck, Duck, Goose. At the end of each group we say some good things about one another. This really puts a smile on our faces. Here are some things that the girls THINK about the group.

"Girls group is a chance for the girls to get together and we don't really get a lot of chances to do that. I think everyone loves girls group (even the adults) for that one reason." **Meghan**

"Girls group is fun – everybody likes to run about." **Kirsty**
"Girls group is good, fun and cheery." **Ciara**

Members of the Girls Group, along with Marianne Barr and Helen Watt, Social Work Students



MY BEST FRIEND... A story by Aaron

I was walking back from the jungle park with my friend Lopey. It was raining and windy but we weren't bothered about it because we were happy. Suddenly... I turned into a Pringle eating monkey. I was shocked. I was running about like a mad monkey. I sprinted as fast as a bolt to my home.

My mother said, "Shoo! Shoo! Go away, go away!"

"Mum it's me." I said.

But she still said, "Shoo! Shoo!"

So I walked out the door and went into the jungle to my gang hut to think what I could do. I was trying to think but it was hopeless.

About 30 minutes later, Lopey was going on a walk with his mum.

I asked Lopey and his mum, "Do you know how I could get back to being a human?" But they thought I was a normal monkey so they ran away. I waited for a while and then suddenly... a monkey was there.

I said, "Do you know how I could get back to being a human?"

"It's you Marsbar," he said.

"Yes it's me. Well... Do you???"

"Yes, go to where the sun meets the earth."

So me, and Lopey's mum, were thinking about how we could do it and then I had an idea about what we could do. We could go on a quest to where the sun meets the earth.

We set off in Lopey's mum's car about fifteen minutes later. We got caught by the police and they had to call the RSPCA to come and pick us up because the police thought we were mad. The RSPCA took us away and put us in a cage. In the cage next to us, there was a dog called Robin. We all tried to make a plan to escape the next day. We escaped, and ran and ran until it was dark. Then we slept in a bush. As soon as it was light we ran and at about 3pm we arrived. We had to lie in the sun with homemade sunglasses for about fifteen minutes. Robin was two and a half metres tall and she had black bobbed hair. Lopey's mum's just looked the same and so did I. Me, Robin and Lopey's mum were thinking about how we could get home. We walked for about thirty minutes and then we found a back road. We got a lift off Leslie when she drove by and she took us home.

We lived happily ever after.

Aaron



STORYTELLER

This lady is called Senga. She is a very good storyteller. It is a pleasure to be able to listen to her story. She talked in Scottish. We did not know all the words that she said but it was good fun. She came in for our Burns Lunch.

Jason



HARMENY ENTERPRISE 'SHARE' CERTIFICATES

This is the Harmeny Enterprise Share Certificate. It means Harmeny allows you to have money from the money we raise. What we do is split the money into two halves. Half gets shared between the children and half goes to charity. We get to choose the charity by voting. This time the money went to little Jack McNaughton to help him get an operation in America to help him to walk.

Kevin

Changing Seasons

OUR YOUNG PEOPLE at Harmeny are again displaying their talents by capturing the changing seasons through photography. Visitors to Reception were treated to a display of the winners from our photographic competition. The standard was so high, that many could hardly believe that these photographs were taken by the children. Here is a small selection that you can judge for yourself. (More on back page).

The photographs now adorn a calendar that was arranged and bound by the children. If you are now into March and realise that you cannot organise your life without a calendar, they are still available to order from Harmeny Enterprise for the very reasonable sum of £4. (It is worth buying for the photographs alone!)





FRIENDS OF HARMENY

Over the last few months, The Friends of Harmeny have helped out the school in a number of ways. At the end of November, Robin Thompson helped support the children and staff at the local Church of Scotland 'Christmas Fair' in Balerno High School.

"There was a brilliant atmosphere at the Fair, with a real sense of anticipation of the coming festive season. Harmeny School was taking part with various wares for sale. The school also had the advantage of a super salesman Kraig, one of the pupils at Harmeny and his mentor Linda Gowans, Principal Teacher, who organised the goods for sale and transport to the venue. Kraig eventually saw an opportunity to widen out the sales potential and set off with a bundle of calendars selling these around the hall, very successfully. All in all it was a great day out and although competition was keen from other outlets selling cards, a significant amount of money was raised, with the bird boxes, calendars and wreaths being big winners."

Robin Thompson, Friend

"I went to the Balerno Christmas Fair to raise money for Harmeny Enterprise. We sold wreaths, bird boxes, calendars and other things. We raised £120."

Kraig

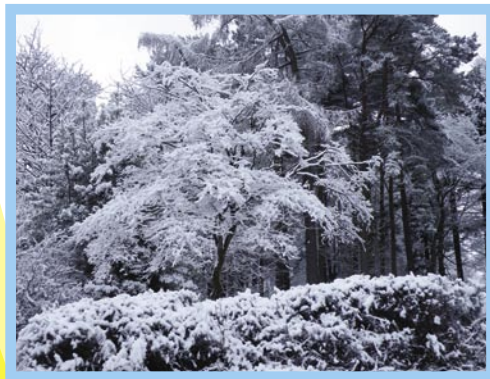
A couple of weeks later, the children were being industrious again by creating decorations for their entry in The Balerno Christmas Tree Festival (an event organised by the local church, with over thirty Christmas Trees being exhibited).

The school tree, sponsored by Friends, was decorated with Gingerbread and 'harmonious' decorations of children holding hands. A great effort and the Harmeny tree did the school proud!

The Friends committee are currently looking at projects for the coming year, the first of which is likely to be a duck race along the Water of Leith, in June. If you would like more information about The Friends please contact us through the school.

Malcolm Ogilvie, Chair of The Friends of Harmeny

More photos from our Changing Seasons



If you have enjoyed reading about our latest exploits and would like to help support the school, you may wish to become one of our Friends.

You can find out more about Friends of Harmeny by visiting our website and clicking on Friends of Harmeny.

You can also contact us through email on friends@harmeny.org.uk or by post at Friends of Harmeny School, Mansfield Road, Balerno, Midlothian EH14 7JY

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