

Ballyclare Family Focus

AGM Annual Report Jan 2022- April 2023

Ballyclare Family Focus, founded in 2003, is a Non-incorporated Christian Charity no 104737 registered with the NI Charity Commission.

SUMMARY OF PURPOSE

Our vision is a harmonious and vibrant community which values the individual and family life: people feel accepted, confident and secure, engage productively in community life and have hope for the future.

We aim to be instrumental in providing effective early intervention Family Support Work for the town and rural communities of Ballyclare.

Outcomes

The outcomes for beneficiaries include:

1. Advancing education and providing educational courses and training for developing individual capabilities and life-skills.
2. Social and recreational groups.
3. Improvement of mental and emotional health and well-being and promotion of healthy lifestyles.
4. Networking with and signposting to other family support agencies, building partnerships to collaborate and broaden our services.
5. Encouraging the improvement of living conditions and safe and stable home environments for children, young people, individuals and families.

The main activities in BFF

BFF operates community outreach programmes and a preschool as a non-profit social enterprise.

1. Educational Courses in upskilling, employability and parenting courses.
2. Recreational and social Group (Parent & Toddler, Coffee Mornings)
3. Counselling and Active Listening Service and 'Pot of Gold' child bereavement care
4. Little Blossoms Preschool run by salaried staff.

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS in 2022-23

Counselling & Active Listening Service Provision was available all year

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| Little Blossoms Pre-preschool | September 2021-June 2022 and Sept 2022–June 2023 |
| Little Blossoms Awards Ceremony | 26/3/23 |
| Dizzy Ducklings Parent & baby Group | September 2021-June 2022 and Sept 2022 – June 2023 |
| Connected Baby Parenting Course | May 2022- August 2022 |
| Pot of Gold | September – Dec 2022, Jan-Feb 2023 |
| Optimal Business Support & Strategy Review | November 2022-March 2023 |
| Optimal Workshops & Conjunction Counselling Service | Mar-May 2023 |

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT 2022-23

Directors: Marion McCallion

Chairperson: Sinead Davies

Secretary: Marion McCallion

Treasurer: Lisa Mayberry

Committee: Allison Campbell, Rachel Knowles, Theophilus Agbaeze

BFF CENTRE MANAGEMENT

BFF Centre Manager: Adelyn Carr

Little Blossoms Pre – preschool Settings Manager: Jennifer Thompson

BOARD MEETINGS

- 6 Board meetings were held bi-monthly from April 2022 to Jan 2023
- A number of emergency board meetings were held by zoom during the year
- AGM 2021-22 was held on 16th Dec 2022 in the format of a Quiz and Christmas party
- Due to the covid 19 disruptions the NI Charity Commission allowed the option not to submit our Annual Report and financial report for 2021-23

Capacity Building of our Board of Management

- A number of initiatives were carried out this year to strengthen and build the capacity of our Board of Management to include the following:
 - o Recruitment of new member in April 2022 included Theophilus Agbaeze

- In March 2023 NICVA provided direction and advice on developing our organization into an ICC (incorporate Community Charity) as we have been operating as a non-incorporated charity for the past 20 years
- Board members attended Charity Commission training which helped to assess and review our 'Public Benefit Statement' and 'Purposes'
- A strategy review was achieved through the Optimal Programme and ANB Council grant

STRATEGY REVIEW

BFF were funded for the Optimal Programme from July to October 2021. David Gillespie from Ledcom engaged to mentor us and lay a foundation for updating our Strategy Plan.

The main outcome from the Optimal Programme was an Action Plan which identified a proposed Business Plan for a counselling service, after school's club, play therapy service and extending pre-school to a 5th morning and afternoon provision. A financial plan was drawn up and the main conclusion was that business sustainability required new ideas to make the business more viable and sustainable.

Through SWOT analysis with committee members we decided that the existing 5-year strategy (2018-23) needed to be reviewed.

A strategy plan was developed by Eos Consultants in July 2022 and completed by 31 March 2023

The Board of Management worked on finding additional members to help with financial management and marketing

From November 2022 to March 2023, Allison Keenan from Eos Consultants worked with our Board of Management and a Steering Group to review our last strategy (2018 – 23) to develop a new strategy for 2023-27. The Steering Group included David Duncan, Eamon Mullan, Theophilus Agbaeze, June Caskey, Kerry McDowel.

The main focus of the strategy plan is building a successful future for our organization, capacity building and financial sustainability with an emphasis on Good Governance and developing the skills of the Board of Management to effectively manage, guide and direct all our activities.

The Board of Management worked on finding additional members to help with financial management and marketing.

FINANCE & FUNDING

BFF is financially dependent on income from funding and donations. Funding Bodies that supported BFF this year include ANB Council grants, Pathways Fund.

Antrim and Newtownabbey Council provided £5,000 funding of for Premises costs for the year 2022-23 and £6,000 for our Strategy Review Consultation in 2022-23

Failed applications were made to Children in Need for children's counselling, Small Rural Business Grants for men's sheds project.

Little Blossoms Preschool has kept fees at an affordable cost with child places subsidised by The Pathways Fund which is a DE early years' education fund.

Brian Glencross, from Bridon Business Services, manages the financial business of BFF and Little Blossoms Pre-preschool. Bookkeeping was managed by the Centre manager Adelyn Carr and volunteers Lisa Mayberry, Sam Hemphill. Signatories are Adelyn Carr, Marion McCallion and Anna Harper

A Financial Advisory and Planning Group was set up to address a number of financial issues. Members of this group included Brin Glencross, Lisa Mayberry, Robert Lamont, Theophilus Agbaeze, Rachel Knowles, Jenifer Thompson and Adelyn Carr. We are thankful for each ones input.

Fundraising

The bulk of our income from donations came from the enormous efforts of Andy McCallion from Penny Tuppence Fundraising Charity. This year Andy raised over £1,000 for BFF for which we extend our grateful thanks and appreciation.

VOLUNTEERING

We could not have managed nor achieved this year without the SIGNIFICANT help from our VALUED and dedicated volunteers. Volunteer team includes members of the Board of Management, parents and people from community. 16 Volunteers helped with activities including administration, fundraising, publicity, project coordination, planning, management, and running our various community outreach projects. Volunteer training was accessed by means of webinars.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROJECTS

Pot of Gold – child bereavement peer support club - Adelyn Carr, Marion McCallioin, Cynthia, Rocio, Rosie Wallace and Andy McCallion facilitated this 12 week course attended by 8 children. Referrals were received from the Family Support Hub

Dizzy Ducklings – Parent and baby group - Jacqueline and Pauline Coney helped Adelyn Carr in running this group

Connected Baby Course - We resourced material from Suzanne ZedyKe to develop this course on child attachment. The hope is to offer this training course to primary school teachers and parents.

The team who researched and developed the training programme included Sinead Davies, Lisa Mayberry, Karen Lennox and Adelyn Carr.

Active Listening Service – One to one active listening sessions were attended by a number of adults and children in need of support attended with their parents. Parent support as also provided through our active listening service

BFF COUNSELLING SERVICE

Active Listening & mentoring:

Adelyn Carr and Marion McCallion held sessions for 5 adult clients and 5 teenage clients this year

Lisa Mayberry's Report:

Lisa Mayberry volunteered as our counselling services co-ordinator this year. In this role Lisa managed the NRC placement students to provide free counselling for our clients. Lisa continued appointments with a number of clients.

The student counsellors were Eamon Mullan, JulieSmith, Lisa Sheridan and Suzanne. Over the year 15 clients were counselled. Carol Smyth a private counsellor hired our counselling room

- Lisa Mayberry stepped down from Board membership to set up manage CONJUNCTION - the BFF Counselling Service, in the hope of receiving remuneration for her work

Conjuxion Counselling Service:

In view of setting up our BFF counselling service as a second social enterprise, Lisa Mayberry received mentoring from David Gillespie from Ledcom and training in social enterprise business from Mallusk Social Enterprise, in August 2022 – March 2023. This was funded by the ANBCouncil.

Family Support Network Hubs

BFF has representation on the Action for Children Family Support Hubs and the CYPSP Locality Planning Group. Through the Family Support Hub we receive our child and teen referrals for our Pot of Gold group. Teens are seen at our Active listening one to one sessions and some are referred on to the Ray of Light Course with Mary Gault.

NICVA Membership and Early Years Membership was renewed.

Little Blossoms Preschool

Jennifer Thompson's Report

- The Pathways Fund provided £23,133.33 to subsidise child places for the year April 2022-Mar 2023
 - o A requirement of the Pathway fund is that our managers attend two governance training sessions each year
- Registration of our preschool with the Social Services progressed throughout the year. Once registered, parents will be able to access Universal credit payment and this will mean more children from disadvantaged backgrounds can attend thus increasing our numbers and growing our preschool.

Little Blossoms Pre-preschool for 2-3 year olds is a private non-for-profit social enterprise which is run by salaried staff.

At the end of 2021, Ashley Morgan left her position as Settings Manager. Holly Ward and Shannon Witherspoon both shared the settings manager role until April 2022. We are so appreciative of the skills and abilities that all our settings managers contributed to the running of the preschool.

Jennifer Thompson became the Preschool Settings Manager in April 2022 and efficiently ran the preschool operations with a team of 8 staff. (Tasha Loughlin, Kathy Black, Irene Boyd, Sarah Jane Hunter, Lesley-Ann Witherspoon, Jenny Taylor, Jacki Wright)

We acknowledge the vital contribution they have made in establishing high standards and quality early learning experiences for the children who attended this year.

Staff attended a development training courses, received an award for Community Preschool Winner at the Family First Spring Award ceremony.

Little Blossoms parents & children participated in extracurricular activities which included:

- Trip to Funworks in June 2022
- Tots that bop autumn party in October 2022
- Winter walk with the elves in Dec 2022
- Penny for Play fundraising
- Easter Parade & Picnic in March 2023

TRAINING COURSES

The 'Building Connections' Programme was attended by board members and staff in February and March 2023. In March HR training was received by webinar

Family Support Agencies Network- BFF is one of a number of family support agencies who represent at the CYPSP Locality Planning Group (Northern Trust care for children & youth) and the Family Support Hub,