

Trustees of Friends of Holy Family PS Annual Report March 2024

The trustees of Friends of Holy Family Primary School Belfast submit their report and accounts for the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024.

Our aims were to:

- Provide programmes and events for members of our school and local community.
- Promote family events and projects.
- Collaborate with local schools, charities and businesses to provide educational workshops and training courses for children, parents and members of the local community.
- Organise fundraising events to help support local charities and the purchasing of school resources and equipment.

Outlined below are the various activities and strategies Friends of Holy Family was involved in to help develop our aims.

Programmes and services in the local and wider community

Our social media and communication platforms including Facebook, School Website, Seesaw, newsletter, telephone and email are highly effective means for communicating with our children, parents and family members. We continued to provide guidance and online links/ workshops to local community services and online learning tools / resources such as Parenting NI, Wee Chicks, Oxford Reading Owl, NESSY, Doodle, Topmarks etc. This helped strengthen family connections and improve communication, as well as, extending learning at home.

Parent Support Services

Our team continued to promote and advertise links to relevant services, webinars and posters on our social media from our local support services such as Ashton, Primary Behaviour Support, ParentingNI, British Dyslexia Association, Barnardos, Grace Family Centre, Holy Family Youth Centre, Autism Advisory Intervention Service, PIPs Suicide Prevention Service etc. Our parents and families were very grateful for the additional support services made available to them.

School Uniform Swap

Throughout the year FOHF promotes and organises a school uniform swap shop in partnership with Holy Family Primary School. Volunteers helped gather up the uniforms and organised them into sizes for the new school year. Families were welcome to come into school on various dates to avail of free school uniform items.

Community Events

Our team worked closely with Newlodge Arts and Duncairn Community Partnership to promote the return of their fabulous community events in Term1 and 2 – Spring Awakening,

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Ardoyné Youth Enterprise also provided a wonderful Multicultural Community Fun Day. We have built up a strong connection with Bryson Charitable Group and Pathway Adventure. This year the children took part in a complimentary Christmas event in the school hall. All events were a huge success with a wonderful turn out from our children and their families, as well as members of the local community.

Art Projects

Our children enjoyed working with local artists from the community and experiencing a wealth of art activities using a variety of media. Art Projects were provided by –

Young at Art

Arts for All

Sinead – The Art and Design Factory

For Arts Sake – GiGI Training

ECO

Staff, children, parents and members of the local community worked hard to maintain the school's Green Flag status. Together they improved the variety of minibeasts, plants and wildlife in and around the school grounds. The team worked with the Lord Mayor during the community BIG Spring Clean alongside Currie Primary School to help tackle the issue of litter. The Eco council members thoroughly enjoyed participating in the Green Fingers Project to develop our outdoor space.

RSPB

The ECO team also worked closely with RSPB to help encourage the migration of Swifts to nest in our school grounds.

Local Sports and clubs

FOHF actively promote sports clubs in the North Belfast area. The Ulster GAA, IFA, Creative Coaching Belfast and Gaelfast have in turn provided our children and staff with a wealth of locally funded sporting programmes and experiences such as Gaelic, Hurling, Soccer and Netball throughout the year. Some of our children were experiencing these sporting activities for the first time, whilst others were extending their love for the sport by joining their local club.

We continue to build on our relationships with our local sports clubs. Many children and their families are active members of McCormick Academy of Irish Dancing, MR Sports, Newington FC, NM Sports, Ardoyné Kickhams, St Malachy's OBY FC etc. The clubs offer activities for all ages and often provide free sessions to learn new sporting skills.

Sustrans Active Travel

Our children and families continue to get involved in our active travel events such as Cycle to School and Walking Bus on a termly basis throughout the year. FOHF support these events.

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Northern Ireland Fire Service and Police Service

P2 and P5 children enjoyed a visit from the local Fire Service and Police Service to learn about the importance of Fire Safety and keeping safe at home and in the local community.

Local Businesses and gifting

Our members continued to work with businesses in the local community to support our school events. Throughout the year Morelli's Ice-Cream provided ice-creams to our children during Sports Day, Sacraments and Fun Days. Bryson provided a complimentary Christmas event to all the children in our school and nursery. Pizza Works provided our Primary 7 children with complimentary pizzas for their leavers party. Tesco sponsored our nursery and school Sports Day with complimentary fruit and water.

Local Art Competitions

Throughout the year our children joined in fabulous art competitions provided by local businesses including –

Newington Credit Union

Texaco

The competitions were a huge success and children were delighted with their wins and prizes.

School and parent events

Shared education

Our children, staff and parents continue to work in partnership with Currie Primary School. Together they got involved in art, music, eco and sporting events together.

Home - school projects

We continued to build relationships with parents and families by involving them in the learning at home. Many year groups completed home learning projects which were showcased at year group assemblies i.e. Projects included – P7 Belfast, P6 Rainforest, P5 Pyramids, P4 Volcanoes and P3 Space and Safari.

Additional family events

Our team has thoroughly enjoyed reconnecting with our parents and welcoming them back into school. Some successful events included Parent Curriculum events, PJ Parties, Stay and Plays, Christmas concerts, sacramental events, Sports Days, Book Fair, Shared education projects etc.

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Cultural events /Catholic Schools Week

We held various cultural events to celebrate diversity and inclusion within our school community. During Catholic Schools Week we celebrated the theme 'Living Life to the Full' and celebrated a special Grandparents Day service in the local church. Grandparents and families were invited and songs, stories and poems about their grandparents were shared and enjoyed.

Other special cultural events celebrated in school included -

Black History Month

Festival of Diwali

Eid Mubarak

New Lunar Year

European Day of Languages

Sacraments

Children, parents and their families together joined in the sacrament celebrations. It was a happy day for all and the events were promoted on our social platforms. FOHF provided refreshments at the Confirmation and First Communion celebrations.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

We continued to promote the counselling service 'Time for Me' provided by Barnardos for our children and advertised support services available to parents and families such as AWARE, Women's Aid. Parents and families had access to free online mediation sessions.

We promoted Mental Health Awareness Week by continuing to use our Nurture in Five practices. The children enjoyed an assembly delivered by The Animal in Amy and P6 and P7 children enjoyed participating in games with TAMHI to raise awareness of mental health. Children thoroughly enjoyed wearing odd socks on Odd Socks Day to mark the occasion.

Fundraising and Charity Events

Our members continued to work together to organise and promote a variety of fundraising events at school.

Many members of the school community got involved in the Belfast Marathon, raising funds for the local GAA Cumann an Phiarsaigh.

The school held a Halloween and Christmas Fun Day. The children dressed up and enjoyed a visit to the school tuck shop.

The P7 children kindly donated food items to make up Food Hampers for our Christmas Hamper Appeal. All Christmas Hampers were donated to the Morning Star Hostel.

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Fare Share Initiative

The Fare Share initiative continues to grow and support our children and their families by offering food items at an extremely low cost. FOHF members support the FareShare Hub, ordering and setting up food items and serving parents and grandparents on Friday evenings. The success of the initiative has enabled us to increase the quantity of fresh and frozen food available.

We have had a very successful year of projects and events for our children, parents and members of our local community. We continue to build strong links with local businesses and groups and look forward to building upon these successful partnerships in the future.

Accounts

Our previous year's closing balance for April 2022- March 2023 was £4,347.93

Our closing balance for April 2023 - March 2024 is £4882.19

