



Come Outside!

Programme Update 6



FAMILY TREASURE HUNTING EGG-STRAVAGANZA

Come Outside! has been working with the Dads' parenting groups in Swansea in conjunction with Family Partnership Teams.

Over the last few months the group have been introduced to geocaching and learnt how to set out their own trails. The group learnt how to follow GPS units to find marked waypoints and coordinates and set out their own trails locally and in Singleton Park.

All the skills learnt through these sessions culminated in a digital Easter Egg hunt in Singleton Park where members of the Dads' group brought their families along to show them what they had learnt.



Over 40 people enjoyed the day and have taken their skills home, geocaching regularly with their families and getting out and about in Swansea.

The Family Support Team is now using geocaching on a regular basis with their groups across Swansea.

"My son has got Aspergers, he loves technology and I struggle to get him

away from his computer but he'll love this.'

'I thought we were just going for a walk but finding treasure was brilliant.'

'Today has been great, I feel so much more positive than sitting around talking about my problems.'

'Today has made me feel so much better. I've recently changed my medication and it's been effecting me but getting out and about has made me feel so much better. It's given me the motivation to get out and do more, it's lifted my mood, it's been fantastic.'

'Great to see everyone smiling....even those that were freezing.' (Support Worker)

Come Outside! aims to support partners to inspire, motivate and enable people from Communities First cluster areas to enjoy the outdoors, to experience the benefits of the natural environment, and to value and care for their local countryside and green spaces.



WOODWORKING FROM START TO FINISH



Caia Crafts is a community enterprise in Wrexham producing hand crafted wooden products.

The enterprise grew out of a woodwork shop providing training to people who were unemployed, many of whom had poor health, or physical or learning disabilities.

We've been working with Caia Crafts to introduce Green Woodworking, getting their volunteers outside the workshop involving them in more physically active woodwork-ing processes.

With the help of Mike Whitley from NRW we have harvested some timber from a beech tree that was blown down over the winter in Cynwyd

Forest one of our sites near Corwen.

Our colleagues did the chain-saw work and the group cut and split the huge rounds of wood. The timber, then small enough to move, was taken back to the workshop provid-ing an easily available source of material.

Come Outside! is also provid-ing tools to allow the group to continue to practice and perfect their skills outside our organised sessions.

The group are planning to make stools, bowls and lots of other small items with the new stock of timber over the coming weeks that they will sell alongside their other products.



FORAGED PRODUCE & HANDCRAFTED GEMS



The Countryside Team in Torfaen has been keeping themselves very busy over the last few months.

Working in partnership with Blaen Bran Community Wood-

land and utilising power tools purchased through their Come Outside! Fund they have made various products from timber harvested from the woodland.

These include bowls, hedgehogs and pigs. They have also assisted the Countryside Section of Torfaen CBC, raising awareness on responsible dog ownership and undertaking tree identification at Pontypool Park.

Foraging in the Park led to its own reward - a delicious leek and wild garlic soup!

HOW ARE WE DOING?

"Over the last 6 months the Come Outside! Programme has made excellent progress with 35 new groups established and 1,609 new participants engaging in outdoor activity"reports Shephard & Moyes Ltd, the Programme's external evaluators.

They go on to say "satisfaction with the sessions remains very high and feedback from people taking part is extremely positive."

The Statistics – so far, the Programme has engaged 2,272 individual participants, 72% of whom live in Communities First area. 6% describe themselves as long term sick or disabled and 5% from BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) Communities.

The Programme continues to attract a good range of age groups. This has been achieved by working with organisations who support people with physical disabilities, mental health problems, parenting support needs and other issues. These organisations are being encouraged and supported to involve their clients in outdoor activity in the natural environment.



SURVIVAL SKILLS

Recovery Cymru in the Vale and SANDS in Swansea came together in the Neath valley to learn survival skills with Mountain and River Adventures Ltd.

The group have been heading to Ystradefellte in waterfall country every week for five weeks to learn the basics of survival.

They also had the opportunity to meet Fern the beautiful Harris Hawk.

On their last session their skills were put to the test and they demonstrated that they had got to

grips with the basics of survival by building their own shelter, lighting a fire with flint and steel, finding and purifying water and cooking fish with wild garlic.

The group members have now taken their skills and motivation for outdoor activities to others.

The group in Swansea are going to be doing Geocache training to run their own sessions for others at SANDS.

Those from Recovery Cymru have decided as a group that they want to keep up with the physical

activity outdoors and are going to be using Pedal Power to build cycling confidence every week.

The sessions have left a strong impression on the group:

'We're closer as a family after coming down here and learning together'

'I'm gutted it's finished, it's been brilliant and I've loved it'

'I'm going to miss everyone new I've met through this course'



PLAS MADOC ACTIVITY DAY

Families from Wrexham took part in a taster day at Plas Madoc over the Easter Holiday.



The Wildlife Trust encouraged participants to use pond dipping to check the health of a local stream and people were to be found digging holes and generally getting muddy as part of a soil survey.

Campfire Cymru ran craft activities, from painting stones to making willow wands, while Doug from Come Outside! made benches with some of the young people to set around the

Opportunities Centre for all to enjoy.

Original Outdoors ran tracking and foraging workshops, helped out with the geocaching and the Groundwork project Pedal Power brought along balance bikes to encourage some of the younger children to get out on a bike.

Hopefully this is just the start for new activities in Wrexham and we hope to do more in other areas nearby over the coming months.

NEW FACES...



In Merthyr Tydfil, '3Gs' (a group of unemployed men) has recently become involved with the programme.

To date they have geocached at Cyfarthfa Park and Dare Valley Country Park, walked to Scwd yr Eira in the Brecon Beacons Waterfall Country, and enjoyed a Heritage Walk based on the Crawshay Family and the Industrial Revolution.

Shortly they will embark on a 5 week course in partnership with Mountain and River Activities Ltd, learning about navigation, water filtration, foraging and all manner of survival techniques.

Two members of the group have been trained by Let's Walk Cymru and will be assisting in the development of Junior School family walks.

...OLD HANDS

The Lighten Up group from Penrhys has been involved for well over a year.

They have accessed a varied programme of outdoor activity which has included cycling, geocaching, heritage walks and a Gruffalo walk with their children and grandchildren.

Recently the group organised a local night time 'onesie' walk and cake sale which will be followed by a walk to the top of Pen Y Fan to raise funds for Autism Awareness Week.

We have delivered informal geocache training to the group, purchased equipment for the group to continue walking and has helped get several members trained as walk leaders.



WALKING WITH CONFIDENCE

The Penybryn Walk Group, which started as part of a 'Foodwise' healthy eating initiative, first met with Come Outside! in Summer 2014.

In partnership with Caerphilly CBC Countryside Service, taster sessions were organised, including biodiversity walks and geocaching at Parc Penallta.

Walking in local greenspace emerged as the most sustainable activity for the group and, recently, a member of the group achieved Health Leaders Walk Training accreditation.

Moving on, a planetarium and dark

sky evening was arranged in late November aimed at attracting new members and galvanising the group.

A tremendous success, this event stimulated interest in further astral learning. Currently in its 4th week and averaging around 8 learners per session 'Patterns in the Sky' - Agored Cymru delivery facilitated by Dark Sky Wales - is equipping attendees with the skills and confidence to be able to lead low level dark sky walks in the winter months.

With ages ranging from early 20's to late 60's the group now has a truly intergenerational feel, attracting young and old alike, with the likelihood of sustainability of the group

being increased dramatically.

One of the group members will also shortly complete her Nordic Walking Instructor's Course giving the group



knowledge of a different walking discipline, increasing levels of physical activity and contributing towards the development of healthier lifestyles.