



Runner earns first donation from Grange Big Local

Grange Big Local is a community association which has secured £1 million of Big Lottery funding to help and support the community in East Finchley. Over the past 18 months local residents have been working together, and with community groups, to write a plan for how to spend the money over the next 10 years.

Their first donation, of £1,000, went to Age UK Barnet, as sponsorship for Nic van der Breggen who ran the London Marathon on behalf of the charity.

It was Nic's first marathon and he ran it with jetlag, having flown back from a work placement in Australia only days earlier. Incredibly, he crossed the finishing line in just 3:58:17.

Pat Murphy, chair of Grange Big Local, said: "We have been

working with Age UK Barnet, along with other voluntary groups, over the past year. Age UK Barnet have kindly let us use their centre, the Ann Owens Centre in Oak Lane, for meetings without charge. The committee decided we wanted to support this cause and say thank you."

For more information on Grange Big Local visit www.grangebiglocal.org or find them on Facebook and Twitter.



Made it! Nic van der Breggen after running the London Marathon.

The importance of being playful

A new after-school club is running at Martin Primary School. Here, owner Fiona Doyle explains the importance of play.

Chances are some of your happiest memories of your own childhood are of playing with friends or siblings; perhaps climbing trees, chasing, games of football or imaginary adventures.

Play time is a fundamental part of childhood yet time to play is becoming less of a priority. There is endlessly increasing pressure on schools, parents and educational agencies to ensure that children make the maximum academic progress in as short a time as possible.

Extensive studies show how play can help develop children's emotional intelligence and communication skills as well as physical agility and coordination. Aleta, 11, from Martin Primary School, says: "You get exercise while enjoying yourself." Isabelle, also 11, adds: "It can teach children things they can't learn in a classroom."

LBL After School Club, a new out-of-school play provision at Martin School, embraces



From the top: Izzy, Aleta and Isaac at the after school club.

the philosophies of play and advocates giving children the freedom to be creative and imaginative. The club was launched in April and so far the response has been wonderfully positive.

Monty Worley, a playworker at LBL, has seen how important it is for children to be able to

let off steam at the end of a busy school day. "When children play without the direct intervention of adults they learn how to share, to care for one another and also how to be kind to others."

Play leader Sam Cleary has seen what children can get up to when left to their own devices. "When we opened the new club we brought in a huge box full of new toys and equipment for the children to play with. The new equipment was discarded and the children spent the whole session crawling in and out of the box, drawing and colouring all over it and taping it up when it burst apart!"

Perhaps there is a lesson to be learned for all parents. It is just as important to allow your children to play as it is to get their homework done, their rooms cleaned and their greens eaten!

LBL After School Club runs from 3.30pm to 6pm every day during term time and also runs holiday play schemes. It has six full-time members of staff, plus supply staff for busy sessions, and caters for up to 70 children at one time.

Circus coming to town

The circus is the theme for this year's Highgate Fair in the Square on Saturday 13 June running from 12.30pm to 5.30pm in Pond Square and South Grove, London N6. Admission is free and thousands flock to this annual fun day of music, live performances, stalls, fair rides, children's creative activities and traditional attractions, such as Morris Dancers, Punch & Judy and the ever-popular Sheep Show.

Over 20 circus artists from Jacksons Lane will conduct skills workshops for all ages and perform juggling, trampoline and balancing acts throughout the afternoon from a new third stage on the grassy knoll in front of The Flask pub.

The Hornsey School for

Girls Steel Band opens the fair to create the carnival spirit, whilst the cast of *There's a Guy Works Down the Chip Shop Swears He's Elvis* playing at Upstairs at the Gatehouse will perform numbers from the show. More details from www.fairinthesquare.co.uk

The umbrella you can't lose

Are you one of the 12,000 people whose umbrellas end up in TFL Lost Property every day? If so, would you fancy the new high-tech Kisha brolly that can not only predict rain, but will also remind you if you are about to leave it behind? Quirky but creepy? Don't worry, it all works through a smartphone app.

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