



Mind games: Six-year-old Hera enjoys one of the summer challenges

Summer reading challenge gives youngsters plenty to do

By Diana Cormack

With a recent survey suggesting that the academic ability of 75% of children can slip over the summer holidays, it was good to see Barnet Libraries' Summer Reading Challenge available again.

In this annual event children aged four to 12 are given the opportunity to keep their minds busy by taking part in a variety of tasks, with this year's theme being 'Marvellous Makers'. They could join the challenge at any of the borough's libraries when staffed or online.

East Finchley Library held two events, both on a Saturday morning. One was a book trail in July where five to 12-year-olds had to find clues along the book trail to win a prize. In the other, rather more complicated, for six to 12-year-olds in August, they had to make two cubes from templates.

On the sides of one they stuck six characters they had coloured in, cut out and named. On the other they stuck six topics they had coloured in and cut out. By throwing the cubes, one revealed the selected character and the other the topic to be put together in a story.

Six-year-old Hera, pictured continuing her writing at home, threw the Two Fairies and the Science Shop. Not an easy subject, but she managed it! Her comment on the event was: "It was fun doing it because there was colouring and I like colouring."

Car boot sale is on

The next Muswell Hill Indoor Car Boot Sale takes place on Saturday 28 September from 10am to 1pm at its usual location in Hornsey Parish Church Hall, on the corner of Cranley Gardens and Park Road, N10 3AH.

Buses W7, W3 and 144 stop nearby. Admission is 50p and refreshments are available. For information, phone 020 8368 8180.

Manager of food bank moves on after 10 years

By Lynn Winton

After 10 years at the heart of Finchley Foodbank, manager Anna Maughan has announced she is leaving her role and applications are invited for the position. However, she is continuing as a volunteer and will serve on the management group when she leaves to work at a local school.

Dipo Oyewole, Chair of the food bank, paid tribute to Anna's decade of service and said: "Simply put, Finchley Foodbank would not be what it is today without her."

I spoke to Anna about the huge changes she has witnessed. She told me: "In 2014, we saw about 30 families a week. Compare that to now when we see 250 families a week. The pandemic changed everything. We now needed a much higher level of professionalism and I took on the first paid position of manager."

Fabulous volunteers

Anna had come from a background of managing pubs so she knew all about food handling, and connecting with people. But there was one new skill set that was a revelation: having to manage volunteers. "Our 200 volunteers are the best in the business," said Anna. "They are a fabulous group of people - committed, united in a common purpose and kind. And we always need more of them."

Anna described a very emotional moment at a recent client session that is all too frequent. "I went to talk to a man who seemed to be taking a larger amount of food than is usual. He told me he hadn't eaten for five days and when I showed him empathy he burst into tears of relief that he had been able to come and that someone cared. People who

come here have been going without to feed their kids".

Wraparound service

Finchley Foodbank is unique in that people can come and get food without vouchers or referrals. It's also what's known as 'wraparound'. On hand during their client sessions are a Citizens Advice Bureau representative, digital champions to help complete forms, energy charities to advise on bills, and a Barnet Council member offering employment opportunities. These are all ways to help clients reduce their dependency on food banks.



Stepping down: Anna Maughan

Enquiries for the manager or volunteer positions can be made to Finchleyfoodbank@gmail.com. Closing date for applications for the role of manager is September 10th. Find out more at finchleyfoodbank.org.uk

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Picnic season treat

Comedian and author Rosie Jones helped launch a series of summer picnics to support movement disorder charity CPotential. She met with families and took part in a Q&A session at the charity's therapy centre in Muswell Hill.

The aim of the CPicnic campaign was to encourage neighbours and families to come together for summer gatherings and raise funds at the same time. Rosie Jones said: "I am so excited to take part in the launch of CPicnic, not just because I love sausage rolls and scotch eggs, but because the work CPotential do is amazing."

CPotential's Trust Manager Paul Catton said it was an unforgettable day filled with laughter, inspiration, and family community spirit. "Rosie's presence not only entertained but also highlighted the importance of inclusivity and support for children with cerebral palsy



Party: Comedian Rosie Jones and friend at the CPotential picnic

and movement disorders." Find out more at cpotential.org.uk/support-us/cpicnic