

# Have We Got News 4 U



Leicestershire  
County Council



## Corporate Parenting & Children's Rights Newsletter

### WELL DONE !!

November 2006

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Well done to all young people who were nominated for this year's Celebration Of Achievement Events.

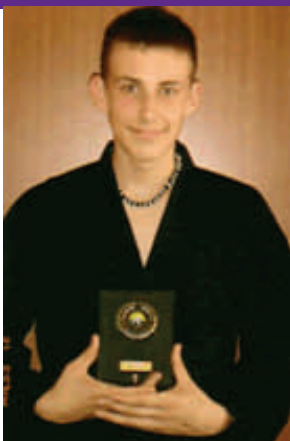
There were **48** children nominated in the 5-13 years age group and **72** young people nominated in the 14-21 years age group

We at Corporate Parenting are proud of all those young people who were nominated.

Here's a quote from the Chairman of Leicestershire County Council, Barry Garner

" We have to make sure the messages we give are those which say " You **CAN** do this, you **WILL** do well' because everyone has something they are good at."

## Liam- Champion !



Liam has been attending Karate Classes regularly over the past five years. He currently has a black belt and was graded for his 2nd Dan in October 2006. Recently he won a regional tournament for sparring in his division. He will have sparred with different competitors from around the midlands aged 14 to 15yrs old, wearing full padded gear.

We are very proud of him and his achievement!

## Memorial Garden

A few months ago we were asked by a foster carer if there was any way the children placed with her could plant a tree in memory of their mum and dad who had died. They couldn't do it in the foster carer's garden as they weren't always going to be there. We thought that they should be able to do this, so we got in touch with the people who run Leicestershire Country Parks. They have been really helpful. We've been given a special space at Watermead Country Park where they will create a wildflower meadow with a bench in the middle. This will be in a really nice bit of the park where you can walk or sit quietly. Over at Bosworth County Park, they've said that any child or young person can put a plaque on a tree to have an individual memorial for someone close to them who has died. If you want to remember in this way someone close to you who has died then get in touch with us or ask your Social Worker or carer to do it. We'll arrange for you to visit Bosworth, choose a tree and decide on the words for your plaque. If you don't want a plaque of your own, we hope you'll want to visit Watermead instead. They are making the bench at the moment so in the next newsletter, we'll send you a map of Watermead showing where the meadow will be.

This is a really nice place to walk around if you just want a trip out.



**THIS IS THE KIND OF BENCH  
WE'LL HAVE AT  
WATERMEAD COUNTY  
PARK**

## Snibston



Visit Snibston and see our £1.4 million makeover. Try and lift a Mini Cooper in our brand new hands on gallery Extra Ordinary, which shows how technology has affected our every day life. Come and see the amazing selection of historic and contemporary costumes in the Fashion Gallery. Join real life miners on a tour of the colliery and experience what it was like to work underground. Take a ride on our diesel locomotive and get creative with our holiday activities. Enjoy the sunshine in our nature reserve or let off steam in our adventure play area. **(Some activities incur an additional charge)**

**“USES YOUR FREE TICKETS”**

## Bosworth Battlefield

Last year we visited Bosworth with two young teenagers and had a really good day. We went to the Heritage centre and the Country Park. We visited the Living History Camp where we could see how the army had lived in tents, saw a cookery demonstration, an archery event and a firearm display. The children tried on chain-mail jackets – very heavy!! And helmets. They experienced being locked in the stocks (that was a good idea!). The café and toilets were very clean and the gift shop prices very reasonable. There were lots of interesting walks, explaining the history and dogs are allowed. We will be going again this year; well worth a visit.

Janet Wright and family

**To Obtain Complementary Tickets Please call Katharine Goodacre on 0116 2657518.**

## Caring About Reading

In the summer many of you enjoyed a morning at Coalville library, an afternoon at Wigston library learning circus skills.

By the end of the sessions I think we were all surprised by what we had achieved; balancing peacock feathers on your fingers, nose and head, Plate spinning, Juggling, Diablo.

Many of you were also able to master the stilts and be all had great fun trying.

A brilliant day !

Karen Green



# Children's Rights Service

## Coming Into Care Pack



Children's Rights and Corporate Parenting, with the help of members of T2C, have recently produced a new information pack. This will be sent to all children and young people aged 8 and over once they have been looked after for 6 weeks or more.

The pack explains about review meetings and how young people can contact the people who run the meeting – the Independent Review Officers. It also gives useful information such as the recommended amount of pocket money young people should receive from their carers and what minimum clothing all young people who are looked after should have.

There is information about what young people can do if they are unhappy about the way that they are being cared for or about the plans that are being made for them. This can include contacting the Children's Rights Officer who may be able to help you sort things out or will support you if you want to make a formal complaint.

It also contains information about the Children's Rights Service and Corporate Parenting. If you would like to be sent a copy of this new information pack and have been looked after for some time please phone **Elaine Constable, Children's Rights Officer on 0800 0830 652** and she will arrange for you to be sent one.

### Care Matters - Government plans for making care better

The government have recently said that they want to make things better for children and young people living in children's homes & foster care and for care leavers. They want to find out what people think about their plans.

**There are 7 main areas that the government want to see improved:**

1. More help for families having problems before children come into care
2. Someone (like an independent visitor) who stays in contact with the child throughout their time in care and after they have left care – too often social workers leave and young people have to get to know too many different people
3. A good settled placement that meets their needs and which children have been involved in choosing whenever possible
4. A place at a good school, college or university with more support when children have difficulties so there are fewer exclusions
5. More out of school support such as access to sports & leisure activities, good health care and more support for young people or go into custody
6. More help for young people when they move on from care. Also, allowing the young person to stay with their foster carers until they are 21 (if they want to)

Listening to children more by involving them in decisions made about their lives such as their care plan.

If you want to find out more about what the government want for young people in care or if you want to comment on the plans please contact **Elaine Constable – Children's Rights Officer on 0800 0830 652**. She will be able to send you an information booklet with more information on the plans and how you can tell the government what you think about them or go to [www.rights4me.org.uk](http://www.rights4me.org.uk) and click the link for **Care Matters**.

Comments have to be made by **15<sup>th</sup> January 2007**

# HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT THE INDEPENDENT VISITORS' SCHEME?

## 1. What is an independent visitor?

Young people who are "looked after" - fostered or living in children's homes - sometimes don't see their families or have only occasional visits. For some, it helps to have a person separate to their social worker or carer to visit and get to know them. These people are called 'Independent Visitors.'

They can be any age, gender or race, with a whole different range of interests and backgrounds.

## 2. What do we do together?

Their role is to meet with you, listen and support you and have fun. They might take you on outings, activities such as bowling, shopping or other places where you share interests. They might help you to speak up for yourself and put over your views. The time you spend together is your special time.

## 3. Will it be private?

Your Independent Visitor will have contact with your social worker, but anything that you do together will be confidential - that is, private. The only time that they have to give their supervisor any information is if they are worried about your safety. So if you tell them anything that makes them think that you or other people could be in danger, they will have to pass this on.

## 4. How long will it last?

Some Independent Visitors might stay friends with you throughout your child and teenage years and you might still know them as adults. They should be able to stay with you if you move home or change placements. Sometimes people move away or have difficulties in their relationships. If this happens, you and your independent visitor might not always keep in touch. However, we hope that you will get on well together for a long time.

## 5. How much time will my Independent Visitor spend with me?

Most Independent Visitors meet up for 2-3 hours every month with you. This might be different, depending on your needs. If you live a long way away or you are particularly busy, it might be less. It could occasionally be more, if for example, you are going on a big day out. It all depends on what you and your Independent Visitor need or can manage. You might write or phone between visits or find other ways of keeping in touch.

## 6. Is it for me?

If you are "looked after" and don't have much or any contact with;  
your family, you might want to have an Independent Visitor. Talk  
with your carer, social worker or Children's Rights Officer Elaine  
about this and they will help you to decide.

You could talk about it  
at your next review, or perhaps ring Elaine to find out more.



# Meet Ivan Ould

## Lead Member for Children and Young People's Service



## “ STRICTLY AFRICAN DANCING “

### 1. Could you tell us a bit about your role as a councillor?

My role as a county councillor covers two areas. The primary role is to effectively represent the 10,600 registered voters in the Market Bosworth Division of Leicestershire County Council.

The executive role is that of the Lead Member for Children and Young Persons' Services.

In that role I have to meet the statutory role and responsibilities defined by the Government that covers services for 131,000 children and young people aged 0 – 19 years of age. (This is all the children and young people in Leicestershire)

### 2. What made you become a councillor?

I wanted to make a difference by improving the way services are delivered, and in making sure that people's opinions were heard and listened to with respect by the politicians and officers at County Hall.

### 3. Do you like what you are doing?

Usually I enjoy being a County Councillor very much. It's really good when you achieve a positive outcome for people, but very bad when you fail.

### 4. Have you ever considered fostering a child?

Yes, I have considered fostering a child but I came to the conclusion that I gave too much time to my work to be able to have enough time to properly be a foster parent.

My wife, before she became unable to continue work, was as career minded as I was.

### **5. What are your hopes for looked after children?**

My hopes for children in care are simple, to get them the best chance in life by helping them as much as I can.

### **6. What are your interests/hobbies?**

My interests are Dobermann Dogs, vegetable growing, English Folk music, cigarette card collecting, politics, art, history, good food, and cider!

### **7. What was your school life like?**

My school life was difficult to begin with, because I was a fidget, frequently being told off or punished by the teachers, and unable to concentrate for very long.

After my mother remarried, I settled down and got on with learning much better.

When I was 14, we moved again and I had to settle in to a new school in Wales.

The teachers and pupils were very friendly, apart from a very small number who disliked me because I was English. I did well at the school and then went on to Teachers' Training College.

### **8. How often do you have contact with children and young in your job?**

I have contact with children and young people as frequently as I can, because I need to listen to their viewpoints. I enjoy their company, and evenings like the Award Ceremony with children in care are particularly enjoyable.

### **9. How do you see us working together?**

I think we've made a good start, and I hope you think so too. I'm looking forward to my next meeting with you. Having worked with children and young people for all of my life, including 11 years in residential schools for children with special educational needs, I've always found it easy to get on with most young people, and I think the way we work together is something that develops between us.

**Interviewed by T2C**

## Visit 'The Jitty'

The Jitty, a new website created especially for Young People (13 -19) in Leicestershire, now gets on average 10,000 hits a month and has recently won an award. 'The Jitty' aims to provide co-ordinated information, advice and support to enable users to make informed decisions at key points in their life.

The website was developed following consultation with young people, and the content is presented in a lively and accessible style, covering national issues such as bullying, exams and crime. The site also provides details about what is happening locally including events, entertainment and sport, and regularly runs competitions.

There is an editorial team of young people who update and manage the site, while there are numerous contributors from around Leicestershire who regularly submit work (film reviews, CD reviews, opinions on what is happening in national and international news etc).

Anyone aged between 13 and 19 is welcome to join the writers group, and there is a "Join Up" section on the website which gives details on how to become involved. If you don't want to write articles, you can still take part by signing up to the "Chat Forum" where you can talk to other young people from around Leicestershire. T2C also has a new section on the Jitty's Chat Forum, which is private and hidden from the Internet, and to join it all you have to do is register as normal, then send a private message to "Hunter" asking to be added to the T2C section.

Visit the site at [www.thejitty.com](http://www.thejitty.com)

Oh and by the way, I assume you'll be registering on the Chat Forum using your proper names as opposed to nicknames (for example I use Hunter, and not James Hunter).

James

