



Dear All
Welcome to our latest update

Learners

We have 15 pairs working at the moment in various venues across the Forest. Our learners are all very different, ranging from those who can already read but need confidence building and general literacy help to those with learning disabilities who need very specific help, which we aren't always able to offer. Fortunately, we have some great coaches who will always help out where they can and below are some really positive comments from 2 learners at opposite ends of the scale. The first one is from a competent reader (and very articulate!) and the other from a coach working with a more basic learner who suffers from a mental illness:

"I considered myself to be at the bottom of the evolutionary ladder and thought I was useless. I have more confidence than ever before and wish FRED had been available years ago. At school I just shut off and closed down from learning. I am now more rounded as a person. I am always trying to encourage other people to come along and get help from FRED"

"I think my learner is doing really well - I'm desperately trying to boost his confidence but think he's been put down all his life so he won't change now but I can but try. He couldn't really cope with the 'Yes we can read' book but has really improved since starting with the Readwell Road graded reading scheme. As he does nothing at all during the week, he really looks forward to our half hour sessions in the library."

Since the local college cut back drastically on the Basic Skills provision last year, we are getting more referrals from higher level learners who need general literacy support, such as spelling, grammar, form filling etc. Our aim, at some point, is to secure some additional funding to extend the provision we offer where appropriate and to provide extra training to support this.

Kris, Fred's coach trainer says:

"The testimonials from learner and coach above, demonstrate the range of support FRED offers and the challenge for FRED to provide such variation. You can see that the 'Yes we can read' isn't always suitable, so do ask Sheila or myself for ideas if you haven't been able to attend the additional training we've provided".

Certificates

As some of you already know, the 'Yes we can read book' is quite long and can be a bit daunting, so we've decided to split the book into 3 parts and to give certificates for each completed stage. Stage 1 will be up to page 79, Stage 2 up to page 121 and Stage 3 up to page 171. Hopefully, this will encourage our learners to feel a sense of achievement and to progress through to the end. As before, they will still get a certificate when they complete the whole book. The certificates could also assist when submitting funding bids, as they would help to evidence learners' progress. Please email me if your learner is eligible for a YWCR certificate.

Venues

A reading pair have recently started meeting in the Bethel Tea Rooms in Littledean. Colin and Lizzie, who run the tea rooms, are very keen to promote it as a community resource so have been really helpful and are letting us use the room for the price of a couple of drinks.

The Community Café 16 in Coleford is also proving a useful venue. Amanda, the manager, has been really helpful and has offered use of their meeting room free of charge for training sessions. There is parking there as well, which is always a plus.

We are always looking for additional venues throughout the Forest so please let me know if you have any useful contacts, particularly in the Lydney area.

Publicity

One of our coaches came up with the good idea of trying to get our FRED leaflet added to the information screens you see in most doctors' surgeries and dentists' waiting rooms, etc. I've been in touch with a Practice Manager at one of local surgeries but am still waiting to hear back. If anyone has any expertise with this kind of thing, please let me know.

Management Team – new member

We are pleased to welcome a new member on to our Management Team - Roger Deeks who will be taking on the position of Chair. He has been involved with various governing bodies and committees and therefore has a number of useful contacts. He has said he would be prepared to assist with drafting applications for bids, which will be great as our funds could do with a boost!

We are always keen for more volunteers to be on the Management Committee. We would also love to have a learner on the committee. Please let me know, if you or your learner are interested.

Contacts Team – Update from Megan

Summer has arrived at last which heralds a new season of events for the FRED contacts team. In May, Janet and I promoted FRED at the Forest Activities Festival at the Speech House. We had a brilliant day, with lots of interest from prospective coaches and learners. We also made contact with representatives from other organisations who exhibited; they will provide valuable links with potential learners.

Later in the year, we will be at two more Speech House events: the Vintage Show in September and the Forest Food Showcase in October. These events have always been very successful for FRED and both events are great fun. If you would like to help out at these events, even for an hour, you will be very welcome. It is such a rewarding way to be involved with FRED.

There are other ways to help FRED too. Leaving leaflets in your local shop, library or community centre is a useful way of promoting FRED to a wider audience. If you would like leaflets please get in touch with any member of the Management Team. Email me (meganjenkins@btinternet.com) if you know any groups or organisations in the Forest of Dean who would like to know about FRED. Wishing you all an enjoyable summer!

Additional Training and Tea Party



We would like to invite everyone to an additional training session on Monday 18th July at 1pm at Forest Community Church in Cinderford.

At about 3.30pm we will then have afternoon tea as a small thank you for your support. This will be an opportunity to chat informally with each other and enjoy lots of lovely homemade cake! Hope you can make it!
