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# Project helps with happiness



Erin, Corey, Jack, Bethany Birch, Mavis Walsh, Mair Williams, Nancy Newton and June Pearson

BY KEIRAN SAMRA

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A PROJECT which united a Flintshire primary school with a local nursing home has been hailed for its success after bringing "improved happiness" to residents.

Despite Ysgol Maes Y Felin already having an association with Llys Gwenfrwdd in Holywell, teacher Gemma Davies, called for it to be developed further. And both parties were soon keen to work together more regularly after becoming aware of the potential benefits to pupils and residents alike.

Mrs Davies was so impressed by the effect that young children

had on the attitudes and health of elderly residents in the touching Channel 4 television series, Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds, that she organised the Holywell-based project over the summer.

Year 5 pupils from Ysgol Maes Y Felin have now been visiting residents alongside a teaching assistant every Tuesday since the school year began in September.

Bethany Birch, Corey Voyle, Erin Roberts, and Jack Chamberlain have been working with residents on a variety of craft projects and have also helped develop their digital skills using iPads.

In a care home feedback form, Mavis Walsh commented: "I enjoy the visits, the children

make me feel happy. I really like the craft activities and listening to them, I find them very funny."

Mrs Davies said: "I am delighted to see how well the children have worked and interacted with the residents. Their ability to listen and empathise is amazing and their natural curiosity and enthusiasm has created much lively discussion and laughter. This is such an exciting project and to see the children and the residents gaining so much from each other's company is truly heart-warming."

The group will continue at Llys Gwenfrwdd care home in Holywell until Christmas before a new set of children will begin visiting the residents in the New Year.

## National recognition for scheme

A FLINTSHIRE soft play business has received national recognition.

Ty Bugs Soft Play Centre in Mold was awarded a 'Highly Commended' accolade at the Welsh Hospitality Awards over the weekend.

The family-run business was established by owners Angela and Rhys Ashworth in 2016.

Since then they have created a fun and safe environment for young children where parents can also relax, drink and eat whilst their little ones play.

And on Sunday, they were recognised for their efforts at the awards ceremony, which took place at the Exchange Hotel in Cardiff.

The awards, in their third

year, recognise the contribution of hospitality bodies that serve their communities admirably throughout Wales.



## Spare bus seats policy is slammed as 'wrong'

PLANS to charge an extra £150 for spare seats on school buses have been slammed as 'wrong'.

Flintshire Council is able to sell empty seats on buses at a concessionary rate for children who do not qualify for free transport.

A pass currently costs £300 per school year, but the majority of committee members backed proposals to increase the fee to £450 from September 2019.

The move came despite protestations that it was unfair on families who have already faced a recent hike from the £165 which was previously charged.

Following a review of bus services in the county, it is expected about 350 pupils will pay the new rate.

However, Cilcain councillor Owen Thomas (Con) said he could not support the latest changes.

Speaking at an environment scrutiny committee meeting at County Hall in

Mold, he said: "I'm not happy about this charge when we see so many buses running every hour empty and being subsidised.

"I think that's wrong and I think that subsidy should go towards children for safe passage to school.

"It's not the parents' choice every time, as sometimes the children are turned down for a certain school and they have no choice but to go on that bus."

Cllr Joe Johnson (Lab) said pupils in Wrexham and Denbighshire appeared to have a 'better deal' with a fee of £150 per year for concessionary travel.

In response Cllr Carolyn Thomas (Lab), cabinet member for Streetscene and countryside, said a further rise was necessary for the authority to recover the cost of bus services.

The majority of councillors voted to support the changes.

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