

Sons and daughters annual event – Yorkshire Wildlife Park

The **sons and daughters of foster carers** play an essential role in welcoming fostered children into their families and we have nearly 200 'children who foster'.

Each October, we **celebrate the vital contribution** that your children make by inviting them to a celebration event. This year we took a small group to the Yorkshire Wildlife Park by coach in the half term. The weather was kind and we had a great day looking at the animals, playing in the park, having a picnic and visiting the many shops; the sweet shop was particularly popular.



This event is an opportunity for the young people to meet other children who foster, to share their experiences and make friends who get what fostering is about. Will said before the trip: "Every year I attend the sons and daughter's event, this year we are going to Yorkshire Wildlife Park and I am looking forward to seeing the friends I made last year."

Bethany has been part of the Sons and Daughter's Children's Council who together give feedback about what they hope to get from fostering, how they like to be appreciated and listened to and help arrange each year's trip. As Bethany turned 18, therefore, this trip was her last opportunity to join us. She says, "My family have been a fostering family since 2005. My sisters and I have been attending the 'Sons and Daughters' events since they first began. This event allows us, as children of foster carers, the opportunity to meet with other children to socialise and enjoy a full day of activities and be rewarded for the hard work and efforts we put into being children of foster carers.

Every year my younger sister and I attend the 'Children's Council' meeting to discuss any issues we may have and make decisions about future trips - as a group we decided to celebrate foster carers children's birthday by sending them a card from the department. We discuss the previous year's trip to ensure we cover all aspects for the next trip. Having these treats as children of foster carers is vital, as sometimes it can feel like we are not rewarded, but being treated and spoilt for a day is fabulous! It lets us know that we have an important role within our families and we are valued by everyone.

We decided to go to the Yorkshire Wildlife Park as it was suitable and accessible for all, rain or shine. This enabled both of my sisters to attend the day, as my youngest sister has severe disabilities and is wheelchair bound, but her favourite place is the zoo! I was able to take her to the trip where she was fully included and thoroughly enjoyed the day. Being able to go out and enjoy the day without any stress was fantastic, it made us all feel valued and important within the fostering role.

If anyone is a son or daughter of a fostering family, I fully recommend getting involved and having a day where you decide what to do and go and have fun!

Editor Note:

Two of our children who foster council members have turned 18 and are leaving us this year. We'd like to say a huge thank you to them for all that they have done. If you have a son or daughter who would like take their places, please speak to your supervising social worker. If your young person doesn't feel able to join them, but has an idea about what activity we might arrange next year we'd love to hear from them too!

Please email Elaine Mills at fostering@nottscc.gov.uk