

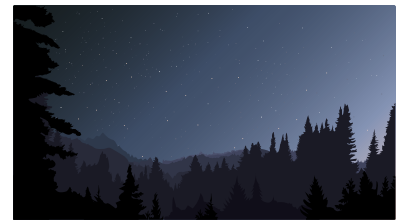
November 2024 Newsletter

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Darkness



The days feel short and dark at this time of year and it can have a real impact on our mental health. Darkness itself has negative connotations historically in language and in actions. Darkness has association of evil, cruelty, depression, anger and coldness we may not agree with this but like so many things in life these associations become accepted as normal. Let us challenge these associations and allow us to reframe what we think of the darkness. As humans we need to learn to challenge the negative thoughts in our own head to help us feel more positive and able to handle the ups and downs of our daily life.

Maybe a simple metaphor for this can be to think about characters in books and films that are presented as Evil. Let us take Maleficent, Fagin, Cruella de Vil, Count Dracula or even Miss Trunchbull. Are they really evil? All of them are presented as characters who are cruel and may torment others. However as humans we know to look a bit deeper. Many of these characters are shrouded in their own darkness due to loneliness, pain, sadness and possibly even social and economic circumstances. So let us reframe the stereotypes, prejudices and brushing statements that we associate with darkness and look more carefully.

Think of the beauty we can see in the darkness. In a pitch black sky we can see some of the most beautiful and magical feeling stars that glimmer for us. With the night sky darkness we also associate beautiful peace, serenity in pausing and having a mindful moment seeking the stars. Making wishes thinking of our dreams and appreciating the joy in the simple things also happens in this time. The moon we only see when the darkness comes and for some of us the moon represents nurture and the care we take when things are born and cared for related to the cycle of life. In the darkness we sleep, we rest, recuperate and heal, it is part of our life and a key to our living. Our sleeping time is when we are nurturing ourselves physically and mentally.

So in these dark nights just take a moment, breath and reflect on the beauty around you as things are not what we may immediately think.



Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival

This October we were delighted to support this years Scottish Mental Health Arts festival with a variety of workshops and activities. Our sessions were again held in partnership with Highland Highlife Libraries and it is always a joy to collaborate.



In Mallaig we held a special themed Bookbug for the whole family inspired by Patricia Karsts beautiful book 'The Invisible String'. We also had arts and craft sessions and a beautiful nature walk. Thinking about and exploring invisibility in all forms.



In Ardnamurchan we held a behind the Superhero mask session which was a great way to think about how invisibility can make us feel.

We had another family arts session in Fort William library and in Kinlochleven we had a drama sessions exploring Invisibility in all forms.



Open Doors

All of our Open Doors are doing well with regulars and new faces at all sessions. Sometimes people ask us why do people go to Open Doors? Well the answer is unique to every individual but the most common responses tend to be for example the want to check in emotionally in a safe and non judgemental place. People may attend when they are struggling with grief, realising that there can be comfort in company both to process and to distract. Social isolation. Loneliness and the need for social engagement is also a key issue in rural areas and so can be a reason to attend. In the chaotic and busy lives many of us lead just taking some time to do something for your own wellbeing can also be a real motivation. We never ask anyone's reason for attending, you are free to talk but also just sit and listen if you wish. All Open Doors are a safe space to which anyone is welcome so please join us.

EWEN'S ROOM OPEN DOORS

Community drop in sessions.
Join us for coffee, cake and chat!
Everyone is welcome!

TUESDAY - FORT WILLIAM
10:30 - 12:30 LIBRARY

WEDNESDAY - ACHARACLE
11:00 - 1:00 COMMUNITY CENTRE

WEDNESDAY - MALLAIG
10:30 - 12:30 MALLAIG LIBRARY

THURSDAY - ARISAIG
10:00-12:00 ASTLEY HALL

THURSDAY - STRONTIAN
11:00- 1:00 SUNART CENTRE

FRIDAY - KINLOCHLEVEN
10:30 - 12:30 LIBRARY

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Scottish Charity no. SC048248

Thank you

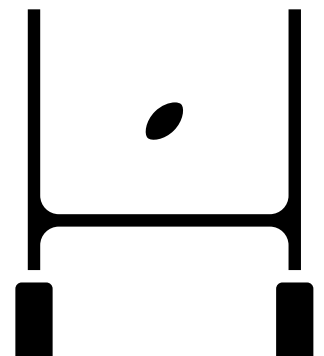


PF Charitable Trust



Youth Rugby

We offer Youth Rugby in both Acharacle and Mallaig and we really believe it works well to support children’s overall wellbeing both physically and mentally. The Mallaig group have become active within the community and held a fundraising barbeque to buy more equipment for training sessions. AS you can see they had an absolute blast using all their new materials in a recent session. They used the stopwatch on drills and the kids loved timing one another and trying to beat their previous round! We are very grateful for the community support and enthusiasm that keeps all of our rugby sessions going.



Workshops for WellBeing

Funding has enabled us to hold an increasing amount of Workshops for WellBeing recently. So on top of our regular walks we have been able to add some strolls and now some evening creative wellbeing sessions as well as therapeutic dog sessions. We know how hard it can be both to find time to motivate yourself to doing something for your own wellbeing as well as finding something that suits. So always keep an eye on our Facebook page for any upcoming events. We are very grateful to Highlife Highland Libraries who are such great partners and have been fundamental in helping us run many of the sessions especially the recent ones at Kinlochleven Library. We hope to keep offering our Workshops for Wellbeing across Lochaber in the new year popping up where they are needed. We know how important it is to look after your own wellbeing and our sessions are there to ensure access for all.



Introducing Marit



We mentioned earlier that recent funding has enabled us to employ a new Operations Manager. We are delighted to introduce Marit Behner-Coady. Marit joins our team with a wealth of experience in the third sector and in community volunteering. She is happily getting to know the ins and outs of Ewen's Room and is passionate about working to ensure our future sustainability. If you would like to connect with Marit feel free to contact her via our contact information below. But just for fun here is fun profile from Marit.

Summarise yourself in 3 words: Optimistic, Focussed, Chocolate

If you were an animal what would you be?: Probably a cat, I take time getting to know people before being very caring and affectionate. I like being an observer and I like going on solo adventures.

Hobbies: I sing in the Cill Chumein Community Choir and help to organise the Glengarry Highland Games, where, time permitting, I also compete. I enjoy riding my bike and do a bit of creative writing now and again. At the moment I am also studying part time for a Masters in Agricultural Professional Practise, which I enjoy for keeping my mind and researching skills sharp.

Favourite Snack: Crunchips Paprika flavoured crisps - in Germany all crisps are Paprika flavoured so this is a little home comfort.

Favourite Movie: Moulin Rouge (2001) closely followed by Klaus (2019) - that one's a seasonally appropriate recommendation.

What are you most excited about in your new role? I'm really excited to be supporting an absolutely excellent team and an organisation with such an important and heart-felt focus. I'm so impressed with everyone and feel very privileged to be working alongside this team



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