



Donnington Doorstep Family Centre

...is Fun, Messy and Free! We're a home from home drop-in for children, young people and families. Come and try out our wonderful free play activities, home cooked food and warm welcome. Doorstep is open free of charge 10am to 4pm, Tuesday to Friday and 11am - 2:30pm on Saturday, throughout the year.

Donnington Doorstep Family Centre
Registered charity no 294699
Townsend Square, Oxford, OX4 4BB
Phone: 01865 727721

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Website: www.donnington-doorstep.org.uk





Donnington Doorstep Family Centre



Happy 25th Birthday!
Annual Report 2009





*“We used to have
very little space at home
and Doorstep gave us
space to play.”*

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What is Donnington Doorstep?

Donnington Doorstep is a much loved and busy community family centre.

Set up 25 years ago by local parents who knew that caring for kids can be hard - we're a home from home drop-in for children, young people and their families.

We have our own purpose-built and fully accessible centre in East Oxford where we run activities for children of all ages, their families and the local communities. Our focus is on **play, food, support and community activities** – with services open to everyone but targeting those most in need.

You can drop in free of charge 10am to 4pm Tuesday to Friday and Saturdays 11am to 2:30pm all year round.

Doorstep's mission:

“To provide high quality inclusive services for children, young people, families and carers. We will create a safe and welcoming environment for all, promoting multi-cultural awareness and valuing diversity. We believe that free play is central to children's learning and development.”

Doorstep's aims to:

- Increase the happiness and emotional well being of local children, young people and their families
- Improve the mental and physical health of local children, young people and their families
- Improve the life chances of socially excluded children and young people to enable them to realise their full potential
- Achieve a stronger, safer and more integrated community in Donnington and the surrounding areas

“Everyone is friendly and none minds if children are lively and active – messy play is encouraged!”

Structure

Donnington Doorstep is a voluntary organisation and registered charity run by a management committee with a core team of 5 staff based in the Family Centre each day. We currently have 19 part-time employees and a team of volunteers.



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25 years of Doorstep

Donnington Doorstep was set up in 1984 by local parents who found that there was nowhere to go with their children outside the hours of the local Donnington Playgroup.

Originally based in a Portakabin and run entirely by volunteers it was the first Drop-in Centre of its kind in Oxfordshire. We've come a long way since then building our own centre and employing a large team of staff. However Doorstep has remained true to the original parents' vision and we are extremely proud of everything that has been achieved and the difference our services have made to thousands of Oxford families.

Here are a few images from the past 25 years:



Where it all started, Donnington Playgroup in the 1980s



What does Doorstep offer today?

- a daily drop-in with play, food and support
- out of school activities for children aged 5 to adulthood
- Play Rangers – outdoor play project
- weekly music group and story times
- play resources
- toy and book library
- family learning activities
- a community kitchen - healthy, multi-cultural, low cost meals
- healthy eating and living activities
- a welcoming community building and gardens
- a hub for community activities and development work
- events and celebrations involving the local communities
- multi-cultural resources
- volunteer and training programme
- student placement opportunities
- one to one support for children and parents
- support for disabled children
- parenting programmes
- young parents outreach work and support group
- dads and male carers activities
- outreach work with black and minority ethnic families
- supported contact visits in a child-friendly environment
- Bumps2Babies – targeted ante and post natal support
- second hand goods and clothes
- Ofsted registered crèche

All our services are free and focus on play, food, support and community

“A wonderful place for children to learn to play and adults to sit and chat - and the food is always lovely.”



Play

Play is vital for children's development at all ages - and for adults too! We offer loads of high quality, varied and genuinely child-led play opportunities - both indoors and outdoors. We don't worry about mess, bad weather or an end product and risk taking is encouraged and supported. Children learn, develop confidence, social skills and emotional intelligence – all while having fun!

Food

Doorstep is all about nurturing so our open plan kitchen is the heart of the centre. The kitchen provides so many benefits - nurture, comfort, good health, knowledge of diet and of other cultures, social skills and pleasure. We serve a variety of home-cooked multi-cultural and affordable dishes including vegetarian and halal.



Support

Doorstep is a home from home that welcomes everyone. Life can be difficult whether you're a parent trying to look after your kids or a teenager struggling to find your place in the world. Our approach is informal, creating an atmosphere of tolerance and mutual support that is hugely beneficial to everyone. This informality is backed up by a strong staff team and clear family support procedures and child centred focus.



Community

Doorstep acts as a hub for local community activity, initiatives and projects. Our events reflect the faiths, cultures and festivals of our multi-cultural society and involve local community members. Doorstep offers volunteering and training opportunities for people of all ages from which many move on to more formal education, training and employment.

Updates on some of our activities

The new first floor

In July 2008 FINALLY Doorstep's new first floor was completed giving us a cool new Youth Space, a training and activity room, a private space for confidential support work and two administrative offices. It was a long hard struggle to secure the funding and then manage the project - so we held a HUGE launch party to celebrate.

The new space has allowed us to extend and improve our services way beyond all original expectations. Local young people have made the youth space their own out of school hours and at other times the spaces are in almost constant use.



We run and host a wide range of groups and activities including parenting programmes, support groups, training, community activities, contact visits and much more. It is a great community asset.

The building project was made possible by generous capital grants from the Tudor Trust, Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City Council - East Area Parliament, TOE, St Aldates Parochial Fund, County Chill Out Fund, Critchley Charitable Trust, Garfield Weston, Anton Jurgens, Make Space A BIG THANK YOU!



Drop-In Play-Out (Activities for 8-18 year olds)

The youth space is a huge asset to this community. Kids have a sense of ownership and enjoy meeting friends here. These activities and the one-to-one support that is available have had a positive impact on many young peoples lives and the wider community. Our Over 5's workers enable children and young people from all backgrounds to use, own and benefit from the activities we provide.

In term-time we run three evening Drop-ins and three outdoor Play Ranger sessions. During the school holidays we run additional day time Drop-ins and Play ranger sessions. We offer games, arts and crafts, music, pool, workshops and 121 support for anyone who wants to come along - all free of charge. We have a particular focus on inclusion and making sure disabled children have full access to and involvement in the activities.



“Doorstep is open long hours which is just what we need.”

There is a youth worker in the building most days, so for any young people not in education, work or training they can always find someone to talk to. We are also “C-Card” trained which means young people can come to us for advice and guidance about sexual health and contraception.



“Doorstep staff have been there for me and the kids when things got really difficult - thank you.”

Play Rangers

Doorstep has been running the County-funded Play Rangers project for 2 years now. The project “inspires and supports play opportunities for school-age children in outdoor spaces out of school hours. Play Rangers encourage and enable children to play outside, whatever the weather, in their own communities, utilising parks and open spaces.”

The Play Rangers presence enables more children to have fun outdoors, come rain, shine and even snow! The kids learn social skills, are physically active and creative. By encouraging kids to use community spaces in a positive way, Play Rangers have been able to forge strong relationships the kids as well as their parents, carers and local residents. We run 3 sessions a week, some Saturdays and more sessions during school holidays. Play Ranger sessions are drop-in – not childcare – so kids can come and go as they wish. Children of all ages are welcome but under 8’s must be accompanied.

“I love the Play rangers – they showed me to walk on stilts.”



Events, Festivals and Courses

Doorstep has continued to run a range of wonderful multi-cultural festivals, events and themed days. We always involve parents and carers as much as possible in planning the activities. Events have included: Dads Go Wild; Holi and Diwali; Eid Party; Harvest Festival; Hanukka; Halloween; Day of the Dead; Christmas Party and lunch; May Day; Easter; Oxfordshire Play Day 08 in Florence Park and our own Play Day 09 in Doorstep.

We have continued to have a big presence at Cowley carnival the last two years – led by the wonderful Groovy Su.

We have hosted and run a number of parenting and family learning course including Henry Training for Young Parents; M&M’s ante natal group for young women in care; Challenging Behaviour Parenting Course; Healthy Living; Keeping Up with the Kids; Cooking sessions.

Young Parents Work - The Munch Club

Every Thursday we run a free drop-in lunch and support group for young parents. This year the main focus of the Munch Club has been on Healthy eating and lifestyle changes. The parents attended a Henry Training (Healthy Living) based course over a period of 6 weeks. Parents and their children have participated in cooking sessions and information sharing on healthy recipes. Regular swimming sessions have taken place throughout the summer, which the little ones thoroughly enjoyed and gained confidence in the water. Recently, we have visited London zoo funded by the Youth Opportunity Fund. A fun and educational day for everyone. The group is very successful, enabling the young parents to access support from each other as well as from the other parents and staff in Doorstep. The children have had some wonderful play and learning opportunities.



Statement of Financial Activities for the year ending March 2009

	unrestricted	restricted	2008-09	2007-08
	£	£	£	£
Incoming resources				
Incoming resources from generated funds				
Voluntary Income				
Donations	2,145		2,145	2,187
Grants - Voluntary Income	12,041		12,041	2,500
Activities to generate funds				
Goods & Services	685	2,592	3,277	5,003
Fundraising Events & Activities	3,531		3,531	2,885
Investment Interest	1,630		1,630	1,502
Incoming resource from charitable activities				
Grants - Specific Deliverables		299,608	299,608	324,099
Food	15,655		15,655	18,138
Miscellaneous	419		419	484
TOTAL INCOME	36,106	302,200	338,306	356,798
Resources expended				
Costs of generating funds				
Cost of generating voluntary income	7,700	8,560	16,260	16,772
Fundraising	527		527	599
Charitable activities			0	
Core Service	19,301	113,803	133,104	158,990
Drop In Play Out (5-18 Services)		62,904	62,904	56,508
Governance costs	3,309	4,248	7,557	13,554
Building Development not Capitalised		18,931	18,931	7,321
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	30,837	208,446	239,283	253,744
NET OVER YEAR	5,269	93,754	99,023	103,054
Depreciation of Equipment	380	1,055	1,435	1,795
NET INCOME FOR THE YEAR	4,889	92,699	97,588	101,259
Comprising of Income from Normal Activities			7,970	
Building Development Capitalised Expenditure			89,618	
Funds brought forward	194,698	151,757	346,455	245,196
Total Funds carried forward	199,587	244,456	444,043	346,455
Comprising of Building			421,256	
Other Fixed Assets			5,742	
Net Current Assets			17,045	

Who uses Doorstep & why is the approach successful?

Doorstep is used by people from all over Oxford but most live within walking distance. Our centre is on the Donnington Estate in East Oxford – a culturally diverse area and measured as being within the 30% most disadvantaged communities in the UK.

The immediate area has few community resources as well as significant and visible social problems. However there is also a strong sense of community in the area.

Statistics for April 2008 - March 2009

Family Drop-in Stats

Number of days open	219
No. of users (incidents of use)	18,378
% of users children	56%
% of adults male	13%
Average no. of visitors each day	84
Number of new users	925
Lunches served each day	40

Doorstep services are targeted at the most vulnerable but open to all – resulting in our centre being used by a great mix of people from a wide range of cultures, ethnic and social backgrounds. Families, children and young people of all ages and from all walks of life come together to play, relax and get support.

Doorstep provides fantastic preventative services that are not easy to measure. Our approach is informal and flexible. We focus on providing open access and drop-in activities that anyone can come along to. Doorstep staff and management believe that it is this informality and accessibility that makes the setting so successful.

Funding - an ongoing challenge

How is Doorstep funded?

Doorstep has core grants from Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City council and East Oxford Children's Centre. In 2008-9 this accounted for 32% of our overall funding (not including Building Development Capital Grants). The rest of our income came from other County & City grants, Oxfordshire Children's Fund, the Tudor Trust, Children in Need, the Sobell Foundation, various trusts, a small amount of income from services, fundraising and donations from our supporters.

Most of the Doorstep Manager's time is devoted to funding – renegotiating existing contracts and making new applications. Most funding available is for new projects or very specific purposes. This can be difficult, increasing our overheads but not actually funding our core services such as the daily family drop-in.

The impact of the recession on our funding

The economic crisis has reduced the overall funds available for trusts to distribute to charities such as ours. This has also resulted in greater competition for the larger funding streams.

In October 2008 Doorstep faced a significant shortfall in forecast grant income. This was a very difficult time resulting in an agreed reduction in staff hours and a freeze on recruitment and staff cover. Our activities were slightly reduced but overall services were not too affected - due very much to the commitment of the staff team and our supporters.

In December 2008 we received the fantastic news that the Tudor Trust had agreed to provide three year funding towards the Centre's core costs.

This combined with additional grants from other sources (including a generous additional SLA from East Oxford Children's Centre) meant that we could reinstate staff hours and return the service to usual by the end of February 2009.

Future Funding

Doorstep has a very successful track history in terms of securing funding and we are confident that this will continue but we know that we need to establish adequate reserves to carry us through difficult periods in the future.

For 2009-10 we still have to raise at least £20,000 in new funding.

We have a number of contracts already agreed for 2010-11 and are hopeful of securing sufficient funding to maintain the existing provision as well as developing new.

A significant % of our funding comes from statutory sources. Doorstep has a high profile within the City and County and we are part of the network of services provided by the Oxfordshire County Council Children, Young People and Families Directorate. There is uncertainty over the future funding of public services and the impact this will have on the voluntary sector.

Doorstep will be lobbying for continued statutory funding for our services in light of the impact and improved outcomes achieved for local families and the wider communities.

In response to the uncertain economic climate we are planning this year to increase our income from donations and fundraising events. There is a great deal of support for Doorstep in the Oxford area with many people having benefited from our services over the years. There is much that we can do to tap into this support and we hope to re-launch the Friends of Doorstep Group in January 2010.



Funders

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank the following organisations and individuals who supported us financially in 2008/9:

Albert Hunt Trust
Amco
Awards for All

BBC Children in Need
Coopers CT
Critchley Foundation
Doris Field
East Oxford Children's Centre
Elizabeth Jane Foundation
Grandpont Children's Centre
Humpty Dumpty Music Group
Iffley Parish Council
Oxford City Council

Oxford Law Group
Oxfordshire Children's Fund
Oxfordshire Citizens Housing Association
Oxfordshire County Council
Oxfordshire Parenting Forum
Play Pot
Robert and Margaret Moss CT
SLG Charitable Trust
Sobell Foundation

St Michael's and All Saints
Stanton Ballard
Sydney Black
Truck Festival
Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment
Tudor Trust
Without Walls - Oxfordshire Children and Families Trust
Youth Opportunities Fund

Some of our plans for 2010

Children's Centres and Baby Friendly Initiative

Our work with parents and under 5's is part of a network of support services for parents and children under 5 provided by Oxfordshire County Council Children's Centres across the city. We continue to develop our Children's Centre services in partnership with East Oxford and Florence Park Family Centres. We are particularly excited to be part of the South East City Children's Centres project to become accredited as "Baby Friendly" with UNICEF - promoting and supporting breastfeeding.

Promoting & Developing Inclusive Play

Over the last three years we have had great support from the Sobell Foundation and we now hope to secure new funding to employ a dedicated Inclusion Worker in 2010. We are working in partnership with Oxfordshire Play Partnership and the Oxfordshire Play Association and plan to continue to improve the play opportunities available for disabled children and young people in our centre and the local area.

Dads Work

Doorstep Saturday drop-in sessions have a focus on involving Dads and male carers and there are many men using our weekday drop-ins. Over the past 2 years we have seen a large increase in the number of formal contact visits in our open drop-in, usually involving male carers. We are working with East Oxford Children's Centre to secure funding to appoint a dedicated dads Worker to support dads access the range of support available to them as parents.

Healthy Eating & Healthy Living

This year funding from Awards for All has enabled us to run a whole range of healthy eating activities for parents, children and young people including cooking lessons, multi-cultural events and play activities. This has been a fantastic project and we would like to see it remain a big focus so are very pleased to have secured some funding for this work in 2010.



"My little girl loves it – there is always something different to do."

The Doorstep Garden & Inclusive Outdoor Play

Since September 2008 we have been working closely with Stuart Tuner from the Without Walls project to improve and develop the outdoor play and learning opportunities at Doorstep. We have always had a big focus on outdoor play but it has been great to have an opportunity to rethink the outdoor spaces and make some small but significant changes.

We have also secured Aiming High funding to properly develop the outdoor areas to ensure they are fully accessible for disabled children. We will create new sensory and activity routes within our gardens including a range of sensory stimuli and physical play activities.

The routes will include aromatic and textural plants, a range of different hard landscaping surfaces and textures, a fire pit, climbing log tree, water play activities, sand / earth pits, boulders, pulley system, windmills and musical play structures.

We plan to run a "growing" project with children and carers from January 2010 and hope to be able to link this with the Botanic Garden.

Family Support Work

Over the last 18 months we have seen a steady increase in our case work and the amount of time spent supporting one-to-one.

The benefits of this level of involvement for both parents and children have been very apparent with some really good outcomes. As well as employing dedicated Inclusion Worker and Dads Worker we plan to increase the staff time available for this work in 2010 to increase outreach to our target groups:

- Vulnerable families
- Young parents
- Children and adults with disabilities
- Young people at risk of offending and/or exclusion
- Adults with few if any formal qualifications
- Families from ethnic minorities
- Male carers

"We don't have a garden. I like playing in the sand & with the logs at doorstep."

Replenish and the Botanical Gardens

We have also been lucky enough to be one of the main beneficiaries in the wonderful pilot Oxford Food Bank Project - Replenish. Since July we have been receiving daily deliveries of fruit, veg and bakery products. This is food that supermarkets would otherwise be sending to compost or landfill. As part of this project the Botanic Gardens have also been sending us weekly deliveries of wonderful produce from their veg growing programme.

The benefits to Doorstep have been huge, saving the charity money as well as giving us the opportunity to use the produce in food-based activities and cooking sessions. We have tried to involve everyone in washing, peeling, cutting and prepping - from podding peas to grating celeriac. Having such a range of fresh and - to many of our families - unfamiliar ingredients has been fantastic. We are very pleased to be part of this exciting project and hope to play an active role in it's development.



Management, Staff, Volunteers, Partners & Supporters

Management Committee

Doorstep is a registered charity and voluntary organisation run by a management committee. Our committee includes parents, local community members and practitioners as well as representatives from Oxford City and Oxfordshire County Councils. Soon we hope to appoint a young person from the Drop-in Play-out project as well.

All the committee members are volunteers and once again have done a great job of steering the charity through difficult economic times. We would like to say a big thank you to Deborah Glass-Woodin who was a management committee member for many years and Chairperson until the end of last year.

Doorstep Management Committee (Nov 2009):

Vanessa Eade – Chairperson

Adrian Towse - Treasurer

John Tanner – Secretary

Alyson Duckmanton

Lisa Clayden

Maddie Bain

David Crowe

Lorna Bordeaux (Observer)

Elise Benjamin (Oxford City Council Observer)

David Williams (Oxford City Council Observer)

Chip Sherwood (Oxfordshire County Council Observer)



Staff Team at November 2009

Doorstep has the most amazing team of really committed staff. The last 12 months have not been at all easy with concerns about funding high on the agenda. Thank you so much to everyone for continuing to provide such high quality services in spite of limited resources. This year we have had to say good bye to some truly wonderful staff members – **Sheila Wright, Kim Sordillo, Joe Ginsburg, and Denise Salambasis**. We were so very sorry to see them all go!

The current staff team (November 2009):

Manager - **Anna Thorne**

Deputy Manager (Services Coordinator) - **Heather Morton**

Saturday Duty Manager – **Lucy Phillips**

Accounts & Personnel - **Nicola Barclay**

Children and Families Worker - **Josie Abbots**

Drop-in Play Out Project Leader – **Marie Nolan**

Senior Play Leader - **Claire Daniel**

Play Leader – **Fiona Clegg**

Project Workers - **Shabeena Ali, Nighat Shan, Pippa Hamwee and Joanne Chambers**

Over 8's Workers and Play Rangers - **Oliver Wright, Kristian Hudson, Julie Bolitho-Lee, and Natty Samuels**

Cleaners – **Toni Sordillo and Sandra Da Encarnacao Ruge**

Social Work Student – **Hayley Chittock**

Admin – **Sarah Williams**

Cover staff and freelance – **Su Frizzel,**

Karen Stansbie, Kelly Hempersall, Aidan Mahone, Jenny Chanter, Lizzie McHale, Hannah Higgins, Lucy Hickie and Tammy Little

And a really big thank you to all the Volunteers, occasional staff, helpers and workshop facilitators who have been so fantastic over the year. In no particular order...

Dawn, Ilse, Nazreen, Antonella, Irene, Amena, Abubakar, Mariah, Kane, Hazel, Tammy, Kat, Hannah, Ziggy, Fiona, Bill, Sara C, Shanaz, Celine, Fabiola, Lorraine, Lucy, Laura, Alison, Val, Zoe, Katie, Uppy, Rachel, Jinxie, Taris, Tammi, Jade, Rosie, Danni, Shaista, Sailma, Dave, Damien, Peter, Tim and lots more!



Very sadly this year long standing supporter **Janet Baynes** passed away. She had visited Doorstep with her husband Tony for many years and we do miss her.

We also have many partners and supporters to thank:

Ann Ellet

Lorr, Chriss, Dawn, Jane, Alison and everyone at **Donnington Playgroup**

Bernie, Spadge and **Bunt** for keeping our building shipshape

Donnington Community Centre; DNTRA and **Full Circle**

Karen, Trish and all at **East Oxford Children's Centre**

Amanda Smith, Frances Duffy and **Vicki Hatch** from the County

all at **Larkrise School** and **Florence Park Family Centre; Granpont Children's centre**

the **Children and Families Teams**

Ros, Krystal, Annie, Carolyn and the **Bumps2Babies** staff

Merry and **Maureen** – **M&M's!**

Kate and the **Community Caterers; Parent Education and Adult Learning teams; OPA, OPP** and **OCVYS**

the local **PCSO's**

IT **Jon** and **John**

Julie and the **Baby Café Bus** team

Verity and all at **Young Carers**

John Gould and **Gerard** at **Affinity Accounting**

RIACH Architects and **Coopers Construction Ltd**

Orinoco

Family Information Service

Roy at **Gibbons Bakery**

Brian at **Hicks'**; **David, Robin, Lucinda, Tom** and all at **Replenish** and the **Botanic Gardens**; and **Iffley Church**

St Nicholas Church

"I don't see my kids much, so when I do, I want it to be fun and they always have fun here."