

Thurs 28 May

Optician and Dentist

After all the fun of yesterday the children were back down to earth with a bang today with visits to the optician and dentist. It may not be fun but it is one of the most important days for the children on our programme.

There was an early and unusual start for some children getting picked up in the minibus at the hall at 8am and others meeting us direct at Specsavers at 8.30. As usual the Specsavers staff were wonderful, testing all of the children's and interpreters' eyes within a couple of hours. It was an interesting experience for the children. Especially the new ones who probably hadn't been in a shopping centre like Livingston before they came and maybe hadn't had their eyes tested before. Only 6 children and one interpreter needed glasses. With children getting older now, decisions on styles of glasses take longer as fashion considerations probably come into play 😊 We make arrangements to pick up the completed glasses in the afternoon. Such a great and friendly service from Specsavers who have supported us for many years now for free. We can't thank the manager and staff enough. They always go the extra mile for us and gave all of the children cakes, a bag of fun goodies and a gift voucher each for The Entertainer shop in Livingston. Wow, so kind.

Back at the hall we had some concert practice, packed lunch and a big teeth cleaning session before heading off to the dentist. We split in 2 with some hosts taking 5 children to Specsavers to pick up their glasses, as they were ready. So soon. What a great service.

This year our friends at St John's Church in Bathgate provided an excellent and fun dentist waiting room for the children with lots of fun activities and snacks but the snacks were only for those who had been to the dentist 😊 We made glitzy name badges, played some team games, had a wee memory game in a group which worked well with the children talking in Russian and English. The children also made lovely thank you cards. With the dentist only 200 yards away there was much shuttling of children backwards and forwards but it worked really well and kept us from clogging up the dentist waiting room with bored children. Iain and his team at Bathgate Dental Spa are so good with the children and have supported us for many years now. We feel a wee bit sorry for Maksim who had 4 fillings and Sasha who has to go back and get more work done, but he took it all in his stride. A funny moment – Zhenya has a fear of dentists. When he was in the chair and they lifted up a pointy looking tool to tap his

teeth, he shouted “No” and ran out of the room. Gold medal for patience for the dentist who eventually successfully gave him a filling. I think we had a total of 21 fillings with many sealants and varnishes applied, but on the whole the dentist says their teeth are getting better.

So a very busy but worthwhile day. Maybe not so much fun for our helpers so a huge thanks to our big team of host parent helpers today for your patience. Thanks to our great interpreters for all their hard work with much translating and hand holding at the opticians and dentist. Thanks to our friends at St Johns church for doing so well in their first experience of meeting and hosting our children for around 2 hours and working without an official interpreter. Thanks to Dima our oldest boy for his interpreting skills today, a great help with our interpreters stretched to the limit especially in the dentist with the children being worked on by 4 different dentists. To Specsavers and Bathgate Dental Spa for providing your services and care so willingly and for free. Lastly to the children, the most important people for behaving well and making everyones “job” much easier.



