



August Visit 2017



Week 1 - Day 1

MONDAY 7 AUGUST

It was great to welcome the children back to Scotland today at school and a special welcome for Dima and Stas returning after missing a year. The children shared with us all the nice things they had been doing with their families over the weekend. They have done so much already and its only day one

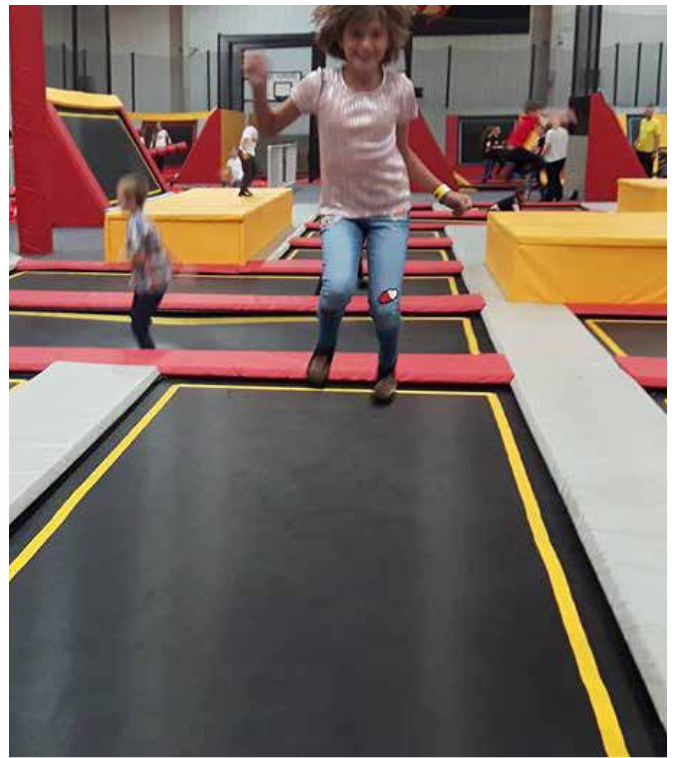
We were joined today by Natasha Richards who is a pupil at St Margaret's school. Natasha's mum is from Russia and Natasha speaks Russian. She has been a great help already and will help on a few days.

Our day started with rules and setting the scene ready for a good visit. We also popped outside for some road safety and some stranger danger training

After a successful snack from bag number one we made some lovely thank you cards and we are still making them. The children had a great afternoon at Jumpstation. Despite watching the safety video in English and then again with translation from Ira they had no fear and gave the marshals a few headaches however if fun can be measured in sweaty heads and the amount of water drunk then they had a brilliant time it was nice to see our interpreters Luda, Ira and Natasha take part and maybe they were the biggest kids

Back at the hall we shared the remains of Bill Grant's birthday cake with the children and many others. Just as well it was a big cake to accommodate all those candles we all got a good piece a great start to our visit.





Week 1 - Day 2

~ TUESDAY 8 AUGUST

Tuesday started with an amazing thing in the sky that gave lots of brightness and even heat. Once everyone got over that shock, we all assembled at Broxburn HQ to receive another fantastic Chris English lesson. As ever he delivered another highly entertaining and interactive session.

All too quickly it was time to head over to the swimming pool for another hour or so of fun & tomfoolery. In the boy's case that begun the minute they got into the changing rooms. Following the traditional round up, pulling them away from the dryers etc. eventually, everyone tumbled into the pool and much smiles and fun followed. Not 100% sure but some of this may well have been down to the strange water aerobic / dance thingy that Ira and Luda seemed to be doing today...!!

Anyway, and far too soon, it was time to head back to HQ central and engage in the traditional lunch bartering.

Boss-man for the day Bill, expertly aided by Pauline, then announced it was time to get in the FOCC "disco bus" and make our way to our fun golf day at Bathgate Golf club.

Golf boss-men Andy and Willie introduced us to a real and fantastic golf professional (Stuart) who then talked, demonstrated and helped all the children through the basics of golf. Starting with equipment and then onto a mini-putting competition.

With the basics mastered we then proceeded to take part in a really fun team warm up where everyone got involved with big nets, tennis balls and generally made enough noise to ensure that all the Golf club members knew who was visiting today.

We then moved onto some real power stuff and, following an important safety lesson from golf- boss-man Stuart we then all had a chance to "smash" a few balls down the practice ground.

After sweltering in the heat and showing the club members and professionals a few new ways to play golf, the children were then rewarded with a sit in the sun. All the children were then presented with a special sports top sponsored by Bathgate Golf Club and HSBC Bank.

Finally, we all then headed back to FOCC HQ when realising that here was still a big sun thing around we headed to the park at the bottom of the road





Week 1 - Day 3

WEDNESDAY 9 AUGUST

We didn't have a bus today so we just stayed local and it turned out to be a bit of a dancing day. We started with Joanne at JHM dance studios where she put the kids through their paces with a range of serious looking warm up exercises before helping Luda develop some dance routines for the concert - the kids had great fun but it's difficult to envisage any of them heading for the Russian Ballet

After a spot of lunch, it was off to the park to take advantage of some rare sunshine before back to the hall to meet with the Livingston Fiddlers who entertained and helped the kids learn some ceilidh dances.

After snack we had a bit of fun with a Piñata and the kids all enjoyed the resultant sweet storm.

Super day. Thanks, once again, to Natasha for her help and to Joanne and the Livingston Fiddlers who all generously donated their time so that our kids could have fun.





Week 1 - Day 4

THURSDAY 10 AUGUST

Chris started the day with one of his popular English speaking lessons, keeping everyone posted within the host Facebook group as to what was covered during that time.

After the lesson we had time for our first snack of the day before heading off in the mini bus to Beecraigs Country Park, near Linlithgow. The sun was shining, and so it was a good day to go outside.

We visited the Red Deer and Highland Cattle first and then walked around the Beecraigs Loch. We saw two swans and their cygnets.

It was then time for lunch and we sat outside in the sun at the picnic benches near a huge play area.

As soon as lunch was finished, we played. There was lots of equipment to play with and climb.

Luda pretended to be Spider Woman, climbing to the top of the big spider web made from rope.

Stephen (host parent) then drove us around the park in the mini bus to the foot of Cockleroy Hill. It is 278 metres (912 ft) tall and when we climbed to the very top, we could see all over West Lothian, Forth Valley and Edinburgh.

At three o'clock we left Beecraigs Country Park and headed back to Broxburn. It was snack time again and then we had just enough time to practice our singing for the concert before getting ready to go back to our Scottish families.

It was another fun filled day with all our friends at FOCC.





Week 1 - Day 5

FRIDAY 11 AUGUST

It was good to see the film crew arrive, but I know that when they did they were well into the filming as they had been at Alina's host family.

The day went well and the children behaved well, the morning full of play and song. We headed out to Pottering Around after morning snacks, and that was a great morning treat. I can't thank the staff at Pottering Around enough as they did a really good job at keeping the kids amused and entertained. Of course tea and coffee for the adults was much appreciated. Watching the kids paint and interact with each other and then with Mike our chief was great. Mike's tease with the paint brush dipped in water was fun, kids thought he was painting their necks, got quite a stir that did, worried looks on faces and frantic rubbing of necks to see what colour the paint was. . . . After the fun hilarity games and interviews completed we headed back to Broxburn Church for lunch, Mike popped into the co-op and bought a few chock ices and that went down well with the kids, some big kids too. . . Its always fun to watch the kids at lunch as there is so much bartering and swapping of food going on. And they really seem to enjoy the interaction. The afternoon plans changed, due to the weather and also the filming crew, Many minutes of piece to camera interviews were done, Again Mike doing his bit to describe the work that the FOCC charity does. I really think that we did ourselves proud today.

We did manage to get out in the afternoon and we went up to the park by the sports centre for a wee while so more filming could be done, this was completed and due to the drizzle we headed back to the church and more suitable indoor activities engaged.

Again it was a good day and the kids were great, and a lot of laughter filled the day.





Week 2 - Day 1

MONDAY 14 AUGUST

Started the day with some enthusiastic concert practice.

Then headed for a drive to South Queensferry to continue today's activities. Slight change of plans and we headed to Deep Sea World...considering the weather worked out a great activity.

The children thoroughly enjoyed adventuring round the centre, watching the seal feed, watched in awe through the underwater tunnel not once but twice, investigated all the exotic fish, reptiles and creepy crawlies. To finish off they all had a go in the hurricane simulator... leaving us with a few cool hairdos on exiting the centre.

After a spot of lunch, we headed to watch a few planes land and take off by the side of Edinburgh airports runway.

Then back to HQ to continue on with some just as enthusiastic concert practice.





Week 2 - Day 2

TUESDAY 15 AUGUST

Everyone in early so some concert practise before Chris and English lessons.

Ellie and Emilio joined us for the main morning activity so plenty helpers for swimming but we still managed to get half drowned by the boys. We had lunch then lunch then Dave drove us to 5 Sisters Zoo where the highlight was the animal handling with an African Snail, a Tenrec and a Leopard Gecko.

Half an hour's play in the park, more concert practice then off to the family meal.

The food was great and the magician hilarious so everyone finished a long day tired but smiling.





Week 2 - Day 3

WEDNESDAY 16 AUGUST

A fun packed day for all the children.

Started the morning rehearsing for their farewell concert with Luda and Ira.

At Joanne's dance studio the children started with warm up routines then on to dance and another run through for the concert.

After lunch a trip to Clip and Climb was fantastic. What a fantastic place! they all loved it, so did Luda!





Week 2 - Day 4

THURSDAY 17 AUGUST

Another fun start to the day with English lessons from Chris. Alphabet (MNOP) and questions such as “what is it?” and “what colour is it?” It would be great if FOCC had £1 for every time Chris exclaimed ‘Noooo...the answer is “it’s a zebra.... NOT.... pizza zebra” !!!’

A quick snack then all aboard the FOCC mobile for our journey to Linlithgow. Thanks to Historic Scotland for letting us all into the Palace for free and for providing young tour guides who were dressed in period costume. I didn’t look too closely but I’m sure that most of the damage to the Palace happened before our visit.

A quick tour of St. Michaels church (beautiful stained glass) before the rare treat of a picnic lunch in the sunshine.

After lunch we did picture orienteering around the loch - each child had photos of 12 locations around the loch and received a star when identified. The course was punctuated by a visit to the park and opportunity to feed the ducks and swans.

After completing a successful circumnavigation of the loch a reward of ice-creams seemed in order and these were devoured in record time.

We finished an excellent day by returning to the palace and blowing bubbles and playing games in the sunshine.





Week 2 - Day 5

FRIDAY 18 AUGUST

Today started with English lessons from Chris. This is a great opportunity for all the children and it's great to see them enjoying it. We then set off to Bubbles swimming pool where we all got to enjoy, not just swimming, but the flumes and river rapids as well. Due to our lovely, Scottish, summer weather (drizzly rain) our afternoon was taken up with more concert practice and games.





Week 3 - Day 1

MONDAY 21 AUGUST

Before the first visit to the opticians the children played with crafts materials.

Those who needed and were offered glasses (including Luda & Ira) will be wearing them by the end of the week. They will each have two pairs to choose from.

After lunch and before we departed for the dentist, some concert practice took place.

Now there's not a lot we can say about a trip to the dentist. Some anxiety, some trepidation, some hilarity and embarrassment when the boys managed to find pictures of scantily clad females in the magazines in the waiting room. The best part of that visit was being able to thank the staff after work had been carried out and the return to Broxburn Parish Church. There was a just a little time for some more concert practice before getting ready to return home. All treatment completed with no follow up visits - thank goodness!

Clean teeth and happy smiles will be evident tomorrow, I'm sure.





Week 3 - Day 2

TUESDAY 22 AUGUST

Day started well with a wee bit concert practise then on the bus to South Queensferry. Onto the Maid of the Forth boat where we sailed to Inchcolm Island and saw sea lions. It was then back to the hall for a later lunch.

The children then were right in to concert practice which was a delight to watch. They went in to the big hall in turn to practice something only they know and while waiting their turn some beautiful colourful designs and patterns of hama beads were made. A great day had by all.





Week 3 - Day 3

WEDNESDAY 23 AUGUST

After the dreadful early morning rain we were resigned to looking for a plan B but after celebrating Stas' birthday, concert practice and having a shot of Martin's bagpipes, the weather improved and we set off for Almond Valley Heritage Centre.

As usual the FoCC bus echoed to shouts of "Russian Music Please!!!" and "Louder !!!". At the Heritage Centre there were animals to pat and plenty of play areas to explore. We even managed to get the official photos taken in the sunshine. Both Ira and Luda claimed to have forgotten that the photographer would be there, but they both managed to look stunning.

After a brilliant time, it was back to the hall to demolish Stas' birthday cake, collect their finished pottery and receive gifts of teddies. The day ended with Pinata and Hama beads.





Week 3 - Day 4

THURSDAY 24 AUGUST

The day arrived the kids all love. A trip to M & D's, Scotland's Theme Park. We arrived a little early so went for a walk around Strathclyde Country Park but it was soon time to go in and enjoy the screams of excitement from the small and bigger kids! Such a fun day with lots of laughs and lots of water!





Week 3 - Day 5

FRIDAY 25 AUGUST

Well what a crazy wet day it has been. We All started off at the church doing rehearsals for the concert and some of the kids got their new glasses.

We all then jumped in the mini bus and headed off to scout camp for some fun and games. We met Philip, the boss, on arrival and had a good play on the adventure park.

We had some lunch then split into groups of four doing lots of activities: Crate climbing with Philip, ride round on the go karts, the labyrinth. (pitch black maze)

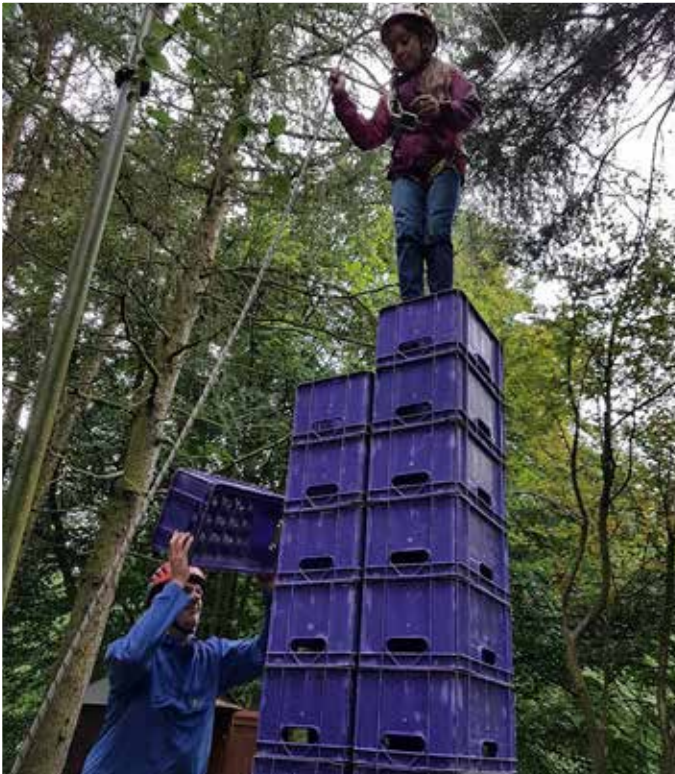
The groups took it in turn going through all the activities and did well to stay motivated with the heavy rain.

Philip handed the children certificates and well earned scout badges and we said our goodbyes.

A short drive back to the church for a snack and more concert practice. It was nice listening to the children having a sing song.

Tip of the day when you're told not to go into the labyrinth as it's for children only, listen. My bottom is bigger than I thought!





Week 4 - Day 1

MONDAY 28 AUGUST

Our day started with some concert practice - the main event is only days away so serious stuff now. At snack they celebrated Alina Smith's birthday in traditional Belarusian style (not sure what health and safety would say!) before tucking into cake. After lunch today we headed off to YoYo soft play. We started with a game of lazer quest, boys against girls. The girls won - you don't mess with the girls! It was then time for a run around in the soft play before heading back in for another game of lazer quest. This time it was everyone against each other with Dima being the Champion.





Week 4 - Day 2

TUESDAY 29 AUGUST

Great fun start to the morning with Chris. Today it was all about months of the year, we have exactly the right amount of months to kids! Perfect! It was then time for swimming at Broxburn Pool before some more concert practice.





Week 4 - Day 3

we WEDNESDAY 30 AUGUST

Today we spent some time setting up and adding finishing touches to all our things for the concert. We then had a full run through of the concert. The children are very excited.

We enjoyed a well earned early lunch and then some quiet time watching Kung Fu panda in Russian.





The Concert



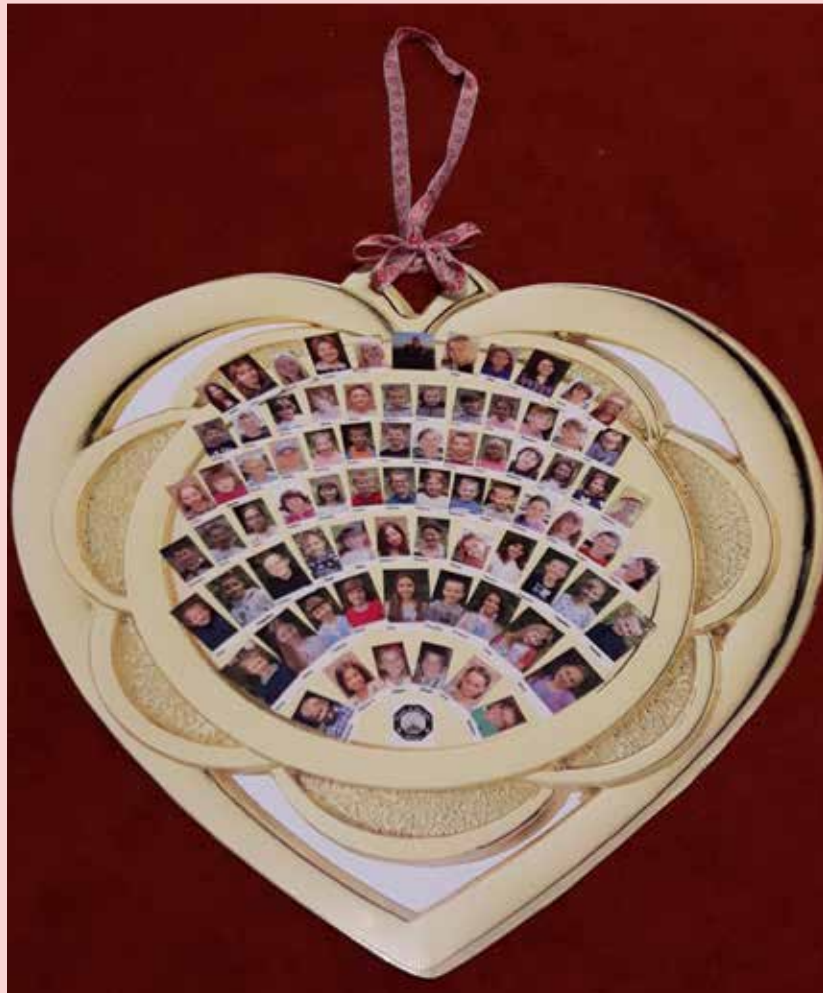
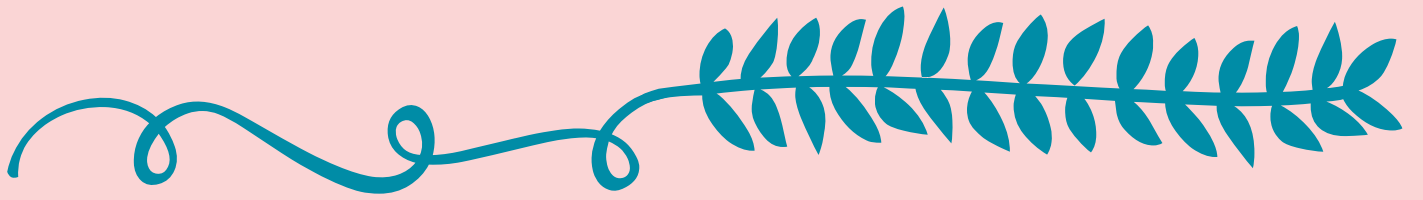
The Concert





The Concert





Before our 2017 Visit



Alina



Alina



Dima



Ercamo



Katia



Kira



Lera



Liosha



Luda



Ira

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Maksim



Nastya



Stas



Timothy

Thank you for helping us to restore hope

After our 2017 Visit



Alina



Alina



Dima



Ercamo



Katia



Kira



Lera



Liosha



Luda



Ira

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Maksim



Nastya



Stas



Timothy

Thank you for helping us to make a difference



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