



Produced by the Environment Group

# Firrhill News

February 2015

## School Concert

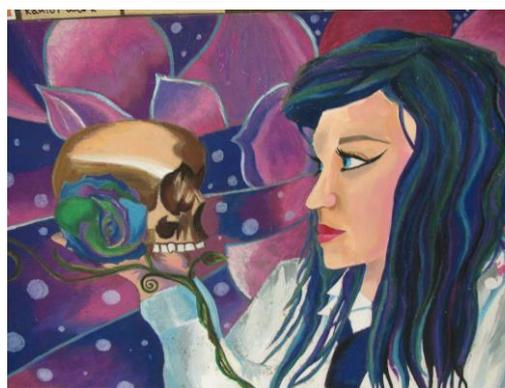
The Firrhill High School Christmas Concert was held on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2014. The Ukulele Orchestra the Junior Rock Band both performed for the first time and did very well!



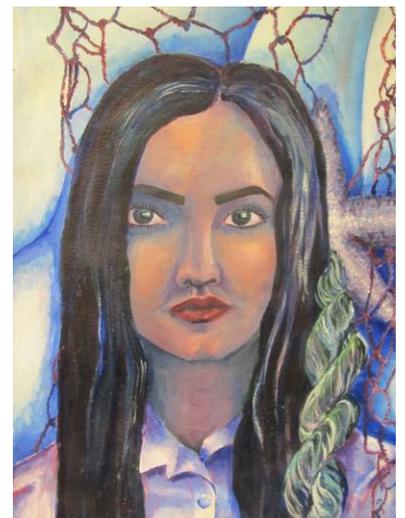
Thanks to staff and pupils for creating a fabulous concert!



It was a fantastic evening of music and art with some interesting folio work on display in the school foyer.



Thanks to the PTA who served refreshments during the interval and organised a festive, fundraising raffle.





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## Childline Concert



Edinburgh Schools Wind Ensemble (above) includes a large number of Firrhill pupils; it is directed by Gordon Jenkins and the ensemble played a superb finale of Happy by Pharrell, and Disney at the Movies, arr J Higgins.



On Friday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2014 the annual Childline Winter Concert was held in Central Hall, Tollcross, Edinburgh. The programme featured:  
Edinburgh Schools Junior Guitars  
Edinburgh North Percussion Ensemble  
The Portobello Cello Ensemble  
Edinburgh Schools Training Wind Ensemble  
Edinburgh Schools Wind Ensemble  
St Augustine's RC Baroque Ensemble



*"Congratulations to those who performed in the Fanfare and Childline concerts. Both concerts were very successful and all Firrhill students were a real credit to the school" said Kim Stephen, music teacher*



### **ABRSM/Trinity music exams**

Naomi Anderson, Grade 7

Jamie Adamson, Callum Taylor and Kathleen Hargest, Grade 6

Joshua Mitchel and Mary Hargest, Grade 5

Joanna Clark, Miriam Taylor and Lily Raper, Grade 4

Megan Alice McLean and Locklain Kennedy, Grade 3

Sam Moffat, Grade 2

*Well done to all who sat their ABRSM/Trinity exams last term!*

A large number of Firrhill pupils also took part in the Fanfare Concert which showcased some more of the city's young musical talent and was held on November 28<sup>th</sup> in Central Hall.



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## Gravel for the School Gardens



On Friday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2 tons of gravel was moved from bags at the front of the school, into the Celebration Garden and the Pond Garden to help suppress weeds.



Pupils, staff and parents did an amazing job to shovel, transport and rake the gravel, then finally sweep and tidy up. A pupil took photos and video film too.

Thanks to the PTA for funding this project and to parents, staff and friends for helping and lending equipment.





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## Gravel & Garden Maintenance



Gardens in quadrangles, which are enclosed on all sides, present access issues! At Firrhill High we needed to bring in the gravel via the main concourse and any weeds, rubble and rubbish needed to be removed by the same route.



Pupils cleared dead leaves and rubbish into plastic bags (left). The old school wheel barrow which sadly was beyond repair, plus some rubble were removed & recycled. As gardening can be both grubby and strenuous, layers of clothing are practical and stout shoes advisable.

**“The pupils did a fantastic job they worked very hard both individually and as a team. It was amazing that we could achieve so much in such a short time - very well done, an incredible effort everyone!”**  
said Mrs Hargest, Firrhill parent



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## Farewell to Miss Carmichael

*Congratulations to Miss Mags Carmichael, Pupil Support Teacher, who now has a new post at Belmont Academy in Ayrshire as Principal Teacher, Inclusion. This post is designed to promote positive behaviour management and restorative practices throughout the school.*

The Support Base was introduced twelve years ago by Mrs Hall and Mrs Jerome. Its aim was to support pupils who needed to work in a supported environment for a short period of time. Working alongside Mrs MacArthur, Miss Carmichael has further enhanced this provision by her addition of attachment work which has allowed a number of pupils to progress back into attendance. She has worked at Firrhill for eight years and will be sorely missed, especially by her pupils.

The Support Base has helped many pupils and their families and carers to access education and support when they were experiencing wide ranging difficulties. Young people have gained qualifications and positive destinations through the contribution the Support Base has given to the Pupil Support Department.



“Miss Carmichael has helped me by providing support surrounding anxiety issues in my personal life that then started to affect my school life also. The Support Base is the place I go when I need to talk to someone or I need somewhere to calm down. I genuinely believe that if it was not for the Support Base and the help provided by Miss Carmichael I would not be in school at all. I would most definitely not be getting qualifications out of it like I am now. All of the pupils that have been supported by Miss Carmichael, including myself, will miss her very much when she leaves but wish her all the best in her new post at Belmont Academy.” Pupil’s own words

Miss Carmichael has been instrumental in involving pupils in school Eco Projects such as the maintenance of the Celebration Garden, Bio Pond and Anne Frank Gardens. Pupils helped at the Anne Frank Tree Planting Ceremony by putting up the gazebos (shown below) and later, creating and planting new flower beds, plus the recent mammoth task of shovelling and moving 4 tons of gravel, into the school gardens (to help suppress weeds). Several pupils from the Support Base received awards at the Annual Celebration of Achievement for gardening work.



Anne Frank tree Planting Ceremony, 12<sup>th</sup> June 2014

We will miss Mags Carmichael and we wish her every success in her new post and hope that she enjoys being near to her family and her roots.

## The Support Base

The Support Base is a single classroom where “magic” can happen! In a year approximately 100 pupils will cross its threshold. There are pupils who are timetabled to be there every week. The Support Base is geared up to be reactive to needs within school as they arise, for example, in response to a pupil experiencing unexpected issues at home.

Pupils are encouraged to complete work and revise for tests that they have otherwise been opting out of. Work around attachment is essential to this end.

Many Agency staff are “well kent” faces in the support base which makes working with a particular pupil much easier to achieve. Building relationships means the Support Base has a direct impact on transition as pupils are more likely to remain engaged with education until sufficient planning has been put in place to secure a positive destination. “It is extremely rewarding working in the Support Base” says Miss Carmichael

“The school remains committed to the provision of one to one or small group work to ensure all pupils feel included” says Miss Statham, Depute Head Teacher



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## Diversity Day Celebration

On December 18<sup>th</sup> 2014 the Anne Frank Ambassadors and special guests enjoyed a buffet lunch to celebrate Firrhill High's Diversity Day featuring in Edinburgh Council's "Bright Futures" blog.

On Diversity Day, 18<sup>th</sup> November 2014, Harry Bibring (pictured below) gave a moving account of his remarkable life story, including his experience of coming to the UK via Kindertransport. Harry spoke to the S3 year group and guests, with clarity and humour and held everyone's full attention.



A film about Diversity Day including Harry's testimony as well as interviews and workshop footage has been produced by Ian Cowie, former Firrhill parent. Mrs Watson, art teacher, who created and organised Diversity Day has planned a red carpet film premier which will take place on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> February at Oxfangs Library, complete with entertainment by the "Maid of the Forth Stompers" and dress code: red & glitzy!

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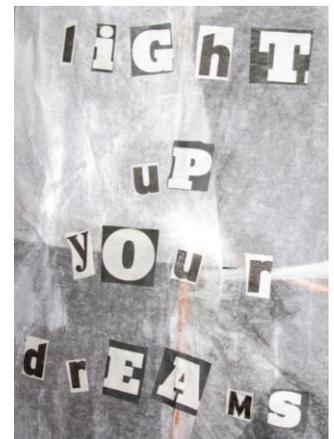
### The City of Edinburgh Council's Bright Futures blog: Firrhill High lights the way to diversity

Posted on 17 December 2014 by Children & Families

"On 18 November Firrhill High School held their first ever Diversity Day to help raise awareness of the terrible consequences of bigotry and to encourage diversity and inclusion"



Heather Levy from Firrhill Community Council hopes the Diversity Day film will be used as a resource and shared with many members of the wider community.



One of the 70 willow lanterns (above) made by pupils to symbolise the 70 years which have passed since the closing of Auschwitz –Birkenau, the lamps shine with messages of hope for the future.



The Anne Frank ambassadors have worked very hard sharing Anne's Story and last term they received their badges from Carolyn Hargest, Environment Group Leader

The Diversity Day film will help more pupils and members of the community to learn important lessons about inclusion, tolerance and diversity