

2023 IMPACT REPORT



“We are Friends in Libraries” is funded by Waltham Forest Council’s **Best Start in Life** offer. This heart-warming intergenerational project, was delivered in collaboration with Chit-Chat-Pitter-Pat and Waltham Forest’s Libraries service.

We united older residents, young children, and their parents/guardians in libraries across Waltham Forest through the magic of storytelling and singing songs.



Stories and Rhymes sessions for the under 5’s and older people

We are Friends launched in 4 libraries across Waltham Forest and ran for 8 weeks before the summer holidays.

Because it was so successful it rolled out to 4 additional libraries in the autumn.



64

1 hour sessions delivered



“It’s very uplifting and gives you a sense of wellbeing, meeting different people and seeing the children enjoying themselves.”

- Library staff

The sessions successfully...

- Addressed the isolation and loneliness that so many of us have experienced.
- Provided a fun way for children and parents to link up with older generations.
- Celebrated the simple, restorative power of human connection.
- Helped to spread joy and reduce loneliness.



272

Unique number of beneficiaries (older people, parents/guardians and children)



“My Dad has dementia and quite limited speech. Each session he’s been full of positive words ‘fantastic, amazing, wonderful, brilliant’ and his mood is always lifted. Thank you so much.”

- Parent/guardian



“A great opportunity for young and old to come together and have a joyous morning. The residents absolutely love it. For some this is the highlight of their week, knowing that they can bring joy to the children as they read them a story.”

- Care home staff



82%

of older residents said they ‘enjoyed interacting with other generations’ (100% said they ‘enjoyed the colourful scarfs’!)

100%

of older residents said “I enjoy it all” when asked ‘Is there anything you didn’t enjoy about We are Friends in Libraries?’



“I have met some of the community that I would not have met without the ‘We are Friends’ event.”

- Library staff



1,337

Total number of parents/guardians, children and older people attendance recorded

“It’s very uplifting and gives you a sense of wellbeing, meeting different people and seeing the children enjoying themselves.”

- Older resident





100
NPS
 Net Promoter Score
 - older residents



100%
 of older residents
 agreed/strongly agreed
 that 'We are Friends in
 Libraries' has made me
 feel less
 lonely/socially isolated

"I feel more connected
 as this amazing
 opportunity has
 managed to give me a
 different look on how
 we can expand our
 limits and meet new
 friends."
 - Library staff

**"I like getting out
 of the house.
 There is one little
 boy I could just
 pick up and
 cuddle."**
 - Older resident



89%
 of parents/guardians
 said they enjoyed
 Meeting/making friends
 with parents/children/
 other older adults at the
 'We are Friends' library
 sessions



**"I love the
 interaction with
 the children it's
 been such a joy,
 seeing the
 children grow with
 each story."**
 - Older resident

100%

of older residents agreed/strongly agreed that 'We are Friends in Libraries' gave me something to look forward to



78

NPS

Net Promoter Score
- Parents/guardians

"A wonderful place for children and their loves ones to come and share experiences together. Also to create wonderful friendships."

- Older resident

100%

of older residents agreed/strongly agreed that 'We are Friends in Libraries' has brightened my week



83%

of parents/guardians said "I enjoy it all" when asked 'Is there anything you didn't enjoy about We are Friends in Libraries?'



"I've enjoyed being with everyone. The library staff have been a huge help in mixing us with the community."

- Older resident



"I think it is a wonderful idea, the sessions are well put together and entertaining."

- Parent/guardian

100%

of older residents agreed/strongly agreed that 'We are Friends in Libraries' made me feel more connected to my wider community

82%

of parents/guardians agreed/strongly agreed that **'We are Friends in Libraries'** has brightened my week



75%

of parents/guardians agreed/strongly agreed that **'We are Friends in Libraries'** made me feel less lonely/socially isolated

"This is amazing and should be a staple in all boroughs/libraries. The program is doing huge work for the mental health and loneliness of older generations *and* the education of our new generation."

- Parent/guardian

88%

of parents/guardians agreed/strongly agreed that **'We are Friends in Libraries'** made me feel more connected to my wider community

"So much fun and so many happy memories... amazing to see old and young having a great time together."

- Parent/guardian

90%

of parents/guardians agreed/strongly agreed that **'We are Friends in Libraries'** gave me something to look forward to

"My daughter and I love this class and always leave with a smile on our faces. She spends the rest of the day singing the songs and loves the props and bubbles. It's a lovely way of bringing the community together in a simple, relaxed way.."

- Parent/guardian

Meet Winnie, a care home resident who attended 'We are Friends in Libraries' sessions. She's our storytelling hero after bravely volunteering to read to the children each week!



Winnie's stories didn't just entertain; they spread joy, creating a bond across generations, connecting older residents in the community with young families, fostering relationships through shared experiences.

"Just a quick note to say, my daughter and I attended today's session and we absolutely loved story-time with Winnie - the smiles on the children's faces as well as Winnie's said it all. Winnie said she'd spent the weekend preparing for the story, and you could see how proud she was and how having that purpose had brought her such joy."

- Parent/guardian



"Very enjoyable, I've never done anything like it before. I've loved telling the stories to the children."

- Winnie, care home resident



As a special treat for the final celebratory sessions, we welcomed the talented local author Karin Akesson who captivated us with her brand new picture book 'The Rainbow Snail'

