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Annual Rotary KidsOut Newsletter 2021

Jointly Compiled by: Rtn. Gordon Moulds CBE DL – Chief Executive KidsOut
Rtn. Steve Cartwright – Rotary GB&I KidsOut Coordinator

Message from Rtn Gordon Moulds CBE DL - Chief Executive

What a year! I must start by congratulating all Rotarians who rose magnificently to the challenges caused by Covid-19 and supported some of the most vulnerable children in the UK at such a critical time.

As most of you are aware, KidsOut is a Rotary charity, started by Rotary and run by Rotary. With a Rotarian Patron, 3 Rotarian Trustees and 16 Rotarian Ambassadors; KidsOut is run on Rotary principles. Together in partnership, we have achieved more this year than we have ever done to support the mental health and well-being of children who have fled serious domestic violence.

Often forgotten, most families arrive in refuge with nothing other than the clothes on their back and they cannot leave the refuge for fear of meeting the abuser. Covid-19 really caused these families additional problems as refuge staff had to work from home with many furloughed; they faced a real dilemma, many with no access to money and scared to leave the refuge but fearing they had no option. This is where KidsOut and Rotary stepped in.

In week one of the pandemic, we provided food vouchers to the 85% of families in refuge who had no access to a food bank or school voucher scheme. In week 2 we provided a toy box to every child in refuge and week 3 another food voucher. By the end of May, working with other agencies, we reduced the number of families without access to food to 30% and received Government grants to provide food vouchers until the end of March 2021.

Following a comprehensive survey, we discovered that 78% of families did not have access to a TV or computer. 42% had no access to the internet and remember that during the pandemic a family is restricted all together in one room. We also asked the children what day out they would like to do when restrictions allowed and a whopping 99% asked to go to the cinema – no surprise when you consider 78% have no access to a TV and are stuck in one room with their mother.

Thanks to Rotary Clubs, we were able to provide a cinema ticket to every family in refuge. We also provided internet access to a 1,000 families and a 6 month subscription to Disney Plus. As you can imagine the feedback has been astounding - especially for the toy box which was a staggering 100% positive.

By Christmas, virtually every family in refuge had been replaced by more families escaping serious domestic violence and the need to provide toy boxes for the children was vital. Due to our increased support of children in refuge since March, KidsOut would have struggled to finance the toy requirement, but thanks to Rotarians rising to the challenge, we were able to provide toy boxes to every child in refuge at Christmas.

This is a staggering achievement and one that all Rotarians should be so proud of.

KidsOut ensures that Rotary takes the credit for these services and as such are trying to find more volunteers to become a Rotary KidsOut Ambassador in every District to help coordinate the services.

Many Rotary Clubs are currently struggling to raise funds and that this year's National Rotary KidsOut Day will again be affected by the pandemic. For this reason, KidsOut intends to increase its support to Clubs that take part in the Day Out but also to offer an alternative to support disadvantaged children during these challenging times. KidsOut intends to offer free children's cinema tickets to help you support your local disadvantaged groups. The shared project will require Rotary Clubs to provide the adult tickets and coordinate the distribution. KidsOut will be purchasing 20,000 tickets and aim to provide them for June, when we hope restrictions will be lifted – more detail to follow.

Please remember, KidsOut only exists because of Rotary; that said, I am only too aware of the superb work that Rotary does in so many areas but still ask that your Club considers as a minimum to participate in the National Rotary KidsOut Day or the cinema initiative. I would appreciate your thoughts on how we can help you more in the future.

Checkout the KidsOut website: <http://www.kidsout.org.uk/>

2021 UPDATE from Rotary GB&I KidsOut Coordinator – Steve Cartwright

Checkout Rotary KidsOut Rotary GB&I website information: (you will need to log-in)

www.rotarygbi.org/members/humanitarian-service-programmes/community/community-events/rotary-kidsout-day/

and

www.rotarygbi.org/members/club-district-support/opportunities-serve/list-projects/kidsout/

I wish to reiterate Gordon's comments and express my thanks to every District, Club and member that have been involved in ensuring Rotary KidsOut goes from strength to strength, underlining indeed proving that we, as Rotarians we ARE *People of Action*. THANK YOU

Contd:

ROTARY Christmas Toy Box initiative: As mentioned above by Gordon, the response from Rotary Districts, Clubs and members has been FANTASTIC. Whilst still finalising the accounts, 'Rotary' has donated over **£125,000** to this project, equating to in excess of **5,000** Rotary Christmas Toy Boxes sent to individual children residing in *Women's Refuges* to escape domestic violence in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Such is the success of this *initiative*, that we will be doing it all again for Christmas 2021!

National Rotary KidsOut Day 9 June 2021

To reiterate Gordon's comments, Covid-19 looks set to influence, disrupt our annual plans, at the time of writing, whilst we hope that 'KidsOut Day' 2021 will go ahead as planned, there is a need to have a *Plan B*. Hence KidsOut offering FREE children's cinema tickets in lieu of sponsoring children for the, a 'normal' National Rotary KidsOut Day.

However, NO problem if your club wishes to go ahead 'as normal', given the current fluid Covid situation, that finalising such a 'Day Out' should not be done until Mid-March. At which time the on-line registration form will be available on the link below <https://www.kidsout.org.uk/forms/rotary-kids-out-day/>

Should you also require free of charge *baseball caps*, you will need to complete a separate additional order click on the *link* below:

<https://www.kidsout.org.uk/forms/national-rotary-kidsout-day-caps-order-form/>

Please take the opportunity to see the details about National Rotary KidsOut Day on the KidsOut website:

<http://www.kidsout.org.uk/what-we-do/national-rotary-kidsout-day/>

Alternatively you can access all the details and Registrations Forms by going to the KidsOut website: <http://www.kidsout.org.uk/> – see menu at the top of the front page, select '*What we do*', then '*National Rotary KidsOut Day*'. The Forms can be seen clearly stated in bold red type, just *click* on these as required.

Rotary KidsOut on-line virtual 'Zoom' Presentations

Why not invite your District KidsOut Ambassador or myself to *visit* your club on-line to tell you more about the history and work of KidsOut and its strong link, partnership with Rotary GB&I?

Presentations usually last 20 minutes with 10 mins. for Q&A.

Please contact me for more information.

Rotary KidsOut 'Ambassadors' - YOUR HELP PLEASE!

We have **vacancies in the following other 9 Districts of Rotary GB&I:**

1010, 1080, 1150, 1160, 1175, 1180, 1190, 1200, 1285

Do you know someone in your Club/District who may be interested in becoming an 'Rotary KidsOut Ambassador'?

More details available from me.

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Want to be kept up to date with Rotary KidsOut Information?

If so, please let me know your full contact details including email address. *These details will not be used for marketing purposes, but will ensure that any KidsOut information will be sent out quarterly to the correct person(s).* Help ME to help YOU.

And finally, should you have any questions, queries or comments please do not hesitate to contact me, don't forget to let me know your full contact details.

Thank you (again) for your continued support for KidsOut, and please carry on the good work safely!

Steve Cartwright

Rotary GB&I KidsOut Coordinator

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