



walk 4 life

Furness families NEWSLETTER

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Issue 1



For three months now the Ramblers and Action for Children have been running a pioneering walking programme in Barrow-in-Furness and surrounding areas, funded by the Department of Health.

The Furness Families Walk4Life project has aimed to find new ways to combat the 'can't get off the sofa syndrome' and get families – particularly children - out discovering the wonderful world of walking on their own doorstep.



We've set out from Action for Children centres in the Barrow, Walney and Dalton areas and had an absolute ball! We've been on Bear Hunts, visited local rugby ground Craven Park, adventured through the Ormsgill Quarry and visited the ducks at the reservoir, just to mention a few of the walks enjoyed by children and adults alike.



Although sometimes the weather has been against us, mostly it's been kind to us, with brilliant sunshine making the experience of walking together much more enjoyable. Many families took part and told us that the project allowed them to spend more quality time together, talking and walking, looking at a range of countryside and nature, playing games and learning about what delights lay on their own doorstep.

As the walk leader and project coordinator of this programme I have to say how enjoyable it has been to walk with all the families. Several families have been so positive about Walk4Life, spreading the word and encouraging others to join in. I'm sure they'll be able to take this enthusiasm on into their own independent walking, as well as sharing it with their friends.



I personally would like to thank all of the families who attended and hope you enjoyed the walks as much as me. I'm sure you will all join with me to thank the support walkers, Lauren, Andy, Marjorie, Steve and Lisa, without whom this project would not have been as much fun. I'd also like to thank Tom from the Ramblers main office. I know that those of you who met him have constantly asked after him, and the project wouldn't have been anywhere near as successful without him.

The Celebration Events were very successful with all who attended enjoying a wonderful party atmosphere, playing pass the parcel and flying kites. So to everyone who took part in the walks and especially to the seven Top Walkers who completed all twelve weeks... **WELL DONE!**

What next?

This project was a "pilot" project to see if this way of encouraging families to get more healthy through walking works. Depending on the results, we hope to get further funds to run more programmes, in Barrow and in other parts of the country.

Some of you attended focus groups in August as part of the research into how well the project is working, led by researchers from Oxford and Loughborough universities. Thanks to all who gave up their time for this. We had such constructive comments from you all that will really help send back positive messages about the project to our funders

at the Department of Health (DH). The researchers will also be calling you next spring to chat about your walking progress, before producing a final report for the DH.

I know many of you are eager to know about more walks. I hope we will have more news soon, hopefully in the next newsletter that should arrive in the next few weeks.

I have enclosed a leaflet with details of local walks to give you more inspiration. There's also lots more information from the Ramblers and Change4Life on the web to help you do more walking. See www.getwalking.org.uk or www.nhs.uk/change4life under Partners and supporters – Toolkits – Walk4Life.

Good luck and keep walking, and remember everyone can walk. You're never too young to start a walking adventure!

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Furness Families Walk4Life is part of the Change4Life movement. In order to maintain a healthy weight we need both to eat well and move more. Many families are making changes that will help them live healthier and longer lives. Visit www.nhs.uk/change4life or call 0300 123 4567 for more information.

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