

Thank You

We would like to extend a special thanks to you, our supporters, for your ongoing assistance with our work. Despite the tough economic climate, Bag Books managed to increase its income year on year enabling us to reach out to more people with Severe or Profound & Multiple Learning Disabilities than ever before. We couldn't do it without your help and support. We have some exciting plans for the next twelve months and we hope you will continue to follow and support our work.

Regular Gift

One of the most effective ways of supporting Bag Books is to make a regular gift. This enables us to plan ahead for the future because we know, day in day out, that we will have a steady income stream that we can rely on. It is quick and simple to set up and can be for as little or as much as you like. Please email: camilla@bagbooks.org for more details.

Tell a friend

We've included a spare copy of our leaflet in with this newsletter. Please pass it on to a friend, relative, neighbour or colleague and help us to publicise our work more widely.

Run for us

Bag Books has six guaranteed places at the London 10k run on Sunday July 10th 2011. Would you like to run on behalf of Bag Books? Please email: camilla@bagbooks.org for more details.

Storyline is published quarterly and is available in email and print versions. If you would like to change the format you receive in future please contact us. Similarly, please let us know if you'd rather not receive future editions.



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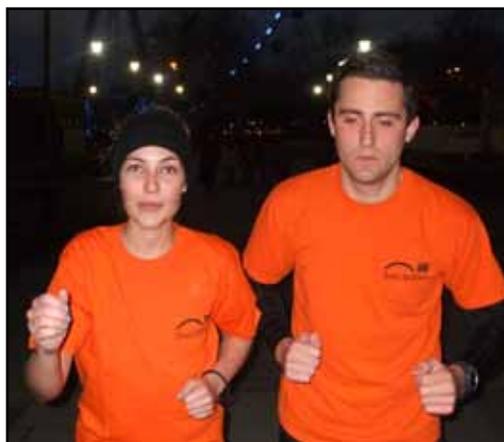


"It had two large eyes and seemed to be smiling" from our story Kofi and the Magic Shaker at a storytelling session in Bexley.

Marathon effort

We are delighted to have two supporters running the London Marathon for Bag Books this year. Huge thanks to Richard Cummings and Rebecca Jarvis and good luck with the training.

If you would like to sponsor them, please visit <http://www.justgiving.com/richard-becca>



Some late night training by our two runners.

Storyline

March 2011

Multi-sensory stories for people with learning disabilities



Awards

In late November, we won the "Everyday Impact Award - Long-term Enterprises" category of the DSC Social Change Awards. Dean Casswell, our Chief Executive, said "This is the first award Bag Books has ever won so it is very special and even more so because it was decided by a public vote – many thanks to everyone who voted for us."



Just over a week later, we won The Guardian Charity Awards 2010 which came with a £6,000 prize fund, free NCVO membership, free fundraising training from The FSI and free support from The Media Trust. Dean said "Being chosen to receive this award from over 700 nominations means a great deal for Bag Books and the prize money will be used to develop a groundbreaking new storytelling project for adults in Day Centres." The Guardian also made a film about us which you can see at <http://tinyurl.com/bbfilm>

Storytelling in Northern Ireland

Our first every storytelling tour of Northern Ireland took place in February. During the two-week long tour we saw 207 children with severe learning disabilities and trained 99 people. In the feedback received to date, all the teachers involved judged the children in their class to have benefited from the sessions. Specific comments included:

"The Story-Go-Round was very enjoyable, children who are not usually interested in storytime were engaged and participated... A fantastic idea and we'd love to see more." Teacher from Oakwood School, Belfast.

"Bag Books are an excellent resource, well suited to our pupils." Teacher from Castle Tower School, Ballymena.

We are now busy planning tours of Wales in May and East Anglia in September.



"Where could I hide him?" from our story "C.J. The Library Cat" at a storytelling session in Rathcoole Library, Belfast.

2010 in figures

Storytelling

- We recruited five more storytellers, bringing the total to nine.
- We ran 584 storytelling sessions for 4,061 people with learning disabilities – that's more than twice as many sessions and three times as many people as 2009.
- We received feedback from two thirds of all the schools involved in our storytelling tours of East Midlands and Scotland and all of the teachers who responded judged the children in their class to have benefited from the storytelling session.

Training

- The number of people attending training sessions doubled to 991.
- In the first year of our Telling Tales project, 73 trainees were mentored and from the feedback received across all their six sessions 98% rated the overall experience as either "good" or "very good".

Book Production

- The number of orders received increased by 11%.
- The amount of time given to us by volunteers increased by 9% over the year.
- At the end of the year, the waiting time for orders to be made had been halved compared with a year earlier.

Our reach

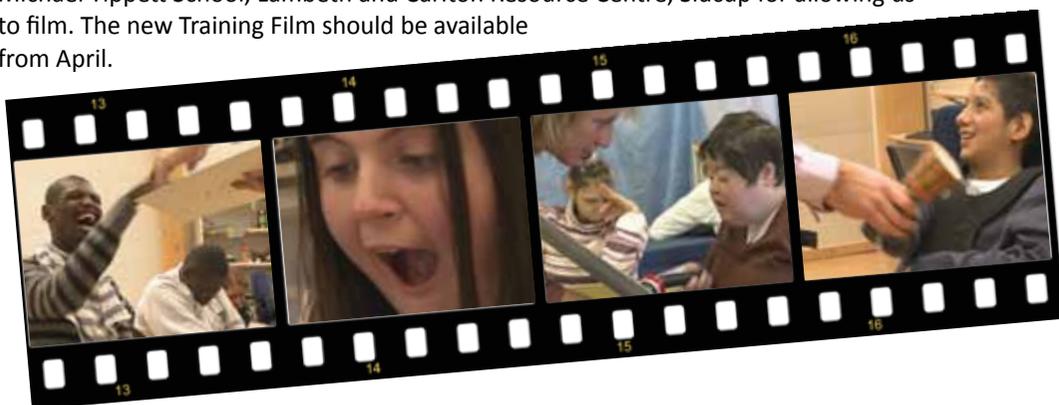
- Our research shows that through our books and storytelling we have now reached 65% of all the Special Schools catering for pupils with Severe or Profound & Multiple Learning Disabilities in the UK.
- The number of websites linking to ours increased from 248 to 590.

Finances

- Thanks to some wonderful donors, we managed to increase expenditure on charitable activities by a massive 55%.

New Training Film

We are just putting the finishing touches to our new Training Film. For the first time, our Training Film will feature storytelling sessions in schools and adult day centres thus better reflecting the environments many of our trainees are familiar with. Many thanks to everyone concerned at Michael Tippett School, Lambeth and Carlton Resource Centre, Sidcup for allowing us to film. The new Training Film should be available from April.



My Week: Sophie Baker, Craft Workshop Manager

Monday

My week starts with a morning of planning daily work lists for all my staff and volunteers. I have to spend some time ensuring I give them all appropriate work suitable to their strengths and abilities, making sure that our often untrained volunteers are not given pages that may be too complex for them.

Our Bosnian volunteer Ines comes in later and brings in photos of Bosnian mosques that she will use to help her design one of the pages for a new story about Eid that will be going into production in a few months.

Tuesday

The arrival of some 60mm bolts from a supplier means that the steering wheels on the dodgem car page of our new story "The Fairground" can finally be finished and the completed books sent out.

We have received a donation of £6,500 from a company on the proviso that it is spent on books for North London schools. As the author of "The Fairground", I go along to present a copy to The London Centre for Children with Cerebral Palsy which is in the area where I grew up.



Sophie, centre, with pages from the donated book.

Wednesday

We have a team of 13 volunteers from Ashurst, the international law firm, in the workshop today. They make another eight prototypes of the new Bag Books "At Home" story. Following their last visit a year ago, they donated a heavy-duty laminator so I make sure they have a chance to see it in action.



Thursday

After showing our new Craft Artist, Patricia, how to correctly use the fret saw in the workshop I visit Mary, one of our knitting volunteers, at her home. I then go to Shepherds Bush to pick up cheap bells for "Desmond". In Walthamstow, where I find most of my bargains for our stories, I buy 20 bottles of the most potent perfume I can find for "Gran's Visit". I then pop over to W S Jenkins in Tottenham to collect the beeswax polish that they kindly donate to us, 50 pots at a time.

Friday

In the morning Helen, one of the Craft Artists, brings in a donated overlocker sewing machine from her friend in Newcastle who makes wedding dresses for a living and who had a spare one she no longer needed.

With Karen, our Deputy Craft Workshop Manager, I plan which books to send out next week and discuss next week's schedule. That leaves me with just enough time to phone the suppliers at Zooplus to say they have sent us the wrong sized rubber chickens!