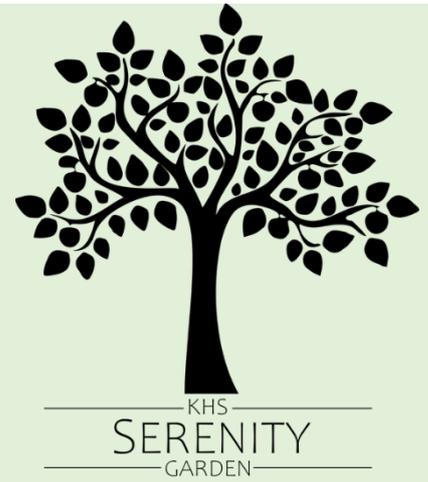


KIRKCALDY HIGH SCHOOL

SERENITY GARDEN  
NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 1  
APRIL 2020



**Getting our hands dirty!**  
The pupils of Kirkcaldy High School have proven that they aren't afraid to get their hands dirty! Read more about the progress so far in the garden on page 2.

Hello and welcome to our first newsletter. We are very pleased to have reached this point in our project where we have enough news to create a newsletter! Back in the Autumn of 2018 the young people of Kirkcaldy High School had an idea to create a school garden to help improve wellbeing. The idea grew to include a memorial area following the tragic passing of two former pupils, Ethan King and Connor Aird in the Nov of 2018. By the Spring of 2019 the pupils had a firm plan of what they would like to achieve and had managed to recruit volunteers and wide support. A launch meeting was held in May.

This newsletter will share with you just how committed, hardworking and caring the young people of Kirkcaldy High School are and how their determination has pushed the progress of the KHS Serenity Garden forward. We have seen the garden itself develop and become a calm retreat for some; we have watched skills, knowledge and confidence grow in both pupils and staff; and we have made many connections within our community in what we have been calling #KirkcaldyKindness. This newsletter will hopefully bring a little bit of sunshine and positivity during this difficult time coping with the Covid-19 pandemic. Everyone on the KHS Serenity Garden team wishes you and your family health and wellness. We will see you in the garden again soon!

**#KirkcaldyKindness**

We have come across many acts of kindness while working on our project. Read more about donations received on page 3.



**Outdoor Learning**

We have learned so much on our journey so far. Read about the experiences that have had a positive impact on our confidence, skills and knowledge on page 5.



#StayInTheHoose

## Getting our hands dirty!

There have been some changes in the area now known as the KHS Serenity Garden over the last year.

We were able to add some colour to the garden last June. We bought a wooden wishing well planter and were able to fill it with beautiful flowers donated to us by the SAMH 'Evergreen Project' which is located locally in Kirkcaldy.

Christine Paterson, our in school DAPL counsellor, donated some planters and plants to our project. We had lots of fun planting them up and before the school closed, to help reduce risk of COVID-19, we were seeing the flowers come up again this year.

In August, we placed some wind chimes into the garden which give a beautiful sound to the area. The chimes were chosen by the members of the wellbeing lunch clubs.

The school management and janitorial team have been supportive of the pupils and have contributed to the project greatly. In October we saw some benches being relocated within the school grounds to provide much needed seating and a secure storage area for our growing collection of tools was created too. The area has been a perfect store for the welly boots also purchased by the school to save getting shiny school shoes dirty!



In November, we put out a plea on social media asking for guidance about improving the look of the substation within the garden. SP Energy Networks made contact and within a month, they had organised for the metal fence to be replaced with a brown wooden one. It blends into the area so much better and made such a difference.

Another addition to the area has been the large composting bin which has been in use since the start of this year. We were very pleased to find that the Home Economics dept, the refectory, the main school office team along with some faculties were motivated to join in our efforts and have been recycling their department waste here. We look forward to making use of our own compost in future years.

The final addition we managed to make before we had to put all plans on hold was adding a bird feeder to the garden. The school funded the purchase and it was a real team effort to cement the table in place. We have been putting daily offerings on the table of meal worms and fat balls and boy has it been popular with the 'locals'! The offerings don't last long at all. We have been lucky to see some of the birds while sitting quietly observing them over lunch. The pupils had the idea that we could work towards purchasing a wildlife camera so we can catch any action. A project we will consider sourcing funding for in future.

## #KirkcaldyKindness

Our project has seen many acts of kindness and support. We have been lucky enough to benefit from donations of money, time and skills.

Some of the KHS pupils kicked things off when they completed a 5km sponsored walk around Lochore Meadows. They raised over £300 which gave an amazing start to the project.



Mrs Rae, KHS Pupil Support Officer, won a fundraiser run by Mrs Armstrong called 'Calories for a cause'. Mrs Rae kindly chose the KHS Serenity Garden as her chosen charity to receive the prize money while also winning some scrummy cupcakes for herself!

The KHS class of 2019 journeyed through school with both Connor Aird and Ethan King who both tragically lost their lives at the same time as the pupils held fundraising events to assist with the cost of prom etc. They decided to donate some of the money to our project so we could purchase benches in memory of both Connor and Ethan.

After sending a plea letter to local businesses we were very pleased to hear from Raeburn Construction who donated and delivered a large amount of bricks and other hardscaping resources for our use. We really appreciated this gesture and support.

The Nationwide branch on Kirkcaldy High Street kindly chose our project as their 'charity of the month' in October. A group of pupils were able to collect a large donation of both new and second-hand tools which were generously given by both their staff and customers.



The pupils in our very own metalwork class led by Mr Gallagher took time out of routine lessons to come and create an entrance in the school fence so we could access the woodland area to the rear of the garden.

KHS were lucky enough to have a talented student teacher join us for part of our school year. Mr Crawford gave up his lunch times to come and lead our young people in building the compost bin. He also very kindly donated a wormery to our cause. The whole team wish Mr Crawford the very best of luck in his studies, we are certain he will make a tremendous addition to any school team and we will miss his support and enthusiasm.



We were grateful to receive a donation of gardening equipment from Julie Lautredou, our school careers officer.

BAM construction heard about our project and made the very generous donation of a new wheelbarrow which has been put to good use since we received it.

B&M Home Stores also responded to our plea for support and were able to donate a large amount of seeds which we happily shared with our feeder primary schools.



Just before the school was temporarily closed, we were very excited to be given a geometric dome by Cathy Houston from Collective Architecture in Glasgow. We hope to set up the dome on our return to school and use the space to bring on the seeds mentioned above. An extra mention to Mrs Gannon, a KHS Biology teacher, who managed to source this donation for us.

The young people working on this project have felt an amazing amount of support from the adult community around them and this has encouraged our young people to 'pay it forward' with their own acts of kindness. I hope reading these stories will inspire you to join in by carrying out an act of #KirkcaldyKindness.

## The next chapter in our journey

We were absolutely delighted to connect with Gary King, Father of Ethan King, who works at Jewson in Kirkcaldy. Gary has recruited a team of volunteers to carry out some major works in our garden in memory of both Ethan and Connor as well as securing donations of the materials needed. Gary and his team have committed to placing a wooden archway at the entrance to the garden and to the woodland walk, a monobloc pathway through the memorial area, a stone circle patio area to be encircled by two memorial benches and to create some space for planting. Work was due to start at the end of March, as you will imagine things have been 'paused' and we are hopeful that the work will be underway once our current situation improves.

Gary was also in contact with Crosbie Matthew Funeral Directors Ltd who have kindly offered to donate a bench and plaque to our garden. The young people and staff of Kirkcaldy High have decided to use this bench to remember our friend, teacher and colleague Mr Chris Fairley who sadly died in April 2019 after being diagnosed with Ewing Sarcoma.

A big thanks to the following people and businesses for supporting the young people of Kirkcaldy High School with their ambitious project:

**Gary King  
Jewson, Kirkcaldy  
Shaun King Builders  
Martin Ellis  
Hardscapes Scotland  
Angle Park  
Grange Fencing  
Crosbie Matthew Funeral Directors Ltd  
Judith Kerr, Growing Kirkcaldy  
SAMH Evergreen Project  
SP Energy Networks  
Mrs Rae and Mrs Armstrong  
KHS Class of 2019  
Raeburn Construction  
Nationwide, Kirkcaldy Branch  
Mr Gallacher & Mr Crawford  
Julie Lautredou  
BAM Construction  
B&M Homestores  
Cathy Houston, Collective Architecture  
Carol Sidey, Greener Kirkcaldy  
Tara & Laura, The Centre for Stewardship**

## Outdoor Learning

The young people of KHS have been very lucky to have accessed some great learning opportunities while working in the garden.



In June 2019 we visited the SAMH evergreen project in Kirkcaldy which provides work experience opportunities in horticulture for people with mental health problems. We enjoyed a tour of their grounds and took away lots of ideas and information for setting up our garden.



In July 2019 Holli Moffat, S2 pupil, presented a display of our plans and efforts so far to the 'Britain in Bloom' judges at the 'Greener Kirkcaldy' building. Holli did a fantastic job of sharing our vision and Kirkcaldy went on to receive a 'Silver Gilt' medal at the awards ceremony!

In November Carol Sidey from Greener Kirkcaldy spent a few lunch times with us in our garden. We completed a workshop on composting which was very helpful and informative.

We had a visit from Tara who works at the 'Centre for Stewardship' in Falkland Estate. Some of our young volunteers are looking forward to a trip to the estate where they will build the two memorial benches for Connor and Ethan. We will be using tools and learning skills in the workshop there. The young people involved have decided to pay the kindness shown by Tara and Laura forward by holding a sponsored litter-pick in aid of The Centre for Stewardship. Both these events will be re-scheduled as soon as we are able to do so.



The pupils of KHS have had the opportunity to attend the Serenity Garden meetings which are held in the boardroom and formal minutes are taken. The young people who have attended have shown a great amount of maturity, enthusiasm and dedication.



Our young volunteers have been busy in the school greenhouse and with the support and guidance from Mrs Gannon have learned a great deal. We learned how to plant seeds and were able to hold a plant sale at the last school Parents Evening. The sale table was manned by Sean Williams of S2, Jamie Ballantyne of S3 and David Manzie of S6 who all managed the money and interactions with customers to a high standard. The sale was popular and we were able to add another £40 to our fund pot.



Our pupils were given the opportunity to practise their artistic skills when we held a competition to create a Serenity Garden logo. Arron Kennedy of S2 won the competition with his entry. Well done Arron!





### **Keep up to date with our progress on Twitter**

@KirkcaldyHigh

@gillianwood2018

#KHSSerenityGarden

### **Receiving copies of meeting minutes or newsletters**

If you would like to receive a copy of future minutes or newsletters

please send your email address to [gillian.wood-kk@fife.gov.uk](mailto:gillian.wood-kk@fife.gov.uk)

### **Think you can help?**

If you think you can help the young people of Kirkcaldy High with this wonderful project,

please use the details below to get in touch.

Kirkcaldy High School

Dunnikier Way

Kirkcaldy

KY13LR

01592 583405

[Kirkcaldyhs.enquiries@fife.gov.uk](mailto:Kirkcaldyhs.enquiries@fife.gov.uk)