

# PLAY AWAY WILD Project BRIEF

## The Rainbow Centre - background

The Rainbow Centre offers Conductive Education services for children and adults with cerebral palsy and other conditions that result in impairment of the central nervous system.

Conductive Education is a system of learning for children and adults with motor disorders that not only aims to improve motor skills and function but also to affect development as a whole, including social, emotional and intellectual aspects.

### Conductive Education:

- Believes in the latent ability of the person and our support is aimed at maximising that ability, concentrating on ability and not disability.
- Builds self confidence and belief - if you believe you can, then you will!
- It is more than just practicing physical movements – it's a series of structured stages to enable, empower, exercise and support.



*“We took Patrick to The Rainbow Centre when he was just 4 years old, as he was unable to stand without buckling at the knees. He had meningitis at birth and the paediatric consultants had warned us that he would require an operation to stabilise his hips and would be wheelchair-bound for life.*

*Patrick is now nine and has worked very hard over the last four years at the centre, so that he now can walk with the aid of sticks, attends a mainstream school and the surgeons now say he does not require surgery”*

**Patrick's Mum**

## Play Away Project description

This is a sensory garden and specialist play area for children and adults with motor impairments. This community facility will have specialist safety flooring that encourages activities whilst reducing the risk of injuries. It will have raised borders for those in wheelchairs and be fully accessible to people attending the Rainbow Centre and for people with disabilities from the local community. The **Play Away WILD** is an addition to the basic play area plans; it for a dedicated wild garden running alongside the building and by developing this 'breathing space' we will be striving to increase community participation in all of our activities.

## Key benefits of Play Away and Play Away WILD:

- It will make a very positive contribution to the development and lives of children with disabilities, their parents and carers.
- It will help adults with disabilities socialise and gain an understanding of the benefits of Conductive Education.
- There is no such facility in existence at the moment locally.
- There are 3 specialist schools in the area, who's children would benefit tremendously from the specialist play area and increased social exposure.
- It will bring the local community and other disability organisations closer together.
- It will provide a platform the establishment of mutual support networks.
- By engaging with the local community and in particular getting the youths in the area involved in the consultation process, design and construction, we also hope that it will instill some pride and respect for the garden and property, whilst also generating more volunteer involvement in the work of the centre.

## PLAY AWAY WILD – Introduction

The Play Away WILD project has just been awarded a grant of £9905, from The Big Lottery Breathing Places grant Programme towards this project, which is now also registered on the BBC Breathing Places web site.

*This project will encourage wildlife to The Rainbow Centre, provide an opportunity for the children and adults with disabilities, (who attend the centre) to see wildlife in a natural habitat and raise awareness of a 'back garden philosophy' to wildlife conservation.*

*Play Away WILD will also encourage greater community involvement, volunteering and help to enhance the delivery our Conductive Education services."*

**Helen Somerset How**  
Appeal Director and Co-Founder

We hope that by involving people attending the centre (children, siblings, parents, carers and volunteers) and by encouraging people from the local community (organisations, local businesses and community groups) to become more actively involved in the designing, planting and ongoing use of the wild (and sensory) garden aspects, that this will generate a band of voluntary help that will ensure continued use of the garden (and all of its aspects).

It is difficult for the children and adults who attend the centre to get out and about to see wildlife (because of their motor impairments) so we would like to encourage more wildlife to come to the centre. This way the children can make the most use of the Play Away area in their breaks, as well as during lessons.

**Our first aim** is to gather interested individuals together from all walks of lives and hopefully representing all areas of the local community.

Inviting them to an Open Day that has been provisionally arranged for the 4<sup>th</sup> December (TBC) to coincide with our AGM, when plans for the Play Away and Play Away Wild will be on display and staff available to chat to about this exciting project.

### **We are also aiming to generate interest by:**

- Advertising our activities on the BBC Breathing Places Web site
- Generating some specific PR about the Big Lottery grant award
- Distributing leaflets around the local housing estates and commercial premises
- Putting notices up in the local clubs, shops, pubs etc
- Contacting the conservation organisations identified
- Advertising the project on our web site
- Approaching Community Volunteer Organisations

We hope that a dedicated interest group will form and with the input and help of local conservation groups/organisations, this group will look at our proposed plans and by enlisting additional voluntary help, start the transformation of the Wild garden.

By using this project as a focus we hope to forge relationships throughout the community consultation phase with local organisations, and community groups, which in turn will help raise the profile of The Rainbow Centre, thereby ensuring more community use of our breathing space.

By approaching and getting other groups of conservation volunteers involved and helping with this project (e.g. BTCV, Hampshire Conservation Volunteers and Hampshire Wildlife Trust etc) this will also help to ensure that we have a 'breathing space' that is accessible for people of all abilities and ages.

### **The activities that will take place**

The wild garden will form a key part of the Play Away project and whilst plans can not be finalised yet (purely because we do not have the resources, skills or staff to draw up final plans) we envisage a dedicated wildlife garden that has a footpath on the periphery, with a bog area, wild flowers and some native trees.

This will be situated close enough to the centre to be visible from the class room windows but far enough away for wildlife not to be disturbed. Children attending the Rainbow Centre will take part in Foundation and key stage 1, nature projects.

Working with other organisations that run wildlife surveys, (such as UK Phenology, the Mammal Society, RSPB and BTO) we will encourage people to take part in wildlife surveys and if appropriate, register as official observers. Surveys can help find out how wildlife is doing in a particular region and the results can be used to raise awareness and information on practical conservation solutions. It's also a good way to get people more involved and increase observation skills.

## Community need for this project.

Whilst we do have two large nature reserves close by (Swanwick and Titchfield) there is no similar dedicated small wildlife garden in the area, that promotes the 'back garden philosophy' of conservation and how it can help wildlife.

We know ourselves and from comments made by numerous visitors that we could make more use of the plot of bare land that surrounds the centre (photos are available). Whilst several groups have offered to help plant a garden, we believe that by building a dedicated wildlife garden into the playground area plans, this will not only provide a local community facility but a focal point for environmental issues, for people who attend the centre, visitors, staff and volunteers.

## Project aims

**1 Increase participation and access to local breathing places by encouraging people to become actively involved & by supporting activities that are open and accessible to everyone.**

We are aiming to get together a group of volunteers, possibly from a local conservation organisation, to help, design, build, maintain and encourage future use of the garden. In addition, by involving the people who come to the centre we are aiming for full involvement from our clients, parents, carers, staff and volunteers in this project.

Recognising that we are a specialist education facility, that helps primarily children and adults with cerebral palsy and other motor disorders, we will ensure that whilst keeping our clients safe we will encourage supervised community use of this facility by engaging and planning events and activities with other groups and organisations.

The wildlife surveys that we intend to do will contribute valuable scientific data for conservation organisations, encourage the public, children and adults who attend the centre to get more involved in 'green' issues, as well as helping to develop project management, practical and observation skills.

**2 Make a lasting improvement to the local environment by supporting activities that develop existing breathing places or help create and sustain new ones.**

The Play Away Wild garden is a new project that will make a lasting improvement to the community and by involving the local community it will encourage people generally to be more environmentally aware and considerate.

We are also aiming to tie in our existing recycling initiatives, the 4R Project (Recycling, reusing, reducing for Rainbow, for our children for our future) with this project by having permanent fixed outdoor display boards at the start and end of the wild garden walk. These information boards will be designed in conjunction with one of our identified potential environmental partner organisations. They will show what people can do to help wildlife, the impact of litter, promoting composting etc. Even if only in small way by changing the way they currently garden.

## **How our project will meet the outcomes of the Breathing Places grants programme.**

### **Outcome one – Improved biodiversity, and wildlife habitats which are accessible to all.**

We will be creating a wildlife garden, accessible to children and adults who attend the centre as well as people from the local community. The garden will also act as a focal point for the local community, demonstrating different means of biological pest control, as well as promoting biodiversity and providing a wildlife habitat.

### **Outcome two – Increased community use of local breathing places.**

We will involve the children's parents, siblings, carers, volunteers and staff at the centre as well as people from the partner organisations and local conservation groups from the very start, during the design, planting and building stage which will help maintain continued use of the wild garden as people will want to come back to see how its developing. Guided tours will demonstrate what can be done on just a local small level to help improve our environment.

With the garden being in close proximity to the centre this will enable us to involve people with disabilities in conducting wildlife surveys to monitor the health of the breathing space, whilst collecting valuable scientific data for use by conservation organisations.

### **Outcome three – Increased opportunities and support for volunteers.**

By working with local conservation groups this project will provide increased volunteering opportunities, not just during the design and planting phases but in the work at the centre generally. The Rainbow Centre is always looking for volunteers to help deliver the Conductive Education sessions.

The voluntary band will help devise implement and support activities that will be open and accessible to everyone. Volunteers will have opportunities to expand and increase their skills and be fully supported throughout the design, construction and planting stage of this project.

### **Outcome four – Improved skills to manage local breathing places.**

We have allowed for some training of staff in conservation and environmental issues to help them gain an understanding of environmental issues thereby improving their skills and knowledge. This training will also enable them to build specific activities into the educational programmes that we run.

By obtaining professional advice and support we hope that this will have a wider influence on the local community and particular the council, whom we hope will agree to make a wildlife corridor around the playing fields that surround the centre.

## The wild flower garden and habitats



Foxglove

This dedicated 'wild' garden area will take in several different habitats to attract various forms of wildlife such as birds, amphibians, reptiles, insects, and mammals. It will have nesting boxes for birds and solitary bees, log piles to provide shelter for insects, lizards and slow worms. We would also like to put up bird and bat boxes and investigate with the local council the possibility about leaving a 2 metre border of uncut grass around the playing fields to act as a wildlife motorway.

We will be planting beneficial plants that attract insects, including wildflower meadows. As well as allowing self-establishment of wild flowers by minimising maintenance and intervention.

The Play Away Wild garden will feature a variety of native plants, which by their nature are examples of 'water wise' gardening, thereby not creating an extra drain on diminishing water reserves.



Forget me not



red campion

Britain's wild flowers are being pushed to extinction by plants introduced from abroad. Plants such as pennyroyal and fen orchid are struggling to survive outside nature reserves and even the great British cornflower is endangered.

There are a few 'super-beneficial' plants that bloom for a long time, and yield abundant nectar and pollen. These plants, such as Goldenrod and Joe-Pye weed, support whole communities of beneficial insects and small vertebrates.

Other plants that we would like to include are honeysuckle, foxglove, red campion, lesser celandine, herb robert and forget me not. To help attract caterpillars and butterflies; primrose and lady's smock will be planted.

Joe-Pye weed



## PLAY AWAY WILD APPENDIX 1: Environmental organisations list

### Charitable organisations:

Hampshire Conservation volunteers	023 8039 7928	<a href="http://www.hants.org.uk">www.hants.org.uk</a>
Bat Conservation Trust	0845 1300 228	<a href="http://www.bats.org.uk">www.bats.org.uk</a>
Hampshire Wildlife Trust	01489 774430	<a href="http://www.hwt.org.uk">www.hwt.org.uk</a>
British Trust for Ornithology	01842 750 050	<a href="http://www.bto.org">www.bto.org</a>
Buglife	01733 201 210	<a href="http://www.buglife.org.uk">www.buglife.org.uk</a>
Butterfly Conservation	0870 774 4309	<a href="http://www.butterfly-conservation.org">www.butterfly-conservation.org</a>
The National Trust	0870 458 4000	<a href="http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk">www.nationaltrust.org.uk</a>
Plantlife	01722 342 730	<a href="http://www.plantlife.org.uk">www.plantlife.org.uk</a>
RSPB	01767 680 551	<a href="http://www.rspb.org.uk/springwatch">www.rspb.org.uk/springwatch</a>
The Waterways Trust	0845 070 0710	<a href="http://www.thewaterwaystrust.org.uk">www.thewaterwaystrust.org.uk</a>
The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust	01453 891 900	<a href="http://www.wwt.org.uk">www.wwt.org.uk</a>
The Wildlife Trusts	0870 036 7711	<a href="http://www.wildlifetrusts.org">www.wildlifetrusts.org</a>
The Woodland Trust	01476 581 111	<a href="http://www.woodland-trust.org.uk">www.woodland-trust.org.uk</a>
Whitley & Fareham Conservation Group	07849 344 762	<a href="http://www.hants.gov.uk/countryside">www.hants.gov.uk/countryside</a>

### Volunteers and group setting up advice:

British Trust for Conservation Vols	01302 572 200	<a href="http://www.btcv.org.uk">www.btcv.org.uk</a>
Community Service Volunteers	020 7278 6601	<a href="http://www.csv.org.uk">www.csv.org.uk</a>
ENCAMS	01942 612 621	<a href="http://www.encams.org">www.encams.org</a>
Groundwork	0121 236 8565	<a href="http://www.groundwork.org.uk">www.groundwork.org.uk</a>
Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens	0117 923 1800	<a href="http://www.farmgarden.org.uk">www.farmgarden.org.uk</a>

### For educational projects and work with children in school grounds:

Learning Through Landscapes    Tel: 01962 845 811    [www.ltl.org.uk](http://www.ltl.org.uk)

### For help with projects in public parks and open spaces:

GreenSpace    Tel: 0118 946 9060    [www.green-space.org.uk](http://www.green-space.org.uk)

### National organisations that may help

The Countryside Agency.    01242 533 222    [www.countryside.gov.uk](http://www.countryside.gov.uk)  
English Nature    01733 455 101    [www.english-nature.org.uk](http://www.english-nature.org.uk)