

Foster parents can help change the story of a child's life, opening up a lifetime of new adventures and possibilities for them to enjoy during this lifetime.

## Fostering Connections Newsletter... May 2024 edition

Dear Foster Carers

Welcome to our May newsletter... Foster Care Fortnight took place from 13-26 May. This year's theme was #FosteringMoments.

We want to celebrate the moments that define your fostering journeys, big and small; little wins and amazing achievements.

I have written about some of the news you have sent to us in this newsletter.

Sharing helps today's foster carers as well as those who are considering it for the future.

Thank you for always being so welcoming to new foster carers on the village WhatsApp group...

**Meet Fiona, our Children & Family Liaison Advisor**



I was born at home in Essex... my mother was a nurse and wanted my sister and I to follow her career path, but neither of us did. She later went into childcare and started a nursery in the 60s. I took over her nursery in the 90s when my 2 children were young.

I worked at Harrods during my school holidays, as well as a year after I left school... great staff discounts!

I then worked for an oil company, before getting married and travelling.

I have lived in Australia, Belgium, and Botswana.

After taking over my mother's nursery, I continued to work in childcare and supporting families in the private, voluntary, and public sectors.

Apart from my 2 children... I adore gardening and cats.

I visited a local cat café last weekend... I was in heaven – cappuccino, homemade cake, and kittens.

I moved to Suffolk a year ago and had a blank canvas for a garden, so designed it from scratch! I now have a blooming Wisteria, which I have always wanted... so very happy and content living in the countryside.

### Training

Ongoing learning and development are vital for foster carers to ensure they remain up to date with fostering practices and to ensure they have the skills to look after the children in their care.

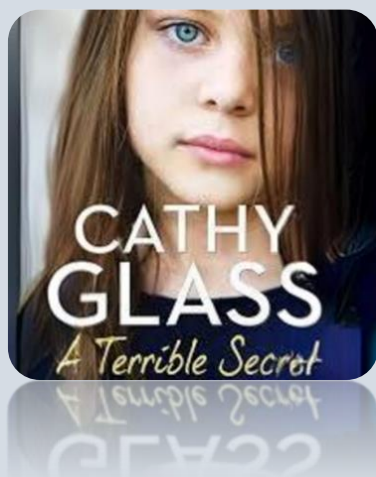
Thank you for your commitment and we'd also like to thank you for sending us your up-to-date information that we require for safeguarding standards and Ofsted.

“Some of the most comforting words in the universe are ‘me too.’ That moment when you find out that your struggle is also someone else’s struggle, that you’re not alone, and that others have been down the same road.” Unknown

**Book Corner**  
**Books by Foster Carers**



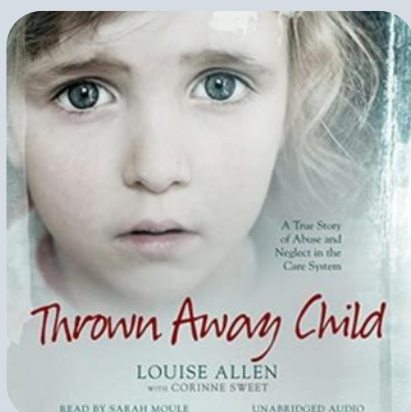
**A Terrible Secret by Cathy Glass**



A Terrible Secret is the story of 14-year-old Tilly is unable to cope with her stepfather’s abuse towards her mother and places herself into foster care.

Cathy Glass is a specialist foster carer who has been fostering children in the UK for twenty-five years. Her books chronicle her time looking after children with challenging behaviours.

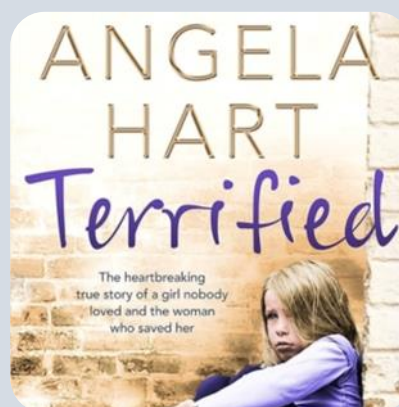
**Thrown Away Child by Louise Allen**



Thrown away Child is a memoir from a foster-child-turned-foster-carer explores the dark and light of foster care. A victim of an abusive foster home, Louise Allen determines to right the wrongs done to her when she becomes a foster carer herself and begins campaigning for better foster care services. The book’s success inspired Allen to continue writing about foster care under her Thrown Away Children series.

**Terrified by Angela Hart**

The Heartbreaking true story of a girl that nobody loved and the woman who saved her.



Angela Hart has been a foster carer in the UK for over two decades and has fostered more than fifty children. With training as a specialist carer for teenagers with complex needs, Angela’s series of books chronicle her experience as a foster mum. Terrified tells the story of a little girl who came to Angela after years of emotional abuse, and Angela’s struggle to help her find freedom from her past.

*“Some of the most comforting words in the universe are ‘me too.’ That moment when you find out that your struggle is also someone else’s struggle, that you’re not alone, and that others have been down the same road.” Unknown*

**We love the news that you share with us and here are some moments to celebrate Fostering Fortnight #FosteringMoments**

**1. JG was thrilled to advise that L, one of Rhonda and Neil’s foster children has gained a place a Benenden School, one of the country’s leading boarding schools. This is an huge achievement.**

The health benefits of owning a pet cannot be overstated. Pets... whether they are dogs, cats, birds, or some other species can improve our physical and mental health.



Corinna’s – George & Mildred



Glen & David’s – 3 dogs



Glen & David’s chickens



Tina’s – Thomas Tallis

Glen & David’s horses

Fiona’s 2 black cats, mum & son

### **Some wonderful news**

Studies show that pet ownership,

- **Boosts Cardiovascular Health...** dogs particularly are linked to lower blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and a reduced risk of heart disease.

*“Some of the most comforting words in the universe are ‘me too.’ That moment when you find out that your struggle is also someone else’s struggle, that you’re not alone, and that others have been down the same road.” Unknown*

- **Increases Physical Activity...** pets, especially dogs, require regular exercise which encourages their owners to engage in physical activities.
- **Improved Mental Health...** pets offer unconditional love, which can be a great comfort to everyone.
- **Lower Stress Levels...** the simple act of petting an animal can decrease levels of stress hormones while increasing the release of serotonin and dopamine.

That was a lot of pet sharing, apologies if we haven’t shared all your photos, but we felt it important to share as many as possible. This just goes to show how much we love our animals and how we consider them to be a part of our family.

Thank you for sharing and for anyone who has lost a pet or has a poorly animal... we understand how heart breaking this can be...



### Easter Fun...

Easter seems a while ago now... here are a few special memories that you shared.

*“Well we’ve been to Nine’s ! The all you can eat buffet .... From Nine different places around the world ! The boys have eaten us under the table !!! Wayne keeps saying “You don’t have to eat it all “ 😊😊 it was Bs choice as tomorrow is our 1 year anniversary since B became part of our family ! Tomorrow is Colchester zoo , Sunday is Kung Fu Panda 4 !! Monday ... PJ day I think ! 😊 what a fabulous year we have all had !! 🍷*

And what a lovely reply from carer J to carer S...

*“You’re all doing an awesome job of building a life together. B and M are lucky to have landed in such safe hands 🍷”*

*“Easter egg hunt tomorrow and walkabout in London on Monday a gaggle of SW visits Tuesday to Thursday. Then off to Cornwall for a week then breath back to school 🏠.”*



### Places and days out shared...

Home Easter egg hunts, London Zoo, Howlett’s Wild Animal Park, Wingham Wildlife Park, Porte Lympne, Woburn Safari Park, Cornwall, theatre trips, boat trips on canals, bug hunting in the garden, and the circus.

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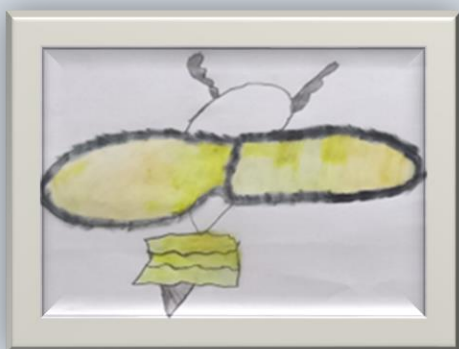
### Saving our Bees project...

Saving our bees seems to be a hot topic and rightly so.

Our Bee Project that we sent out to children has started discussions about how we can help to save our bees and hopefully explained that we don't need to be frightened of bees.

We wanted our children to know that without bees our ecosystem would collapse.

We have received the answers to our quizzes, photos of bee hotels and wonderful drawings of bees.

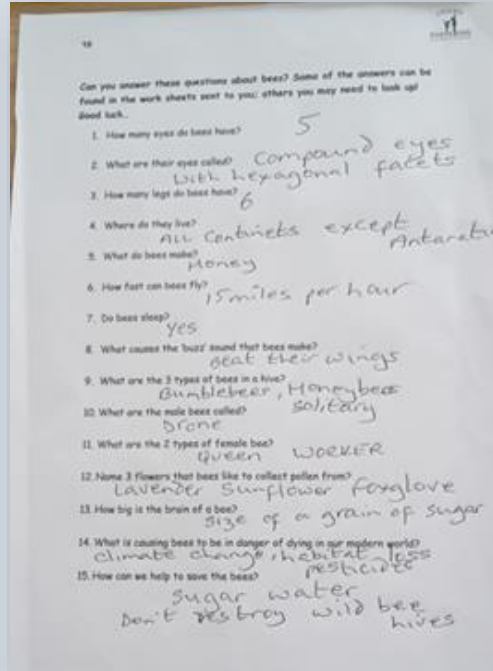


2 of our foster children have drawn bee logos... we love them

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**Insect Hotel... with a bee section**



**Answers to our quiz questions**

**Sent to us from our amazing foster parents... Thank you**

### Pen Pals

Apologies for not starting our pen pals letter sharing. We only have 2 families interested. Letters will be shared soon.

Letters should be sent to Fiona Martin; she will read the letter and then send it on, so that no addresses are exchanged. This will be done to safeguard the children.

Please contact Fiona, [fionamartin@fostering-connections.com](mailto:fionamartin@fostering-connections.com) if any of your family want to join in.



Thank you as always for sharing your news with us... we love to see what you are getting up to and your messages help our other foster carers. You give encouragement to new carers and share inspiring items.

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We are aware that as well as highlighting the good times... the very nature of your love and care can sometimes be challenging and there will of course be bad days.

We felt it important to mention this and for you to know that other carers will be going through the same distressing situations. Our team is always here for you.

We shall be sending out a questionnaire soon that you can complete anonymously... this will help us to improve our service to you and is good practice to keep our provision tailored to your needs.

All our newsletters are now available to read on our website  
<https://www.fostering-connections.com/blog-news/>

Thank you, as always for all you do... The Fostering Connections Team