

WELCOME TO THE OFFICIAL MFC FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER FOR SUMMER AND AUTUMN 2021.

As autumn changes the colour of our landscape in preparation for the cold days and nights of winter, we look back on a different climate, back to a summer where stars shone, partnerships were formed and Europe recognised what we do. To when new memories were set, and old ones were revived, and a Princely touch was applied. Yes, the summer of 2021 was a busy one for MFC Foundation.



FOUNDATION WORK RECOGNISED ON A EUROPEAN STAGE

At the start of September, the work of MFC Foundation was recognised on a European stage.

We were nominated in the top 10 in a More Than Football category by Netherlands-based European Football Network Development, EFDN for short.

The goal of the More Than Football Award is to honour the best social initiatives in Europe delivered by a European club, league or FA by celebrating the work they do on and off-pitch on local, national and international levels.

We were nominated for our Walk and Talk mental health initiative which has helped so many who have found their mental wellbeing in need of some restorative care. You may have seen photos, or indeed been part of Foundation-led groups in Middlesbrough, on Skinningrove Beach, or in Brotton. The Walk and

Talk programme is exactly that, offering participants the chance to walk and talk to someone outside their family or friends, someone who will listen and not judge but will try to help. Often that is achieved by just listening.

A look at the others who made the top 10 gives you a measure of the level of the Foundation's achievement as Barcelona, Juventus and Liverpool were named alongside Sheffield United and Hearts, FC Twente from Holland and Ludogorets from Bulgaria.

We didn't win, but to be nominated was an honour and a major achievement.



“We were honoured to be included alongside so many impactful programmes delivered by leading clubs and organisations who have their communities at heart,” said MFC Foundation Head Helena Bowman in thanking European Football for Development Network for their recognition. “MFC Foundation congratulates everyone who has been nominated in the top 10.”

PRIMARY STARS CONTINUES TO SHINE

OUR Primary Stars programme goes from strength to strength with more schools than ever engaging with us.

St. Margaret Clitherow Primary School in South Bank have been on board for a while and we were invited to two of their special days leading up to their summer break.

Renowned poet and author Paul Cookson read to pupils after the school were nominated by the PL Primary Stars programme. Then there was fun and games, fundraising and cake on the menu during a fundraising day where over £1,250 was raised for Macmillan Cancer Support.



PRINCELY PRIZE HELPS US HELP EMPLOYMENT-SEEKING YOUNGSTERS

WE were delighted to be awarded funding from the Prince's Trust as our Employability programme formed a healthy partnership with James Cook University Hospital.

We were one of several organisations who followed a rigorous selection process, culminating in a presentation to a panel in Manchester after which we were one of just six to be chosen for funding.

The NHS are the largest employers on Teesside and James Cook are keen to emphasise they are not all about doctors, nurses and surgeons.

There are many opportunities within the service and our Employability programme will be working with them to help young people in their job search, offering career advice.



HEALTH MATTERS TO PUPILS AT OUTWOOD RIVERSIDE

SUCH was the popularity of our Health Matters programme in the first year of delivery, the school asked for provision to be doubled for the new term.

In the sessions, students learn in a fun way about the importance of a healthy lifestyle, both mentally and physically.

The early part of the new term saw Years 7 and 8 undertake work on mental health and wellbeing by completing their own personal wellbeing webs and taking part in a number of different physical activities.

The Five Ways to Wellbeing has also proved popular and has seen the pupils produce some really well-presented work.



DANCING WITH THE LEGENDS

TOWARDS the end of summer and with the onset of autumn just around the corner an afternoon session with a difference was set up in the Legends Lounge at the Riverside.

Middlesbrough Football Club Foundation along with Middlesbrough FC hosted its first ever Dementia Friendly afternoon dance as part of the Dementia Friendly Middlesbrough initiative.

Over 40 invited guests comprising those living with dementia and their carers from the Middlesbrough community enjoyed an afternoon

boogie, a Boro themed quiz and they even had a visit from club mascot Roary the Lion.

What was intended to be a test event very quickly turned into the first of what will be monthly gatherings.

Brian Rowcroft, Dementia Friendly Middlesbrough Business Engagement Lead for Dementia Friendly Middlesbrough Project, said: "It was an outstanding event to launch what we hoped would be a series of afternoon dances enjoyed by people living with dementia and their carers in Middlesbrough.

"The benefits of dancing and music are well known for people living with dementia to help them stay

active and re-establish memories. Many people danced when they were young, so the music played today provided an opportunity to relive those past experiences while enjoying themselves."

Helena Bowman, Head of Foundation said: "As a community club we wanted to allow the people from the Middlesbrough Community living with dementia the opportunity to come to the Riverside in a safe but engaging environment. To see so many happy smiling faces in the Legends Lounge dancing and singing along to the music shows us how much of an impact an event such as this can have on people living with dementia."

KITCHEN CONTINUES TO PROVIDE THERAPY

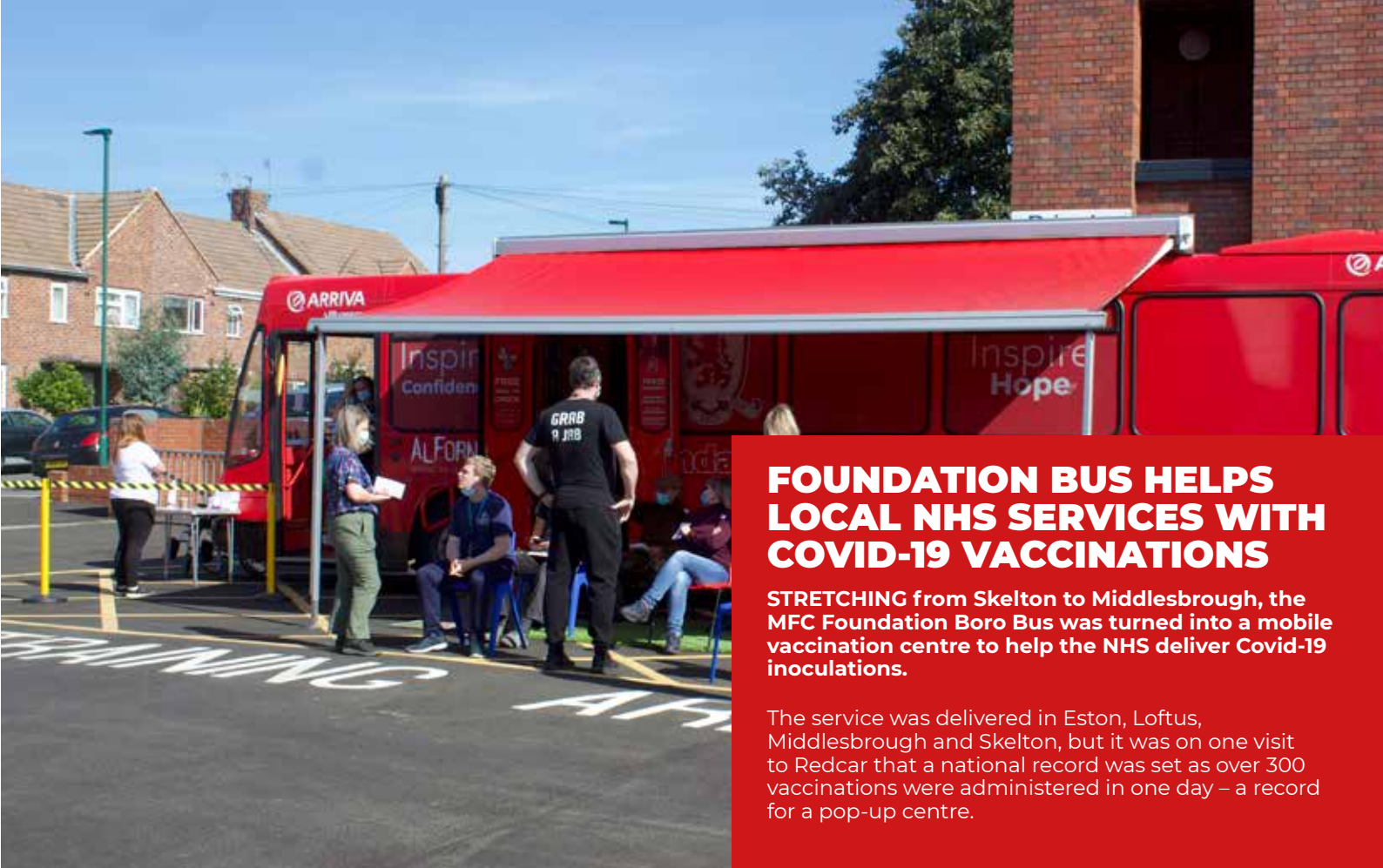
OUR Kitchen Therapy programme moved into its third series in East Cleveland.

The first was popular, the second cut short by Covid-19 regulations and this third one, back at the kitchen of Hunley Hall Hotel and Gold Club in Brotton, is back where it started and carrying on the good work in collaboration with Chef Matei Baran.

A one-time quarter-finalist in MasterChef the Professionals, Chef Matei and MFC Foundation have formed a long and rewarding partnership and the Kitchen Therapy programme is an extension of that.

Participants who have maybe lost their way a little, regain confidence and learn new skills – and tasty recipes – as they work together on a 12-week programme. There have been many success stories from these programmes and we're looking forward to more from this one.





FOUNDATION BUS HELPS LOCAL NHS SERVICES WITH COVID-19 VACCINATIONS

STRETCHING from Skelton to Middlesbrough, the MFC Foundation Boro Bus was turned into a mobile vaccination centre to help the NHS deliver Covid-19 inoculations.

The service was delivered in Eston, Loftus, Middlesbrough and Skelton, but it was on one visit to Redcar that a national record was set as over 300 vaccinations were administered in one day – a record for a pop-up centre.

FIT FOR PURPOSE

OUR Fit Boro sessions are so much more than get fit/keep fit classes.

Friendships are formed, lifestyles are changed for the better.

The 12-week programme runs on the concourses of the Riverside for those aged 35-65, male and female and seem to be more popular with each session.



PROUD MOMENT FOR SKELTON PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS

PUPILS from Skelton Primary School finally had the opportunity to see their handiwork first hand when they visited Middlesbrough's Riverside Stadium.

Walk from pitchside up the tunnel in the North East Corner and you can't fail to see the fruits of the labours of schoolchildren who were asked to make a collage with tiles, on which would be images of what they remembered from the early days of Covid-19.

The concept was the brainchild of Boro Bus coordinator Lee Harding, who commented: "I am really pleased with how it's turned out, as were the children who helped. We wanted to keep it simple and left the ideas to them.

"The pupils and teachers worked with great enthusiasm and this will be a lasting tribute to the NHS, Captain Tom Moore and key workers and a reminder of how everyone pulled together to help each other."

Restrictions limited access to the stadium and it was only just over a week ago when the pupils could see how their work had turned out.

Assistant Head of Skelton Primary School Andy Woolf said: "Most of the kids involved had parents who were key workers, so we wanted an activity that they could do to take their minds off their parents working in the hospitals.

"The project was at the beginning of the first lockdown and we knew it was going to be a major historical moment that we would look back on in years to come so we wanted to mark it."



REWARDING DAY FOR FOUNDATION'S PAN-DISABILITY GROUP

IT was a long shift for everyone involved, but an 18-hour day was well worth it as our pan-disability group took part in the Canary Cup in Norfolk.

Teams representing eight foundations took part in the event hosted by Norwich City's Community Sports Foundation using their community hub at Horsford.

It brought together participants with many different disabilities, but with a common aim to enjoy the day for what it was; a great chance to meet and mix with other likeminded people.

"It was a long day, but no-one was complaining," says Dan Openshaw, MFC Foundation's Social Inclusion Officer.

"It's a small thing compared to the youngsters having a great day, which they certainly did.

"These competitions aren't just about results, its far more than that. There were three staff on duty and like me, both Adam and Trish said how proud they were of the kids and the way they conducted themselves, even though they didn't win as many games as they would like.

"They got better and better as the day went on. It was really positive for all the kids from all the teams just to play football."

The Foundation's team was made up from our Borobility group who have a session once a week at the Acorn Centre in Acklam, Middlesbrough.

Other Foundations represented were, Arsenal, Aston Villa, Chelsea, Manchester United, Norwich City, West Brom and Wolverhampton Wanderers.



AH, THAT'S WHAT IT IS

WHEN you use MFC Foundation's website you may have noticed something new. Two icons, one red, one blue, leading to an Accessibility toolkit call Recite Me.

The ingenious piece of kit helps those who may not be fortunate enough to be able to use the website the way many people do.

It may be that certain colours have an adverse visual effect, the size of font may be too small, or it could be that English isn't the reader's first language.

Changing what may have been obstacles into pathways is what this toolkit does. Why not take a look for yourself?

<https://mfcfoundation.co.uk/about/accessibility-tools-user-guide/>



A SUMMER OF SUCCESS FOR NCS

OVER 1,000 hours of social action was delivered across Teesside over four weeks where some serious work was accompanied by some serious fun.

Youngsters, most of whom have never met before, came together to learn and to help and to play a part at NCS celebrated its 10th birthday.

Participants learned how to make friends, how to make a positive difference to not just their lives but of those around them and they learned how to help the communities in which they live and those around them.

Social action projects included a sponsored walk from the Riverside to Redcar and a coffee morning to fundraise for MDUK, regeneration and development of a sensory garden in Grove Hill and an ice bath challenge to raise funds for Teesside Hospice.

Over £2,000 was raised for these combined causes.



MFC FOUNDATION AND VISTECH JOIN FORCES TO HELP LOCAL CHURCH GROUP



OVER the last ten years Vistech has grown from humble beginnings on Teesside to become a name known nationwide as a quality provider of security and facilities management.

But it has never forgotten its roots.

Perhaps no surprise then that there is an established partnership between them and MFC Foundation with both working at the heart of communities needing their help.

Having previously partnered with the Foundation at Waste Knot Energy, the Gold Standard Friend of the Foundation was asked to help when a call came from somewhere close to home.

Paul Heeran, Operations and Business Development Manager with Vistech, grew up in Grove Hill and didn't think twice about answering a call from Reverend Kath Dean and MFC Foundation when help was needed on the Genesis Project at St. Oswald's Church in that district of Middlesbrough.

The Foundation has a long-standing relationship with the Genesis Project, working as it does to serve the local community with fresh food, clothing, furniture for those starting their first home and much more, so there was a mixture of anger and sadness when the Foundation learned there had been repeated break-ins at the church hall.

Step forward Vistech, with Paul saying: "This was almost personal for me. I grew up in that area, I know it well and I wanted to help. We had a look at the premises to see what we could do, came up with a plan and now it's in place.

"They do great work there; the community needs them, and they help each other."



Paul's Operations colleague Ryan Aspland was tasked with making the project work, two cameras were installed, but there was another problem.

"To make use of the cameras there needs to be an internet connection and there wasn't one," Ryan explains. "But weren't going to let anything get in the way of this project, people needed help and we were determined to give it. We were delighted when MFC Foundation stepped in to provide internet access and even more delighted to learn that since the cameras have been installed, the break-ins have stopped and through watching footage back, someone has been identified."

Speaking of the work done and the collaboration between the Foundation and Vistech, Reverend Dean said: "We can't thank them both enough. We're here to help the community, we're a vital part of it and this has helped us continue.

"In fact, with us now having the internet, we can now use that to help so many more people – and enjoy browsing the web over a cup of tea."

Paul Shepherd, Business Development Manager for MFC Foundation added: "It's a shame that this was needed, but it was, and we were delighted to be able to help. We have an established relationship with Vistech and it was a natural call to make to ask them to help us and in turn the Genesis Project."



FOOTBALL CONTINUES TO WELCOME



PERHAPS now more than ever football can do its part to welcome people of different nationalities, from backgrounds only seen by most when a news story reveals some tragedy or atrocity.

The plight of the Afghan refugees brought this sharply back into focus for many in the summer.

Not that it has ever been anything other than crystal clear as far as MFC Foundation is concerned. The range of nationalities represented in our Football Welcomes programme reached 19 when a gentleman from Western Sahara joined the ranks which now number over 50.

We all have a role to play in showing solidarity with people who have had to flee their homes

and rebuild their lives in another country.

Naomi Westland, Movement Building Manager at Amnesty International UK, said: "Clubs like Middlesbrough and their Foundation are at the heart of their communities and football can be a powerful force for good, bringing people together and providing a sense of purpose and belonging. For those who've fled conflict and persecution and had to leave everything behind, this is incredibly important.

"It's heartening to see football clubs across the country doing great work in their communities to show there is more that unites us than divides us."



A SUMMER OF ACTIVITY FOR TEESIDE YOUNGSTERS

IT turned from a summer of uncertainty into a summer of fun-filled activities for those engaging on myriad of summer courses provide by or in association with MFC Foundation.

Whether it was part of the HAF (Holiday Activities and Food Programme) run with The Junction Foundation's Xplore Summer 21 initiative, PL Kicks one day summer camps or the traditional Train Like a Pro courses we run every year, hundreds of children across the region indulged themselves.

For some, the food provided by Friend of the Foundation

Kit-chen in Linthorpe, or by Chef Matei Baran, a long-standing supporter of what we do across the region, was the only hot meal they might get that day. For others it was about fresh air and football, making friends and increasing confidence.

Then there were those who just enjoyed what they were doing, no barriers, just fun.

There was provision for those that needed it and those that wanted it. And for the best part, the weather was proper summer weather with only the odd refreshing shower thrown in.