

Forever Savvy Fact Pack



www.foreversavvy.co.uk



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For further information about Forever Savvy contact Amanda Phelps on 07765 877273



CASE STUDY

The Phelps Journey to being Forever Savvy

Introduction

Leicestershire business entrepreneurs and proud parents of three, Amanda and Robert Phelps have taken their ability to create successful and sustainable businesses to a new level with the launch of community project Forever Savvy.

This case study shares how the family's determination to provide an interesting and stimulating future for their son Jacob who has Down Syndrome, has fuelled the Forever Savvy vision to create outdoor education centres for adults with learning disabilities across the UK.

With limited employment and educational places available for adults with learning disabilities in the UK, and with 90% of Professional staff from Health & Adult Social Care* agreeing there is no adequate provision for this client group, this project became essential for the family to secure Jacob's future.



The family opened its centre in Thurlaston, Leicestershire in 2011 and is proud to have received a Big Society grant from Leicestershire County Council. The project is supported by a number of volunteers, and is funded by regular local fundraising events and profits from Forever Living Ltd, their family business that distributes natural and organic products.

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How it all began

College sweethearts, Amanda and Robert both graduated from university as computer programmers and became husband and wife in 1990. In 1996, they set up their first IT business called Specnet Ltd – little did they know the sale of this successful business in 2012 would help secure the future of Forever Savvy.

In 1992 Jacob, their first son, was born with Down Syndrome and a congenital heart condition that required lifesaving surgery. This was the year Amanda and Robert thought their world had ended but twenty years on it feels more like an amazing journey.

Then in 1994 Morgan, their second son, was born healthy, giving them the confidence that they could have a normal life and with their third healthy son Duncan arriving in 1999 – the family was complete!

In 2006 they formed their second business Leicester Jujitsu. The busy parents, both black belts and qualified martial arts instructors, were able to launch this business and participate in a sport all the family enjoyed.

Five years later their third business began to take off building a distribution network to show the health benefits of Forever Living natural products, which in turn gave them the confidence to form their fourth and as yet most challenging 'not-for-profit' business Forever Savvy.

Providing a fulfilling opportunity for their son

Amanda and Robert were disillusioned with the opportunities on offer for their eldest son Jacob when he left standard education aged 19 with predominantly part-time indoor college placements available.

So the challenge was to provide Jacob with a fulfilling and interesting job for life, where he could gain confidence and knowledge to help him with his transition into adulthood, and to ultimately live and improve his level of independence.

The family already owned two rescue horses, so decided to rent eight acres of land and create a purposeful job, challenging Jacob with responsibility and skills that would give him a reason to get out of bed each day.

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Therefore the whole family including Grandparents, brothers, and close friends pulled their sleeves up and got the site ready for Jacob to begin his new job, which included making the paddock and surrounding grounds safe, creating storage and also an indoor work area.

Evolving into a Forever Savvy opportunity for others

As the project progressed over the last 2 years it became apparent that the job they had created for Jacob would also be suitable for other adults with a learning disability, so Forever Savvy created eight places which are available over two days the project is currently open.

Jacob and fellow attendees experience a healthy outdoor equine assisted learning programme which includes: land management, animal welfare, Parelli horse whispering techniques, gardening, basic catering and woodwork.

In 2012, to improve the facilities and offer even more life-long places to local people the Trustees decided to apply for additional funding from The Big Society Grant Fund.

As part of the application process and to gauge the demand for further expansion of the Forever Savvy concept, the family carried out a survey of members of the Leicestershire Down Syndrome Support Group (254). The results revealed 99% of respondents would enrol their child if places were available; this was a huge boost to their confidence.

The application was successful and funds of just over £8,000 were released earlier this year to make the improvements required and to begin an awareness campaign to promote the centre.



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Commenting on the project, ***parent of a trainee at Forever Savvy Judy Warner*** said:

“As a parent with two young adults with Down Syndrome, Forever Savvy is a brilliant way of anyone with a learning difficulty to be involved with outdoor activities, working with other people and especially animals in their own environment.

“We are so pleased that the project received a Big Society Grant, as they need all of the help they can get to improve what is available already. I know Forever Savvy will become a very successful learning centre and an asset to the local community.”

The synergy formed between the Forever Living Products and the Forever Savvy community project means the business now revolves around the home and family life, giving Amanda, Rob and their family a work-life balance that meets all their needs.

The future for Forever Savvy

The short term plan is to fill the eight places available by the end of 2013 and to expand the Leicestershire business further during 2013/14 to accommodate 20 full-time attendees.

The project offers respite and relief for parents and carers and is an access point for the young adult to use their Personal Budget and improve their skill set.

The 20 attendees will ultimately look after their own chickens, grow extensive vegetable plots and open a tea room for visitors.

The long term vision is for Forever Savvy as a Social Enterprise is to roll out the concept across the UK within 10 years.

*Source: 90% of Professional staff from Health & Adult Social Care agreeing there is no adequate provision for this client group <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/GWC9D9M>



PRESS RELEASE

Big Society Grant Supports Leicestershire Outdoor Education Project for Disabled Adults



Leicestershire based 'Forever Savvy' is celebrating receiving a Big Society grant from Leicestershire County Council which means more adults with learning disabilities will be able to sign up to the Community Project which provides further education in a traditional farm setting.

Based in Thurlaston, Forever Savvy, was established in 2011 to help young adults learn new skills for transition into adulthood and ultimately independent living. With the £8,300 Big Society grant funding now in place, the project will be offering more places to local families with respite and relief for parents and carers.

Young adults who attend, experience a healthy outdoor learning programme including a broad range of life skills such as land management, animal welfare, gardening, basic catering and wood work.

The life-long learning programme aims to improve the emotional health and physical wellbeing of young adults in its care. This in turn helps the family at home, by relieving stress from a number of related health issues and reduces the need for the family to use NHS resources.

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Amanda Phelps, founder of Forever Savvy spoke about why this project is so close to her heart:

“Having gone through a very frustrating process of trying to find interesting and stimulating activities for my own son at the age of 18, my husband and I decided we could set up our own project to help him and others like him.

“Many of the opportunities in the area are indoor college based and our own experiences drove us to create a more active programme, something that was generally missing. We are absolutely thrilled to receive this grant and extend this unique opportunity to other young adults.”

Blake Pain, Chairman of the Big Society Grant Fund Panel at Leicestershire County Council said: “The Big Society Grant Fund is all about helping the communities of Leicestershire to help themselves. There was a clear need from the community for this type of facility and the expansion of Forever Savvy provides a solution to address this need.

“Supporting the costs involved in expanding Forever Savvy not only fits with the main aims of the Big Society Grant Fund but also with the priorities of Leicestershire County Council around Supporting Leicestershire Families, tackling unhealthy life styles and supporting vulnerable people.”

Forever Savvy is also proud to be supporting national **Carers Week** from 10th to 16th June 2013, a campaign to improve the lives of carers and the people they care for. Carers Week also aims to raise the profile of the 6.5million known carers in the UK, celebrate their contribution to society and high-light the challenges they face every day.

Forever Savvy is an access point for young adults with learning disabilities to use their Personal Budget, to enhance their skill set towards independence. For further information about Forever Savvy visit www.foreversavvy.co.uk/theproject or call Amanda Phelps on 07765 877273.

Ends

To find out more about Carers Week log onto www.carersweek.org

*** Photograph captions are noted at the end of Fact Pack*



PRESS RELEASE

Forever Savvy host event during Carers Week 2013

With Silver Medal winning VIP Guest



Outdoor education project, Forever Savvy, has celebrated Carers Week 2013 by holding a coffee morning, to support carers in the region. With a very special guest, Special Olympics Silver Medal winner and local girl, Aliya Al-Nowaihi aged 29. Who also happens to be a new trainee at Forever Savvy.

Established in 2011, Forever Savvy based in Thurlaston, Leicestershire is an outdoor education project which helps young adults with learning disabilities to learn a range of new skills for transition into adulthood and ultimately independent living.

Founders, Amanda and Robert Phelps, were very keen to promote Carers Week, as being carers themselves they understand the pressures families are under when trying to care for a loved one 24/7.

The Coffee Morning was an opportunity for local carers to socialise and discuss common issues, and it was also a lovely way to welcome their special guest Aliya to the project.

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Amanda Phelps co-founder of Forever Savvy said: “Caring can be a very rewarding experience, but it can also be very demanding. The coffee morning was a great success and a fantastic way to help give carers a bit of a break and to celebrate their role and give them some support.

“We were especially delighted to welcome Aliya to the project and we hope she will have a very rewarding experience with us, gaining more skills and confidence along the way. In turn, her parents will receive much needed respite.”

Gillian and Ali al-Nowaihi, parents of Aliya said: “We are very pleased to have the opportunity for Aliya to be a Forever Savvy trainee, as we know it has already given her great joy and fulfilment.

“We received a lovely welcome at the Carers Week event and were delighted Aliya could show off her Special Olympic Silver Medal for 400metre Power Walking in 2009. This year she is competing again at the Special Olympics in Bath in the 100metre Power Walking, 400 metre Power Walking and Soft Ball Throwing (Shot Put).

“Even though she is severely mentally handicapped Aliya has developed a strong bond with the horses and we can see a dramatic improvement in her confidence and self-reliance.”

Carers Week highlighted the vital contribution made by carers to their families and communities in providing unpaid care for someone who is ill, frail or disabled.

At Forever Savvy the young adults who attend the project experience a healthy outdoor learning programme including a broad range of life skills such as land management, animal welfare, gardening, basic catering and wood work.

Carers Week is delivered by a partnership of national charities – Age UK, Carers Trust, Carers UK, Independent Age, Macmillan Cancer Support, Marie Curie Cancer Care, MS Society, Parkinson’s UK and supported by the Stroke Association and Bupa’s Carewell. In 2013 it is sponsored by Sainsbury’s Plc and the sector skills council in England Skills for Care.

To find our more log onto: www.carersweek.org

*** Photograph captions are noted at the end of Fact Pack*

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People the Phelps Family have met along the way.....

As Amanda and Robert have gone along their Forever Savvy journey with their family, they have been privileged to meet many like-minded parents with similar aspirations for their children who have built up businesses of their own to offer similar opportunities:

Pulp Friction Smoothie Bar CIC is a social enterprise in Nottinghamshire which provides opportunities for young adults with learning disabilities and learning difficulties to develop their social, independence and work-readiness skills.

Founder of Pulp Friction Jill Carter and her team offer training and support for members to run our pedal-powered smoothie bikes at different community events – schools, youth clubs, play schemes and festivals.

They also run a Let's Get Cooking club with demonstrations and tastings at community events using a camper van; they have a soft fruit allotment and run a choir!

All these experiences enable the members to develop skills and self-confidence whilst, at the same time, raising the profile of disabled young people within their own communities and in the world of work. To find out more log onto www.pulpfrictionsmoothies.org.uk

Rumbletums is a Community Café supported training project in Kimberley, Nottinghamshire for young people with a learning disability, some of whom may also have an additional physical disability.

The project offers non-accredited training and work experience opportunities to young people and adults aged between 16 and 30, and was conceived, developed and initiated by parents who have children with learning disabilities. It is now supported by many other organisations and individuals offering their time, expertise and financial support.

The Rumbletums social group arranges regular events for young disabled people, their families and friends, a Parent/Carer Toddler Group called Rumbletots, and a partnership with Kimberley School to share the use of their allotment to grow vegetables for use in the café.

This project also offers additional opportunities for trainees to get involved with gardening and horticulture. To find out more about Rumbletums log onto www.rumbletums.org.uk

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Sence Accounting Fund Raising provides Shelter for Forever Savvy Trainees

Ashby based, Sence Accounting Limited was delighted to donate £1250 to Forever Savvy last year, by holding a quiz night and a prize raffle supported by many other local businesses.



This fantastic donation enabled Forever Savvy co-founder Amanda Phelps to purchase a second-hand caravan to provide shelter and much needed facilities for the workforce.

Sarah Beggan, Business Development Manager from Sence Accounting said:

“Having met Amanda at a local business networking event I recognised what this project was trying to achieve, by providing purposeful work for adults learning disabilities in Leicestershire. The team at Sence then agreed this should be one of our chosen charities in 2012. We also were very happy to provide year end accounts to the project free of charge.

“We wish the Forever Savvy team every success with their Carers Week 2013 event and for the future!”

The winners of the quiz night were ‘The Lush Land Capers’ team, from local business Lush Landscape and Garden Design Limited.

Photo caption: The Lush team with Tina Kirby (far left) and Sarah Beggan (far right), of Sence Accounting Limited.

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Leicestershire and Rutland Community Foundation Award

£1000 to kick-start Forever Savvy's new Woodworking initiative

The Leicestershire and Rutland Community Foundation is pleased to have recently awarded £1000 to Forever Savvy, the outdoor education project for young adults with learning disabilities, to fund essential materials to begin a new woodworking initiative.



The Community Foundation awarded the money as it believes Forever Savvy is providing valuable community work, enabling more disabled adults to access the services for life-long learning.

Amanda Phelps, co-founder of Forever Savvy commented: "We are extremely pleased to have received this award of £1000 to kick-start our new woodworking skills initiative. We will be purchasing materials to construct a number of objects, such as: garden planters, bird tables, bird boxes and small tables.

"Our trainees will benefit from the educational and practical skills of basic woodwork projects, as they will be involved in the selection, design and build of the final product. This will provide them with a real sense of pride and achievement. They would be encouraged to either keep their finished product or place them for sale to raise more funds for the project."

The Leicestershire and Rutland Community Foundation work with businesses and individuals to set up funds and support local charity, voluntary and community groups.

To find out more about its work visit www.llrcommunityfoundation.org.uk

Photo caption L-R: Rob Phelps, Amanda Phelps (founders of Forever Savvy) with Laura Grant representing The Leicestershire and Rutland Community Foundation

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Forever Savvy Photography

Thursday 16th May 2013 – Official presentation of the Big Society Grant

Photo captions:



1.

L-R (*in front of the gate*) Andy Hayes, Suzanne Kinder, Sarah Carter from the Communities and Places Team Leicestershire County Council, Tom Warner (Trainee), Janice Richards County Councillor, Rob Phelps co-founder of Forever Savvy, Aliya Al-Nowaihi (trainee), William Barker (Jacob's grandfather)

(*Behind the gate*) [Ringo the Horse], Jacob Phelps, Amanda Phelps co-founder of Forever Savvy, [Toran the Horse], Georgina Glover (Carer) and Vera Barker (Jacob's Grandmother) being presented with the Big Society Grant



2.

L-R Janice Richards County Councillor, Andy Hayes - Communities and Places Team Leicestershire County Council presenting the Big Society Grant to Jacob Phelps, [Ringo] Amanda Phelps, and Rob Phelps

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Forever Savvy Photography

Thursday 13th June 2013 – Carers Week Coffee Morning



Photo caption:

L-R: *Jacob Phelps (trainee), Amanda Phelps, Thomas Warner (trainee), Rob Phelps, Aliya Al-Nowaihi (trainee) – growing their own vegetables*

THE FACTS ABOUT CARERS IN THE UK

- There are over 6.5 million carers in the UK
- Every day 6,000 people take on new caring responsibilities
- Every year two million people take on new caring responsibilities
- Most carers (5.7 million) are aged over 18 and the peak age for caring is 50 to 59
- 1.5 million carers are aged over the age of 60
- There are 175,000 young people under the age of 18 who provide care, 13,000 of these provide care for 50 hours or more per week
- One in eight workers in the UK combine work with caring responsibilities for a disabled, ill or frail relative or friend

Sourced from www.carersweek.org

To find out more about Forever Savvy log onto

www.foreversavvy.co.uk