



# Fàs Mòr



An Gearran/February 2010

HELLO EVERYONE!

Happy New Year to everyone and we hope you all enjoyed the Christmas Holidays. All the children are settling back into Fàs Mòr and we hope to have a busy year ahead of us and to see lots of changes.

So here is our news so far.....

## *What's been happening?*

We would like to begin by saying thanks to 'Taic' (Comhairle nan Sgoiltean Àraich) for their kind donation of a **TOP Start** and **TOP Tots** kit.

**TOP Tots** has been developed by a registered charity called the 'Youth Sport Trust' and its aim is to introduce simple games to children aged 18months to three years. Fàs Mòr has implemented **TOP Tots** into their weekly routine, to offer children the opportunity to develop a range of physical skills and to encourage them to be active in the future. The equipment used is safe, colourful and educationally sound. Staff have begun holding a session of **TOP Tots** on a Tuesday morning from 10.30am - 11.30am in the Talla Dhonaidh Chaimbeul, the main hall based at the Sabhal Mòr Ostaig campus. A timetable will be forwarded to parents/carers to let them see what the sessions will involve. If your child doesn't attend on a Tuesday, but would like to be involved just drop us a line (see contact details below).



Staff are also currently working on developing a plan for children 0-3yrs and pre-school, from a series of books called **Play @ Home**, which were received from NHS Highland and The Highland Council. The activities in these books are designed to encourage physical and emotional growth and to help develop language and communication. The Practice Development Officer from the Care and Learning Alliance for our region, visited us last year and held a work shop with staff and children. We were shown the benefits and importance of the **Play @ Home** programme and the children were shown how to make playdough and had fun playing with some sticky mixture! If you would like further information about the **Play @ Home** resources, please feel free to pop in and ask us.



We would also like to say thank you to Sam Brogan and Isaac Williamson from the Highland Council who made a kind donation of welly boots and overalls for our under 5's. The children love them and they came in handy during our cold spell back in January when we had lots of snow.

We are much busier during lunch times now with our pre-schoolers joining us after Nursery. So we would like to ask parents to avoid phoning between 12pm and 1.30pm (unless it's an emergency of course!), especially on a Monday and Tuesday.



### ***Club na Sgoile***

The school children have been quite busy this term! We bought new toys before Christmas from money that was raised at events, these included Lego Star Wars, and Shonagh kindly donated all her old Lego. The children have also been building robots and rockets to fly through space, and Roisin and Malachy have been working on a machine for quite some time now which lets them travel through time! We had a visit from some Sami people recently and Roisin kindly explained the workings of the time machine; they were quite impressed! Have a look next time you're in and you can see how creative they have been!

Staff have been collecting boxes, cardboard etc as part of our recycling project and the children have been using them for their creative activities. If parents would like to get rid of any bits and bobs which would be useful for the children, then please just send them in.



The school children have made up another new snack menu. Leo created the menu on the computer and you can see it displayed on the School Club Board, if you want to take a look when you come in. Amongst their snacks are; bread sticks, fruit, raw vegetables, cereal, toast and crackers with cheese. Over and above that, they will be making pancakes, mini pizzas and scones from time to time.

We do have some more ideas for some after-school projects; however, we would like to ask parents/carers if you have any ideas yourselves about what sort of things you would like see on offer for your children after school? For example learning another language (i.e. German) or playing an instrument? These activities would be offered in a relaxed atmosphere with an emphasis not only on learning, but on having fun in an out-of-school environment.

### ***Club Karate***

We are really delighted that everyone who began with the Karate Club last September has moved onto their next belts (green and white). Congratulations to Erin, Aoife, Rachel, Ewen, Róisín and Malachy! The Club has grown bigger through the year with up to 19 members now each week, and every one of them has recently progressed to the next level of certificates.



The Karate Club open presentation that was held in December 2009 gave the children an opportunity to show how well they have been progressing, and we would like to thank the children and their parents/carers for attending. The session went really well and we hope to repeat this again.

We would also like to take this opportunity to ask parents/carers if you would like to pay for your children's karate classes in advance for each term? If you would like to do this, please contact Síleas or Kirsten.

## ***Staff***

We are very excited to welcome Shonnie back to Fàs Mòr. Shonnie began this week and will be working with us every Wednesday and Thursday until 2.45pm.

Staff are making progress in their SVQ training and hope to attend additional training sessions as part of their CPD (Continuing Professional Development) throughout the year with the Highland Council and CALA (Care and Learning Alliance). Kirsten successfully completed an Automated External Defibrillation Course back in August with the College and led by Specialist Operational Support. She also recently completed a two day course in Management with Pinnacle Development and Coaching Ltd.

We would like to take this opportunity to remind parents/carers that all permanent staff have had basic statutory training in First Aid, Food Hygiene and Child Protection. The Manager, along with the Chair of the Board of Directors and with support from Human Resources at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, are working to develop a 'Staff Development Training Programme', which will be available for parents/carers to see when it is completed.

## ***A word from the chair of the board of directors***

As I think most of you will by now be aware, we have recently appointed new members to the Board of Directors of Fàs Mòr and now have clear representatives for parents/ carers, the wider community and for SMO. I would like to encourage you to contact members of the Board with comments, suggestions and feedback both positive and negative. Please see contact details elsewhere in this Newsletter.

We are currently undertaking a review of Fàs Mòr and are considering extending the opening hours from 8.15am until 5.45pm. Please let us know whether or not you would use the facility during those hours and if so how frequently and on what days?

We have written a Remit of the work of the Board in order to clarify the work and responsibilities of the Board. The Remit is available in the foyer at Fàs Mòr, but please ask for a copy if you don't see one there. If you have any questions regarding the work of the Board, please get in touch.

The Board hold regular meetings and Agendas, Minutes and Action Points are available in the foyer and on the website. If you would like copies emailed to you, please let us know.

We have held several successful fundraising events recently: Fèis cafe in July 09, Strupag Cafe on 24<sup>th</sup> October 09, Bag Pack on 24 December 09 and produced and sold Fàs Mòr Christmas cards. The Board are very grateful to parents/ carers, members of the community staff and Directors, who are involved in and support fund raising events and we would encourage you to attend events and/or to donate baking and raffle prizes. Support from parents/ carers and the local community is vital to ensure the running of Fàs Mòr.

Monies raised have contributed towards the purchase of toys, which the children in consultation with staff, have chosen to buy. We are also purchasing a dishwasher machine to comply with hygiene regulations and to save staff hours in washing toys.

We now need to raise money to replace the black tiles in the outdoor area. We have permission from the Care Commission to replace them with decking and we have received a quote of £1,704.96 [plus VAT] for the materials.

We are currently working on a funding application to Highland Council and Board members are meeting with Bòrd na Gàidhlig in February 2010 to discuss funding in 2010/11. Fàs Mòr also receives considerable support in kind from Sabhal Mòr Ostaig.

Kirsten has recently updated the invoicing systems and we would encourage parents/carers to pay promptly.

The Care Commission visited us on 5<sup>th</sup> November 09. Thanks to all staff and Board members for their work in preparation for the Annual Inspection. Copies of the Report are available on request. We have produced a Development Plan to address the Recommendations and Areas for Improvement, contained within the Report.

Work is ongoing to improve the Fàs Mòr website which can be found at: <http://www.fasmor.org.uk/index.asp>

Many thanks to Vanessa Lopez, Parent Representative, both for this work, for her beautiful posters and for the new look Newsletter. We wish her all the best in her Maternity Leave.

Sheila M. Hamilton, Chair, Board of Directors, Fàs Mòr.

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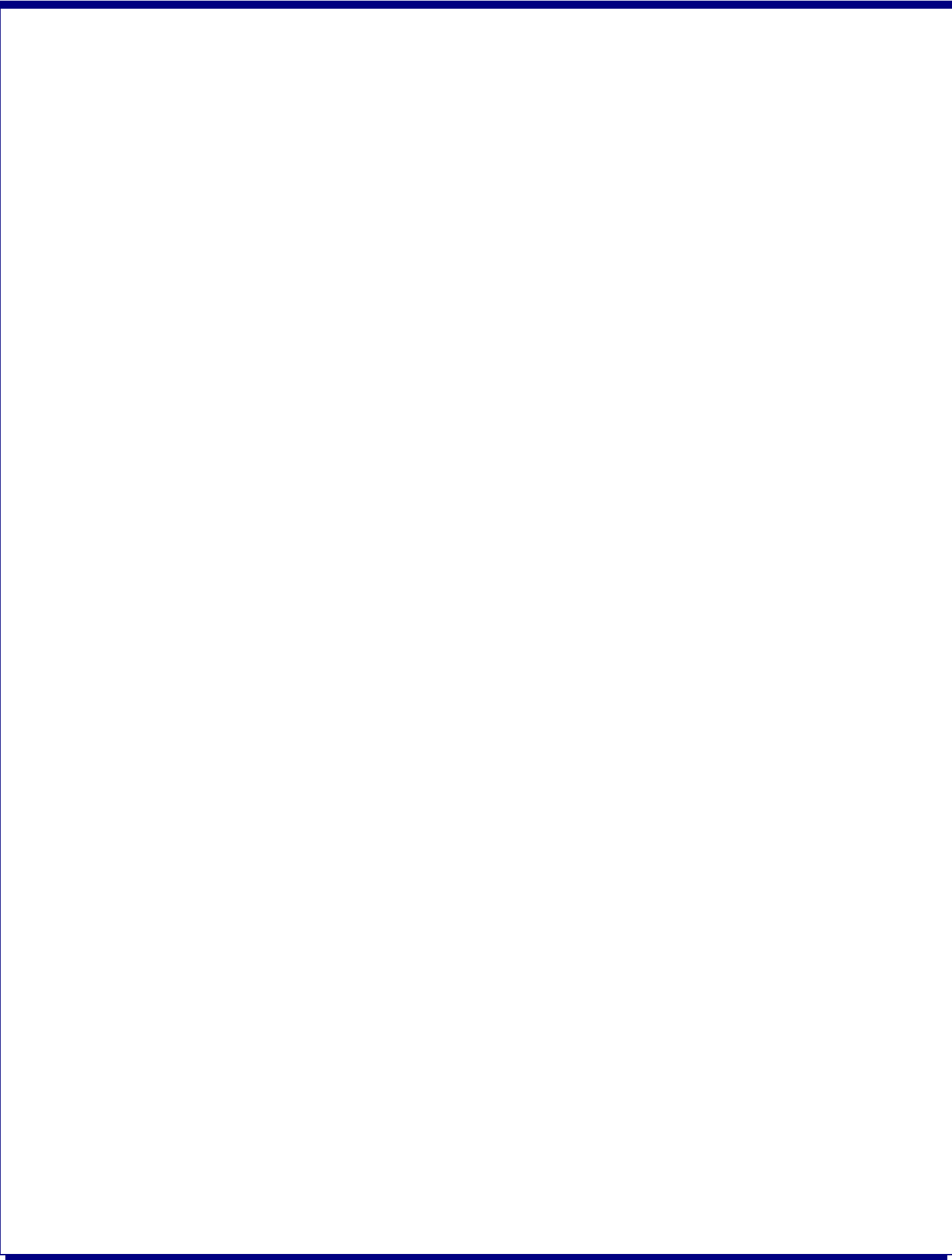
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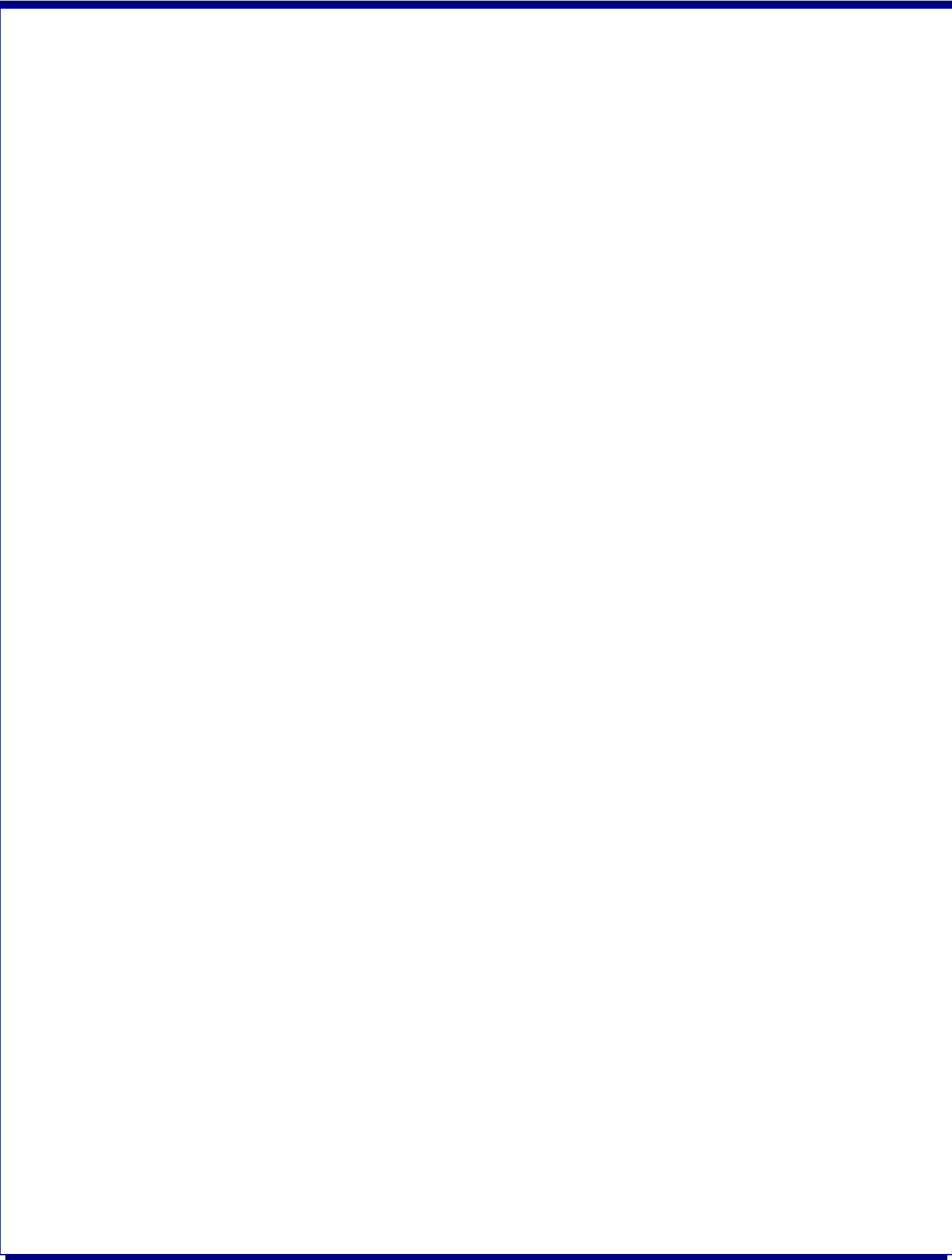
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