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Clockwise from above: Akuak, Esja and Regina take advantage of the activities on offer during the HFBU fun day

Fun day to air views

By **Marcel Reinard**

MORE than 100 people attended an annual party for children with disabilities at St John-at-Hackney church hall.

The event, on 17 February, was organised by local charity Hackney Family Backup (HFBU). The day of fun featured a chance to try out music, circus skills, face painting and arts and crafts.

Deborah Walsh, from HFBU, said: "It can be difficult for children with challenging behaviour at general fun days, as they may need one-to-one support.

"But the feedback we received at our annual party showed parents appreciated its accessibility. Children made friends, as did parents who formed friendships with

other parents and foster parents who provide respite care for families."

HFBU also took the opportunity to consult with parents and children during the event, to discover their



views, experiences and preferences when it comes to playing and socialising.

Deborah added: "We found that some parents are still worried about the future of their children.

"What was encouraging was that we found some older children with challenging behaviour would look after and protect some of the younger ones."

MORE INFO

Call: **020 7275 0088**; or visit: **www.hfbu.org.uk**

Positive leaps

A GROUP of girls have put on an acrobatics show, testing their ideals of body image in the process.

The troupe of 20 girls, aged eight to 12, all live in social housing in Hackney and Islington.

They performed human pyramids and other feats of acrobatics during a performance at the Union Chapel, N1, on 19 February.

Organisers Mimbre, worked with the young people for 10 weeks, discussing the capabilities of the human body, as well as providing acrobatic

training. There were also joint sessions with mothers or carers.

Mimbre's Joint Artistic Director, Lina Johansson, said it was 'an ideal way of dealing with body image and promote an inclusive outlook on what ideal bodies are'.

Dubbed 'Strong and Flying', the project was funded by the Big Lottery Fund and women and girls' charity ROSA.

MORE INFO

For details of dance classes for boys and girls, e-mail: **info@mimbre.co.uk**; or visit: **www.mimbre.co.uk**



A member of the group in action at the Union Chapel



An artist's impression of what the new centre could look like

£6m centre to 'improve access'

A NEW £6million healthcare centre serving up to 70,000 residents is on the way, with a lease signed to build and maintain it.

Construction is due to begin this month on the four-storey South East Primary Care Resource Centre, on the old Hackney hospital site in Kenworthy Road, E9.

Due to open in spring 2011, it will house dentistry services, space for

two GP practices, a physiotherapy gym and bookable consulting space for other community-based services.

The centre is a joint venture between the private and public sector to improve people's access to high-quality care close to home. It will be built by East London Lift Co, on land provided by NHS City and Hackney. The news follows the Council's recent

decision to grant planning permission to develop a South West Primary Care Resource Centre on the site of St Leonard's Hospital, Hoxton.

Both centres are part of a wider strategy called 'Care Closer to Home'. It aims to offer four one-stop places where residents can access a wide range of services, including an urgent care centre, open 12 hours a day, seven days a week.

Steve Gilvin, Director of Primary Care Commissioning at NHS City and Hackney, said: "This strategy was developed following research and extensive dialogue with the local public. It's about bringing care back into the community and improving access to a key range of health services all in one-place, at extended opening times."