

NEWS RELEASE

Date: 15th September



Resident conference successfully with focus on “life in Eden”



Tenants listen to Roger Roberts C.E. Action with Communities in Cumbria (ACT)

Tenants, residents and guests of Eden Housing Association (EHA) attended an annual event organised by ECHO - the EHA resident's assembly, at Penrith Rugby Club. It was the fifth year that tenants have gathered for a conference and this year there was a strong focus on 'communities in Eden'.

The ECHO team was keen to ensure guests learned more about the opportunities available in the area and invited a cross section of organisations and charities to run workshops. Opening speaker at the event was Roger Roberts - Chief Executive of **Action with Communities in Cumbria**, he outlined how ACT has been supporting communities since 1948 and the rural challenges faced by our area. These including the aging population, rise in house prices and reduction in services - as well as limited opportunities for young people and inappropriate policies. On a more positive note he was delighted to demonstrate how some Cumbrian communities have worked together to tackle these issues, community projects in Nenthead, Crosthwaite and the Upper Eden Community Project were excellent examples of success.

Throughout the day guests attended four workshops spanning an array of projects and opportunities in Eden. These were presented by **Connexions Cumbria**, outlining their work with young people aged 13 -19 and **Penrith Crafts** who shared some unusual craft techniques. Highlighting support for children, young people and families was the focus of the workshop run by **Barnardo's** and **Cumbria CVS** focused on the many local networks in their workshop, including "Your Eden Exchange" - a new initiative bringing together groups and organisations to network and share ideas.

Sylvia Sloan, ECHO member said "We wanted to do this for the community, to bring the community together to learn about the support that is available across Eden. I think we have achieved what we set out to - and more. It was a great day, interesting, educational and fun."

Some of the other local organisations and charities who had stands at the event and offered really practical advice included: the Eden Access for All Forum, Fellside Community Development Centre (who provide EHA training bursary), CCC

Neighbourhood Forums, Eden Youth Work Partnership, AGE Concern and a Financial Inclusion Officer from The Debt Redemption and Money Advice (DRAMA) project.

Jessica Worlock, Community Development Officer for EHA reflected on the day by saying “The ECHO team were keen to bring people of all ages and interests together and quite clearly they were successful in creating a good community spirit and a fantastic learning platform. It was also a good opportunity to have so many support organisations in one place on a single day and our residents found that very useful.

This is one of the first projects I have worked on since joining EHA just a few months ago and am impressed by the local spirit. We included a free raffle draw and received many items donated by a number of Eden businesses - this meant many of our guests went home with an extra, quite unexpected gift so a BIG thanks for all the support.”

The event concluded with a fantastic performance by North Lakes Primary School Choir. Eileen Soulsby, chair of ECHO summed up the day by saying “The day ended on a real high note, the choir had great energy and enthusiasm which flowed into the audience leaving us all smiling and feeling very positive about the day.”

Anyone interested in becoming involved with ECHO or our community development activities can contact Jessica Worlock on 01768 861 435 or email her at Jessica.worlock@edenha.org.uk

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For more information or for high res images contact Tracey Errington on 07799 640 290 or email tracey@marketsense.net

Pictures from the event:



Left: Residents and guests at ECHO event
Above: North Lakes Primary School Choir

Notes to the Editor: *Eden Housing Association is an established Registered Social Landlord providing over 1550 homes for affordable rental in the Cumbria districts of Eden, rural Carlisle and Allerdale. We provide a range of accommodation and services to meet the needs of young single persons, couples, families, older persons and the homeless, including specialist provision with support. We are keen to grow and to offer our products to a wider audience in Cumbria with a continuing emphasis on market towns and rural areas, supporting their growth and sustainability.*

Our new website has up to date information and can be visited at www.edenha.org.uk