

At our September club meeting members were pleased to welcome Guest Speakers from our nominated Charity Break.

Our speakers, Peter Marron (Senior Partnership and Projects Manager) and Alicia Edwards-Farrer (Care and Fundraising) introduced themselves and thanked us for choosing Break as our nominated charity this year.

Peter outlined the work of Break from its inception in 1968 to the present day. From its beginning as a small charity providing respite to families with disabled children, Break has developed into a charity throughout East Anglia with a defining mission:

*'To give care-experienced children and young people the love, support and ambition that they deserve'.*

The work of Break is now wide-ranging including running children's homes, disability services, fostering, providing short Breaks and running therapeutic services. Young people are usually referred to Break from their local authority.

The 'cliff edge' for care leavers once they reach 18 is very real as this is the time statutory support often falls away. Break puts much of its focus and efforts into supporting young people navigate this transition and by 'staying close and staying connected' up to the age of 25 and even beyond. This aspect of Break's work includes work experience in their dedicated coffee van and encouraging confidence and ambition through services such as mentoring by trained volunteers to give ongoing support, guidance and a caring ear.

Alicia explained that for young people to heal from the trauma they have experienced, they need to be able to feel safe and stable in the relationships they build with themselves and others. Break's staff undertake Trauma and Attachment training so that they are equipped with the patience and skills to support this. Break also has its own Therapeutic Service which tailors support to meet the unique needs of young people and their experiences.

Their talk came at a pertinent time, following the recent release of a report which found that the overall death rate for care leavers aged 18 to 24 is three to four times higher than that of the general population.' ([Review of early deaths of care leavers - GOV.UK](#))

Our speakers gave us ideas on ways we can get involved with the work of Break including volunteering in one of Break's 45 charity shops, mentoring, Christmas hampers and gifts, fund raising with Quizzes and Go Go trails (next one is 2028 to celebrate 60 years)

It was emphasised that Mentoring is a key volunteer role and provides stability, continuity and some structure for young people at a very vulnerable time as they leave care. Full training is given and currently there is greatest need in the Peterborough area.

The speakers were applauded and thanked for their time and enlightening talk.