



Local Children's charity calls for your support in 2016

This year is due to be full of mixed emotions for Westminster based charity Pimlico Toy Library. Having just celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2015, and with 476 members registered, you could be forgiven for thinking that the charity was flying high. However, as most of us gradually settle into the New Year, Pimlico Toy Library, like many charities across the capital, faces a challenging year ahead. If they are to continue to serve families and children in Westminster, they will need a substantial amount of financial support.

For those unfamiliar with the charity, Pimlico Toy Library was born when a group of parents decided they needed a safe and stimulating place for their children to play and learn in the City of Westminster. Pimlico Toy Library opened to the public in 1985 with its aim to improve the quality of life for local families.

Today, the Toy Library sits at the heart of Pimlico, 133A Lupus Street, London SW1V 3EN. Qualified Toy Librarians show children how to learn, help develop their creative, physical and emotional skills and build their confidence through toys, of which the library currently owns 1700. Since 1985, the Charity has had relationships with thousands of families including third generation families and works with over 200 families annually. In its 30th year alone, Pimlico Toy Library oversaw an impressive 282 two hour play sessions, with 4,013 visits from children with their parents and carers. Indeed, the charity's continued and growing presence as a cherished community asset at the heart of Pimlico has never been more evident.

And if you look at the facts, it's a presence that is absolutely necessary. Situated in the Churchill Ward, Pimlico Toy Library services a community where 42% of children live in income deprived households, and 70% of households have at least 1 dimension of deprivation compared to the Westminster average of 61%¹.

Yet, in recent years, Pimlico Toy Library has come under increasing financial pressure. With more competition for charitable funding, as well as large funding cuts at both a local authority and national government level, the charity is beginning to rely solely on the generosity of Trusts, Corporates, its own members and the public. Even then, it is still having to operate



on nearly half the funding received in 2013, with a decline of over £30,000 from just last year.

Table 1 – Pimlico Toy Library sources of funding

	2013	2014	2015
Public (Council / Government) Funding	37000	31000	16294
Corporate Donations	32205	29872	18100
Trust Grants	19120	21225	22143
Donations from members of the public	4972	11813	5329
Members of PTL	6004	4100	3633
Other	5981		
Total	105282	98010	65499

Maggie Harper, a Volunteer on the founding committee 1982 and Coordinator of Pimlico Toy Library since 1991, said;

“I have raised funds for Pimlico Toy Library for 24 years. Up to 2011 I had three - year funding from a couple of funders and a diverse mix of donors. Since 2011, there has been only one-year funding, meaning a blank income sheet each year, and an average of £ 96,000 to raise annually through other sources. “

“That’s why we are now calling on the public to support us through these tough times.”

“We are looking for companies, foundations, individuals, and anyone who feels they can help us with raising money. Donations can either be given on the website <https://mydonate.bt.com/charities/pimlicotoylibrary#> or you can contact me directly at ptlcharity@gmail.com.”

With mounting costs against a backdrop of reduced funding, Pimlico Toy Library’s 30th anniversary celebrations seem an ever distant memory. With the New Year up and running, the charity is focusing all its efforts on increasing donations. For such an important cause in the heart of Pimlico, your donation could ensure that hundreds of families get the



support they need, and allow young minds to ponder their own bright futures at Pimlico Toy Library.

-End-

Photo of PGRA and caption

Notes to Editors

About Pimlico Toy Library

Pimlico Toy Library has served the communities of Pimlico and Westminster for 30 years, the principal aim of PTL is to improve the quality of life for families with children by providing a safe, guided environment for children aged 0-8 to access play for fun and developmental learning. Any family is welcome to join whatever their background, gender, ethnicity, faith, socio-economic or personal circumstances, providing children with the opportunity to build in three key areas; increased social interaction, improved confidence, a willingness to learn, and parents through improved confidence, parental skills and social networks.

Pimlico Toy Library is a no-for-profit organisation run by the kind donations from the public and local businesses, and a host of volunteers who work tirelessly to provide children with a safe place to learn and play

¹ source: <https://www.westminster.gov.uk/ward-profiles>