



Family Action and idverde announce Chelsea garden for families RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2019

To mark the 150th anniversary of charity Family Action and the 100th anniversary of green service provider idverde, the two organisations are creating a thought-provoking garden for families at RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2019.

The garden, which will be in the artisan section of the show, is designed to get people talking about the everyday pressures all families face but can find difficult to talk about, as part of a new national conversation about family life today.

A path through the garden will take people past boulders of varying shapes and sizes, representing both the pressures families face and the isolation people can feel when facing these alone. It culminates in a central area with a bench large enough to bring the family together and a clear water pool offering people the opportunity to reflect.

The native and non-native plants chosen for the garden will be predominantly green with flushes of colour, and represent the diversity of our families. Birch and hazel coppice represent younger generations, while a large, mature pine tree is symbolic of older generations.

After the show, the garden will be relocated to a Family Action service to create a space where families can face their pressures together and stop these becoming overwhelming.

The local community involved in Family Action's orchard and allotment project in Swaffham, Norfolk will be growing plants for the show garden as well as creating a willow sculpture. The gardening activities on offer at the ESCAPE project aim to increase self-esteem, independence and wellbeing of local people and families experiencing isolation, or who have disabilities or mental health conditions.

As well as designing the garden, idverde will be involving its own apprentices in the build, giving young horticulturalists a wonderful opportunity to develop the skill and passion needed to create and maintain green spaces for decades to come.

Family Action Chief Executive, David Holmes, CBE said:

"We've been helping families face and deal with their pressures for 150 years. This garden reflects both our own and idverde's heritage, and our shared commitment to helping families and communities come together in positive ways. We hope this wonderful garden will encourage families to come together and talk about the pressures they are facing. The more we do so, the better we can all face the challenges of life together, rather than pretending everything is okay."

ESCAPE gardener, Sarah, said:

"It's like a big family really... You can just be yourself and there's no stigma attached to having mental health issues. You can come on your bad days as well as your good days, and people are really caring here. It makes me feel a lot better to get up here; I spend a lot of time on my own, so it's good to get out and see people."



idverde Operations Director and designer of the garden, Alistair Bayford, said:

"For our 100th anniversary we want to celebrate how our parks, green spaces, biodiversity and gardens are beneficial for the wellbeing of families and communities. Not only will this be experienced by thousands of visitors to Chelsea, after the show, the garden will be relocated to a Family Action site, ensuring it continues to benefit families and their local community in the long term."

idverde CEO, Doug Graham, said:

"The green spaces that we create, improve and maintain are essential to positive family and community life across the UK. Our mutual anniversaries are a perfect opportunity for Family Action and idverde to come together and demonstrate our shared commitment to stronger families and communities and the green spaces they rely upon. Our engaging, thoughtful and beautiful garden will put families and everyday family life at the heart of the world's greatest celebration of gardens."

ENDS

For more information or to set up an interview, please contact

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Notes to editor

Planting details

Birch and Hazel coppice, creating partial enclosure, shelter and refuge bound the garden offering filter views in and out. These represent the younger generation and pioneers at the start of their lives. A large gnarly pine (*Pinus nigra*) tree bearing the history of an individual in a family, showing scars of life, represents symbolically the older generation within a family unit. Shrubs provide structure and obscure views into the garden.

Planting underlying the coppice is predominantly green with flushes of colour and diversity, using native and non-native species to represent the diversity of our families.

The planting provides a variety of opportunities for shelter, food and nesting for wildlife. It is a mix of native and non-native species supporting biodiversity.

Plants used include *Molinia*, *Acanthus*, *Digitalis*, *Polygonatum*, *Ammi*, *Gallium*, *Myrrhis* and *Nectaroscordum*. The five main plants are:

- ❖ *Pinus nigra*
- ❖ *Betula nigra*
- ❖ *Hydrangea quercifolia*
- ❖ *Iris siberica* 'White Swirl'
- ❖ *Nectaroscordum siculum*



Family Action is a national charity marking its 150th anniversary in 2019. It is committed to building stronger families and brighter lives by delivering innovative and effective services and support that reaches out to many of the UK's most vulnerable people. We seek to empower people and communities to address their issues and challenges through practical, financial and emotional help. Our work is wide-ranging and includes help for parents-to-be, the provision of many Children's Centres in local communities, intensive family support, emotional health and wellbeing services, counselling, mediation and therapies, support in schools and financial grants programmes. Family Action is also recognised as a leading provider of training and consultancy.

Family Action's ESCAPE project was set up to help individual and families in the Swaffham area of Norfolk, with the aim of supporting and improving the life opportunities of local people. It is an eco-therapy project based around a community allotment and orchard, which is open to all members of the local community and is run by trained volunteers. Between 60 to 80 people participate each week, many of whom have been referred to Family Action by local services, such as GPs, schools and mental health services. Activities are designed to help people develop skills and have experiences that increase their independence, self-esteem, confidence, mental health and wellbeing - as well as feeling better connected to their community.

Registered Charity Number: 264 713

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idverde is the leading green service provider in the UK and is celebrating its centenary in 2019. It offers services in amenity horticulture, focusing on parks and open space management, grounds maintenance, tree surgery, street cleansing and landscape design and build, plus civil engineering and winter services. In 2017 idverde brought the Mind Trap garden designed by Ian Price to Chelsea 2017 winning a gold medal.

Alistair Bayford is a Chartered Landscape Architect with diverse and wide ranging experience in the design, build and management of landscapes and public realm. Having studied at Writtle College and the University of Greenwich becoming a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute in 2008, Alistair leads professional services and landscape construction throughout London and the South East for idverde, winning nine BALI Awards in the past six years. He has previous experience designing and building at RHS Shows in 2004, 2006 and 2007.

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