



Charity registration number 1089224

## A recreational facility for disabled children, their families, friends and schools



## Repairs to a flood damaged cooking and eating area

Unfortunately, in January 2009 Thomley staff arrived back to work to find that burst pipes had caused a very destructive flood in our eating area. To add insult to injury, thieves caused further damage by forcing entry into this same building to steal the dehumidifiers which were drying the area. Due to the fact that up to **120 visitors per day** need access to an eating area, we **urgently** need to get this building up and running again. The insurance company has agreed to cover the basic repair costs however there are additional and necessary improvements.

The eating area used by families is a converted milking parlour. Its conversion was basic with no consideration for heat conservation or efficient use of space. For cost efficiency purposes, it is prudent for us to carry out repairs and improvements simultaneously. Luckily, we know exactly what families want due to an extensive survey carried out in 2007.



*Birthday party in the original eating area*



*Vandalism by thieves*



*Flood damage*

### Planned improvements include:

- **Increase space of eating area** – removal of a wall will provide additional space and ensure flexibility for the needs of different sized groups
- **Improve warmth** – incorporate central heating, insulation, double glazing and new doors.
- **Improve accessibility for wheelchairs and prams** – improve doorways, level the flooring provide differing shape, size and height of tables.
- **Improve kitchen and food preparation area** – create a domestic style kitchen with modern appliances.
- **Replace decor and flooring** – bright but homely farmhouse style.
- **Improve storage space** – lockers and clear space for food, personal belongings and prams.

### Outcomes of this project

The eating area is central to Thomley's daily business. Being located in a rural area, Thomley is over a mile from the closest shop or cafe. It is therefore essential that we provide a fully accessible eating area for all visitors. Thomley does not provide a catering service as many disabled children have food allergies or specialised diets. Instead, visitors bring their own food. Visitors travelling from 16 different counties can come to Thomley for an entire day, in the knowledge that they can:

- Prepare or heat their food in a home from home style kitchen
- Follow normal daily routines and eat at their own chosen times
- Sit down together for a meal with their family, friends and other visitors in a relaxing, sociable and supporting setting. For many families, going to a cafe or restaurant is impossible.
- Encourage children to eat new foods by following the example of others
- Encourage children to develop appropriate table manners, meal etiquette, and social skills.
- Give children opportunity to participate in basic cooking, baking and food preparation projects, thus developing essential life skills and knowledge of nutrition and healthy eating.

Contact: Claire Acworth, Thomley Activity Centre, Menmarsh Road, Worminghall, Buckinghamshire, HP18 9JZ.