



Final Report for the Nineveh Charitable Trust

To help autistic children and children with special educational needs and disabilities to learn about how gardens can benefit wildlife

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Our Project

This project represented the fourth, and final story in a series designed to explore natural habitats and conservation issues across the Southeast and East of England. Once again, we wrote the story about Alex and Rosie, whom many autistic children are familiar with as we believed that children might respond better to a story featuring these characters. As planned, '*Alex and Rosie Make a Wildlife Garden*' shows Alex and Rosie learning about, and creating wildlife habitat in their own garden. It starts with the family visiting Flatford RSPB Wildlife Garden in Suffolk, which inspires the children to create a wildlife garden of their own. Returning home, they make a garden pond; sow wildflowers; stop mowing the lawn in May and June; plant garden flowers for bees and other insects; make bee hotels; put up bird feeders; and appreciate the value of ivy for pollinators and birds. In each case, the story shows some of the wildlife that the children observe, which benefits from their actions. As with other Alex and Rosie stories, the book uses simple language supported by Widgit symbols for children with speech and language difficulties. It has been published digitally, in an audiovisual format and also in an eBook format.

The audiovisual book can be viewed on the Widgit Software YouTube channel and the Activities Unlimited website. The accompanying eBook can be downloaded from the Widgit Software and Activities Unlimited websites.

Widgit Software website: www.widgit.com/products/autism-and-nature/alex-and-rosie-environment.htm

Widgit Software YouTube link: [Autism and Nature - YouTube](#)

Activities Unlimited website: [Activities Unlimited - Suffolk SEND Local Offer \(suffolklocaloffer.org.uk\)](http://activitiesunlimited.org.uk/suffolklocaloffer)

Planned outcome Indicators

1. Publication of an audiovideo and eBook: our digital story book on making a wildlife garden has been published and is freely available online to families and special schools. It is aimed at children of early years, pre- and primary school age. The story book will be publicised by local authorities such as Suffolk County Council Inclusion Services (Health, Wellbeing and Children's Services) and Essex County Council Shortbreaks for Disabled Children and Young People; and autism charities such as Autism Hampshire and Kent Autistic Trust. These organisations reach many thousands of families with children with SEND, in addition to special schools and support workers across the Southeast and East of England.
2. Amongst our community of autistic children and children with SEND, our work is promoting a better understanding of the countryside (see feedback below), and some of the important environmental issues affecting the countryside today. Our garden wildlife story book will also help parents, carers and teachers to overcome some of the barriers to engaging children with the countryside and increase opportunities for many children to engage with natural places.

3. An important element of all our work is to support the health and well-being of autistic children and children with SEND. This project is achieving this through promoting the engagement of children, their families and the special schools they attend, with the countryside and nature.

How our targets are supporting the aims of the Nineveh Charitable Trust

This project represented the fourth and final story book in a short series of educational resources for autistic children and children with SEND that explores specific natural habitats and conservation issues. We believe that our project closely supports the objectives of the Nineveh Charitable Trust, because its primary aim is to promote a better understanding and appreciation of the natural environment. It will promote better access and education for a disadvantaged group in society – autistic children and children with SEND. It supports the health and well-being of our community of need. It will educate and inform families about the opportunities to help wildlife through activities in their own gardens.

Feedback

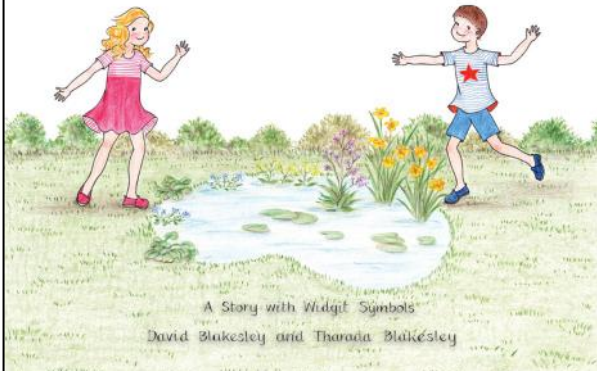
Chris Southwell (Suffolk County Council Inclusion Services (Health, Wellbeing and Children's Services)) who co-funded the book and will be publicising the book comments as follows:

"I work for Activities Unlimited; part of Suffolk County Councils Children and Young People services. We support children with SEND and their families, through the provision of short-break (respite) activities, Personal Budgets and a range of other family-focussed supports. We act as "first step" support in Suffolk's social care arena, so we have good reach into the local SEND community; we currently assist 4,000+ families directly per year, through our Short Break Personal Budgets and funded activities.

We have worked with the team at Autism and Nature for over 10 years, and have supported them with previous "Alex and Rosie" book releases, both through direct funding and through the distribution of books to the local SEND community. Throughout this time, we have found Autism and Nature to be excellent partners – they are good people to work with; they always deliver what they promise, and we are always delighted with their work. We receive lots of great feedback about the Alex and Rosie series; parents, teachers, practitioners in Health and Social Care and the children themselves have all contacted us, praising the quality of the books, the beautiful artwork and the use of assistive Widget text. It was this positive user-feedback that has ensured our continued working with Autism & Nature.

Their latest publication; Alex and Rosie Make a Wildlife Garden, offers the same features as its predecessors – wonderful artwork, fully accessible and a great, locally-based story with a key environmental message for readers. We are really excited with the book, as we know our users/families are going to love it. We have created a dedicated area within the Suffolk Local Offer website, to share Autism and Nature's book releases, and this is already proving popular with our families. The accompanying video is also a joy – good, clear narration from Giles Whithead and a nice pace of delivery – Autism and Nature's recent move to video-stories has been well-received by our users. We are huge fans of Autism and Nature – we are always happy to provide funding where we can, and we would thank any other funding bodies who support this wonderful organisation."

Alex and Rosie Make a Wildlife Garden



"This is Flatford RSPB Wildlife Garden," said Dad.
"We may get ideas to help wildlife in our garden."



They also dug a deeper area in the middle.
Rosie removed the stones whilst Alex added a layer of sand.



One morning, Alex and Rosie heard a croaking sound.
There was a frog in their pond. They were very excited!



They cleared a patch of weeds and raked the soil.
Then they carefully sowed some wild flower seed.



Alex and Rosie made bee hotels with old plant pots.
They packed their plant pots with hollow bamboo canes.