

# Link~Up

No. 99 Dec. 2007

Welcome to our Christmas edition of LinkUp with your new editor. Can I wish you all a happy Christmas/holiday and best wishes for a 'peaceful' New Year!

I would like to thank Lindy Hardcastle our Chairman and previous Editor for all her hard work producing LinkUp for so many years. She has done a wonderful job, but this is one of the roles she has given up as she prepares for a well earned retirement.

## EMAILED LINKUP

As we move on to 2008 can I ask that if anyone would like to enter the paper free society and save us the cost of printing and posting their Linkup and have it sent direct to their computer please forward me your email address

If you would also like to be kept informed of other events that precede LinkUp's publication date - then please tell me and I shall put you into an LAS mailing list. Your emails will not be given out to anyone else or used for any other purpose. All I ask is that you let me know if you would like to be on:-

1. Link Up only mailings
2. Link Up and other events mailings.

Please email to: -  
carole@heubeck.freeserve.co.uk  
I will acknowledge your email—if you do not hear from me within the week—please try again or give me a ring.

**Carole Heubeck**

## **J I G S A W Letter sent to Ivan Ould**

### **Re: The proposed cuts in funding from the County, to the Red Cross Family Support Centre, Oadby,**

Dear Mr Ould,

**ALSO SEE PAGE 7 RE WITHDRAWAL OF FUNDING TO RED CROSS**

I am writing to you as Chairperson and on behalf of Jigsaw, a sub group of The Leicestershire Autistic Society.

Jigsaw supports families of children and young people who have an Autistic Spectrum Disorder and are under the age of 19 years, both in the City and County and in Rutland. There are over 1,000 families on our database.

Jigsaw hold a monthly coffee morning and support group at the Red Cross Family Support Centre, Oadby and have done for over 10 years as far as I know. There are many groups who meet there, serving families whose children have a range of disabilities.

The facilities at the Red Cross are brilliant for these families, who have no other service specifically supporting them in this way. The support groups are unique, because they bring together parents and carers who all have something in common, which they do not have in their own communities. Families of children with disabilities often feel very isolated and these groups help them to know they are not alone, and that others understand the difficulties they have in bringing up their child.

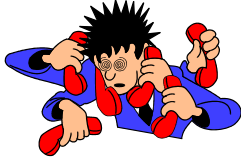
The committee of Jigsaw, who run the Support Group Meeting at the Centre comprises 7 members, all except one of which live in the County. Each one of us has found tremendous support from the Group in the past, and now wish to help support other parents. Mr Ould, I do strongly urge you to reconsider the funding for the support groups.

At this week's coffee morning we had over 20 parents, of these there were 4 new parents and by far the majority were from the County. Whilst these numbers are not huge, we are seeing a significantly increased proportion of parents coming along for the first time, and really being relieved to find the support of the Group and to know that there are other families like them, struggling but finding strength in each other. There are enough difficulties for these families, as I am sure you are aware, so to just have others to talk to, gain information and support from makes a huge difference to them.

I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you for your time.  
Yours sincerely

**Gillian Wisdich (chair of Jigsaw)**

A similar letter was also sent to the Director of Children's Services at County Hall too!



## Leicestershire Autistic Society

Editor: Carole Heubeck, 5 Grey Crescent, Newtown Linford, Leics. LE6 0AA Tel: (01530) 244790

Chair/ Helpline: Lindy Hardcastle, 31 Flaxfield Close, Groby, Leics. Tel: (0116) 291 6958 e-mail [lindy@flaxfield.demon.co.uk](mailto:lindy@flaxfield.demon.co.uk)

Treasurer: Peter Holdridge  
0116 2771974

Red Cross Advocacy and Family Support: Anne Lewis 0116 2710359 / 07921 492431 finishes 14th December 2007

PDA Contact: Alison Mann 01509 561505

Jigsaw Contacts: Chair: Gillian Wisdich, 82 Lime Avenue, Groby, Leics. LE6 0EN Tel: (0116) 287 6747

Jigsaw Support Worker: Jenny Cornwell Tel 07958 235015

Asperger Syndrome Support Group: Chair: Shelagh Wilson Tel. 0116 270 1074 email [she-lagh.m.h.wilson@btopenworld.com](mailto:she-lagh.m.h.wilson@btopenworld.com)  
Website: [aspergerleics.org](http://aspergerleics.org).

Monday Club Project Manager: email [themonday-club@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:themonday-club@hotmail.co.uk)

Chair: Mrs. Jenny Fisher email – [jenfisher@btinternet.com](mailto:jenfisher@btinternet.com) Tel. 0116 2595351

Oakham/Melton SAC Club : contact: Kay Smith Tel. 01572 770765.

Loughborough ASD Group : contact: Carole Heubeck, 5 Grey Crescent, Newtown Linford, Leics. LE6 0AA Tel: (01530) 244790

Rutland and Melton Support Group: contact Carole Gamble 01664 434502

## Useful Contacts

Market Harborough Support Group: contact Yasmin Delargy home 0116 279 2419, mobile: 07763823282

Birchwood Support group: Contact Lesley Herbert 01664 565155

Castle Donington Support Group Contact Jane Hall 07870 688973

Reality Support and activities for children and families, Contact Leisa Smith 07912 850517

Activity Club Contact: Jane Hall 07870 688973

Saturday Swimming Sessions at Bosworth Community College: Sue Cox 01455 822841 ext 27

### Children's Services

Leicestershire Educational Psychology Service: 0116-2845100.

Leicester City Educational Psychology Service: (0116) 221 1200

Leicestershire Autism Outreach Team: Contact George Thomas. (01530) 513600

Leicestershire Pre-school Support Worker: Jane Mansfield, Tel. (01530) 513600

Leicester City Learning and Autism Support Team: Tel: (0116) 225 4800

Rutland Autism Outreach: 01572 758496

Parent and Carers' Council: Tel. 07968 857598 e-mail [enquiries@parentcarercouncil.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@parentcarercouncil.co.uk) .

Red Cross Family Support Centre: Anne Payne, Red Cross Family Support Centre, 54 Kenilworth Drive, Oadby. Tel: (0116) 271 035

**Services for Adults with Autism in Leicestershire:**

Fosse Autism Service: Chris Howell, Leicester Frith Hospital, Groby Road, Leicester. Tel: (0116) 225 5335

NAS, Grovebrook House Resource Centre: Brook Street, Whetstone, Leics. LE8 6LA Tel: (0116) 286 6956

LEAT 182 London Road, Leicester, LE2 1ND Tel 0116 2541664 e-mail: [carolhunt@btconnect.com](mailto:carolhunt@btconnect.com)  
[leat@btconnect.com](mailto:leat@btconnect.com)

National Autistic Society (NAS): Helpline: 0845 070 4004 email [autismhelpline@nas.org.uk](mailto:autismhelpline@nas.org.uk)

NAS Regional Office: Ester Vickers, Regional Co-ordinator, Central Region, Castle Heights, 4th floor, 72 Maid Marian Way, Nottingham NG1 6BJ Tel: (0115) 911 3360  
Befriending Scheme: Gillian Keeling email [Gillian.Keeling@nas.org.uk](mailto:Gillian.Keeling@nas.org.uk) Tel. 0116 236 7524.

### Local Authority-run Schools with Autism Units:

West Gate School, Glenfield Road, Leicester Tel: 0116 285 6181  
Maplewell Hall School, Maplewell Road, Woodhouse Eaves, Leics. Tel: 01509 890237  
Newbold Verdon County Primary School, Dragon Lane, Newbold Verdon, Leics. Tel: 01455 82236  
Birch Wood School (Melton Area Special School) Grange Drive, Melton, LE13 1HA Tel. 01664 483340

Netherhall School, Netherhall Road, Leicester LE 1 5TS Tel. 0116 2417258

Vale of Catmose College, Cold Overton Road, LE15 6ND Tel 01572 771674

If you have a contact you wish us to include on this page—please contact the Editor

**Letter sent to the Leicester Mercury which resulted in an article about the withdrawal of funding from the Red Cross**

Leicestershire County Council has withdrawn its funding for the Red Cross Family Support Centre in Oadby (for special needs children and their families). This funding had provided a Saturday morning play scheme, toy exchange and venue for self help groups. The Saturday morning play scheme was attended, on average, by 27 families from the County (County Council's own figure) plus probably as many families from the City. My family was one of the 27.

What leisure facilities for Special Needs children does the County Council fund? Almost none it would seem. I asked the County Council for details of anything suitable for my 12 year old autistic son. After reading through their 63 page reply all I found was one, two-week summer play scheme and the Red Cross Saturday play scheme.

In the past year the County Council has withdrawn funding from the Melton summer play scheme for Special Needs children, **(also from the Jigsaw Playscheme—Editors note)** refused repeated requests to support leisure activities for Special Needs children organised by charities and now cut funding from the only leisure activity they supported.

The motto "every child matters" is becoming a sick joke. The County Council should own up and admit that "most children matter".

Yours faithfully  
Peter Holdridge

**Letter sent to Ivan Ould Children and Young People's Service about the withdrawal of funding from the Red Cross**

Dear Mr Ould

I write concerning the County Council's decision to cut funding from the Red Cross Family Support Centre in Oadby. This decision has caused widespread dismay amongst parents of Special Needs Children in the County.

As a parent of an 11 year-old autistic child, I would like to make you aware of what parents of Special Needs Children need. We need access to a Support Group for our child's particular needs. We need to be able to speak to people with similar problems and share advice. (We do not need to be barraged with paperwork). We need to have somewhere that we can take our child where they can play and be entertained for a few hours. We can't take our child to a public playgroup, swimming pool, cinema, or any other general public play activity. (I can give you a full explanation of why, if necessary).

The Red Cross Centre met our needs perfectly. Without it we have nothing. Special Needs Children depend on state provision – they can't access general public services. Leicestershire County Council funds no other leisure activity for Special Needs Children. There is no other potential site for Support Groups to meet.

Can you please answer the following questions:

1. Is it acceptable for a County Council to fund no playgroup, leisure or recreational activity for Special Needs Children? (Leicestershire County Council now fund nothing, £ zero). Is it acceptable to cease funding a successful, well attended, high quality scheme (27 County families attended each session on average – your figures – the venue was normally full to capacity) because unrealistic targets imposed by the County Council have not been met.
2. Is it acceptable that a venue owned by the Red Cross, with specialist play and computer equipment paid for by charities, will lie idle because a County Council has cut funding?
3. Is it acceptable that Parent Support Groups for specific special needs will close on 4 months notice because a County Council has cut funding?

<sup>1.</sup>  
<sup>2.</sup> There was a meeting on 2nd November at which the County Council's representative met with parents at the Red Cross Centre to discuss the cut in funding. I have several specific concerns with responses given by your representative to questions raised at this meeting. I will write to you on these matters after I have met the person concerned and after I have received your response to my questions above.

"Every Child Matters". Is this really the County Council's belief? Should it be "Most Children Matter"?

Yours sincerely  
Peter Holdridge—also see pg 4

We are seeing tough times for children in the County as the County are looking at 'inclusion' for special needs children which is a wonderful idea for some children but does not work for everyone. If "Every Child Matters" should the County not be looking at what is right for every child and not just a concept!. We must do something about this situation. Please follow Gillian and Peter's example—write to your Councilor and MP. If as a County parent you can no longer use the Red Cross facilities and Jigsaw's library—look at the NAS website and booklist and order them through your local library.

Mr Gareth Williams  
Director of Children and Young  
People's Service  
Leicestershire County Council  
County Hall  
Glenfield  
Leicestershire  
LE3 8RL

Dear Mr Williams

I write in response to the article on page 11 of yesterday's Leicester Mercury concerning the County Council's cut in funding of the Red Cross play-group for Special Needs children. (The only County Council funded activity that my son has been able to access).

A County Council spokesman is quoted in the article as saying that "the Council funds a range of support services (for) ..... children with special needs". Could you please provide me with a list of playgroups, play-schemes and other leisure activities, funded by the County Council, which my 11 year-old autistic son could access? I am not aware of any such provision supported by the County Council.

I was concerned to read in the article that the Council will "more frequently" provide funding to support inclusion in "mainstream playgroups and play-schemes". As you will be aware inclusion in mainstream schemes is not appropriate for autistic children. If your only funding is for inclusion then this would represent a disturbing lack of provision for autistic children.

Yours sincerely  
Peter Holdridge

**Loughborough Support Group**

**We meet on the last Monday of the month at John Storer House at 7.30pm.**

**Everyone welcome. Small friendly crowd of parents and carers! Contact Carole on 01530 244790.**

## **The Monday Club**

Asperger Syndrome Support Group  
**About the Group**

**The Monday Club is a social group for adults, 18-65, who have Asperger Syndrome. The Club is based at the Central YMCA, 7 East Street, Leicester, LE1 6EY. We meet on Monday Evenings from 7.00pm. – 9.00pm.**

**We aim to create a supportive environment for our members to meet, either in a mainstream setting or in the community, with trained staff and volunteers available to offer support where necessary.**

**We provide a variety of enjoyable activities for our members and offer the opportunity to meet others with Asperger Syndrome and to develop friendships and mutual support through structured activity evenings.**

**The club is funded by the City and County Social Services and works with them to identify and provide services to adults with Asperger Syndrome.**

### **Club Activities**

**The Monday Club offers a variety of activities including quizzes, board games, arts and crafts, bingo, food evenings, DVD/Video evenings and computing.**

**We offer activities that take place in the community, which include visits to local pubs and restaurants, pool evenings, bowling and visits to local areas of interest.**

**We also offer social skills evenings, which provide members with the opportunity to develop social awareness in everyday situations, using role play and group discussion.**

### **Interested?**

**If you would like to become a member of the Monday Club please contact your social worker, or alternatively please write to The Monday Club at the Leicester Central Y.M.C.A. for further details.**

**If you are a professional interested in learning more about the Club or you wish to join us as a volunteer, please contact the club care for more information.**

### **The Monday Club can be contacted by:**

#### **By Telephone:**

**(0116) 2556507 (Monday evenings only)**

#### **Mobile Telephone:**

**07804671783**

#### **By Email:**

**themonday-**

#### **By Post:**

**The Monday Club,  
C/O Leicester Central  
YMCA  
7 East Street,  
Leicester,  
LE1 6EY.**

Reg. Charity No 507300  
Limited Company No 6384957

# The Monday Club

Asperger Syndrome Support Group



## Job Vacancy

**2<sup>nd</sup> Monday Club Project Worker** The Management Committee is looking for a second Project Worker to help run and develop this established weekly social group for adults with Asperger Syndrome which meets on Monday evenings 6.45-pm. – 9.00pm. at the Central Leicester YMCA. Understanding and experience of working with people with an Asperger Syndrome or Autism, either in a residential, educational or social setting, is required. A current driving licence would be an advantage. The person appointed will be expected to help with the running of the club, planning activities, attending meetings and training session and be able to take part in other activities at the request of the Project manager.

**The Management Committee is looking for somebody with vision, enthusiasm and energy who will lead this excellent project into the next phase of its development.**

**Please ring Jenny Fisher on 0116 259 5351 for further details (please give your telephone number clearly on the answer phone) or email at [jenfisher@btinternet.com](mailto:jenfisher@btinternet.com)**

**This is a prestigious project and a National example of Service Excellence quoted in the National Autistic Society document Taking Responsibility, Good Practice guidelines for local services on how to help adults with As.**

## Leicestershire Asperger Syndrome Support Group

### Monthly Support Group Meetings

The **LEICESTER** group now meets **bi-monthly** on the 2nd Monday of the month - 7.15—9.15 pm  
Church Hall, Buckminster Road,  
Leicester LE3 9TA

Scheduled dates:-  
14 January 2008  
10 March 2008  
12 May 2008  
14 July 2008

Website: [www.aspergerleics.org](http://www.aspergerleics.org)

This also has back copies of LinkUp on, available to read as well as other useful information

### Alpha Smart?

I am a mum with an Aspergers child in Mainstream School which has recommended that we buy him a Alpha Smart to assist him. We would like to speak to any other parent or carer whose child has one of these and their experience of it before we purchase one.

Please contact Mandy on 0116 287 4517

### Dinosaurs

I was made aware of this website recently, that may be invaluable to any dinosaur lovers amongst you or your families and children. It might be good for rewards and reinforcers, useful learning materials or just fun activities.

<http://dinobase.gly.bris.ac.uk/dinokids.html>

**Kim Higgins**, Regional Officer,  
The National Autistic Society

### New Siblings Group In The Market Harborough And Oadby Area

We are hoping to set up monthly meetings for the brothers and sisters (aged between 6 and 13) of children with an autistic spectrum disorder who live in the south east of the county. We'd like to do this as soon as we can but need to know young people's thoughts on what they would like from the group.

Unfortunately the date where any one who was interested in finding out more, was on Monday, 26th November (another reason to join the LinkUp email group)

All is not lost though!

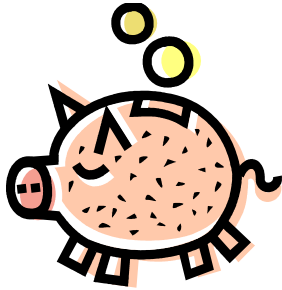
**Please telephone Jane Mansfield from Leicester-shire's Autism Outreach Team on 01530 513600 if you are interested in finding out more?**

## 100 Club Winners

**September**— Mrs Bentley  
No 87

**October** 100 Club draw is  
Angela Johnson, No 94.

**November**—Mrs s Barrington  
No 37



## Anne Lewis

WE are sadly losing a very valuable and respected asset, as you will see from Anne's letter on this page, that her post is ending.

Anne originally started by working as an independent family support worker, part time funded by Miracles to Believe In & Jigsaw.

She then moved to the Red Cross and was able to continue the valuable work she had started, supporting families who had children with autism and were experiencing problems or needed information or support.

Many families have had contact with Anne as she has given them guidance and advice. Her breadth of knowledge is phe-

nomenal - especially as it has been gained the hard way having to fight for her own son's education.

Whilst professionals do help and support us and many of us sing their praises, as we are grateful for their assistance—Anne herself is a legend in her own lifetime. The number of people who I have come into contact with—who nod their head when her name is mentioned or recommend her to others when they are needing assistance is unbelievable.

It is a shame that the Red Cross were not able to continue to fund this post and find funding, as Anne had a large and ongoing caseload of parents who need support and advice.

Anne has also represented us, and the Red Cross, on many Groups both in the City and the County.

At the moment we can only hope that funding can be found to help us keep Anne's knowledge in the autism field—and where it is best suited—helping families  
**Carole Heubeck**

## RED CROSS

The lottery funding for the above project has sadly come to an end and I will be finishing in post on December 14th 2007.

I have evaluated the project and I am hoping to be granted the permission to share the findings with you all in the very near future.

Should you require any Autism Specific support or information you can contact Jenny Cornwell (Jigsaw Family Support Worker) on 07958235015 or Lindy Hardcastle (LAS Helpline) on 0116 2916958.

The LAS and myself are working on other funding avenues as we recognize the need for the continuation of autism specific support for you all.

The Red Cross are currently looking into advocacy posts for the future.

I have enjoyed working with you and I am delighted that this project has effected some considerable change to the lives of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and their families.

I wish you all the best for the future.

**Anne Lewis**

## Disability Support Service Autism support

The clinical psychologists within our team have been working for the past two years to develop a national support network for parents and carers of children with disabilities.

It is an online service providing:

\*Specialist information on causes, treatments & management

- \*Support networks
- \*Online disability videos
- \*Books & DVDs
- \*Counselling services
- \*Psychological tests
- \*Specialist equipment
- \*Disability articles by other parents
- \*Grants & benefits
- \*For older children - disabled employment services

The service has been carefully developed to address many of the unmet needs experienced by people caring for the disabled.

If you feel the parents you meet with would benefit from this service, please bring it to their attention. The service is available online at [www.special-mates.co.uk](http://www.special-mates.co.uk)

Should you wish to place a notice in your meeting place, we have provided an A4 poster which can be downloaded from [www.special-mates.co.uk/poster](http://www.special-mates.co.uk/poster)

Please do not hesitate to contact me, should you require further information.

Thank you

Dr Phil Murphy

## Leicester & Leicestershire Combined Children's Charities Annual Sponsored Walk 2007



As has been reported in previous issues of LinkUp this is the main fundraiser for the LAS.

This year, walk organisers made a huge decision to change the route of the walk and to make it much shorter. The main reasons for the changes being for safety. It is now much more difficult to get marshalls to help walkers cross roads. Also organisers wanted to make the walk fun and more accessible to families.

We took a gamble as to whether as much money would be raised by this major change and I am glad to report that the money realised overall by the individual charities and by the Combined Charities has been very similar to that which was raised in previous years. HURRAY!

The amount raised for the LAS this year totalled £1,976.03. That money, as always will and is being spent on supporting children with ASD's and their families.

Many of you will be interested to know that over 75% of the money raised by the Combined Children's Charities goes to each individual charity. This year that was £400 to each of the 7 charities (as well as what they individually raised). Walkers for the LAS alone raised £1,576.03.

May I say on behalf of the LAS, A VERY BIG THANK YOU to all who were involved in any way this year.

Next year the walk will be the same route, a distance of approximately 5km from Western Park and around Braunstone Park and back. There will probably be an option for keen

walkers to do 2 laps!  
Please put next years date in your diary.

**SUNDAY 4TH MAY 2008**

As always the walk needs your support. Please either plan to walk, sponsor or help marshal on the day

Thank You

**Gillian Wisdich**

### LAS MEETING

31st January  
2009

@7.30pm

Venue to be  
confirmed

**At this meeting we will discuss and vote on whether we continue as a separate charity or whether we become a branch of the NAS.**

**I have had only 1 call to discuss this matter after the last issue of Link Up**

Please contact the Chair Lindy Hardcastle (see pg 2 contacts list) If you are interested in attending this meeting.

## Books from the NAS

Here are a few ideas for tried, tested and trusted books and resources from NAS Publications which would make lovely presents and give good insight into the world of autism. Please see below for how to order. Don't forget to claim your 10% member's discount when you order by phone, fax or post!

***A friend like Henry: the remarkable true story of an autistic boy and the dog that unlocked his world***

Nuala Gardner

Dale was a little boy with autism, locked in his own world, until Henry the golden retriever puppy entered his life. Written by Dale's mother, this is the heart-warming story of how Henry turned round Dale's life and helped his sister Amy, who also has autism. Donations from sales to The National Autistic Society.

Published by Hodder and Stoughton, 2007, 342pp, hbk (Code NAS 727) ISBN 978 0 34093 401 2 £14.99

### ***After Thomas***

"The best thing I've seen in ages" - The Times

Shown on BBC Television on Boxing Day 2006. This film is based on the book, *A friend like Henry: the remarkable true story of an autistic boy and the dog that unlocked his world*.

DVD published by 2Entertain, 2006, running time 90 minutes (Code NAS 715) No ISBN £19.99 incl VAT

### ***How artists see feelings***

Colleen Carroll

People with autism and Asperger syndrome often have difficulty in understanding how other people feel. This beautifully illustrated book uses art from across the globe to explore joy, sorrow,

fear and love. Focussing on art and sculpture by artists including Renoir, Van Eyck and Picasso. Colleen uses inspiring art to explore a wide range of emotions in a very accessible style. She has taught in museums, galleries and schools. This book would make a delightful gift for children aged seven upwards. Published by Abbeville Press, 2001, 48pp, A5, hbk, illustrated in full colour

(Code NAS 750) ISBN 978 0789 206 169 £6.99

Rory Hoy

'Gives a real feeling of what autism is all about. A great DVD for young people and adults alike.' Christine Deudney, NAS Information Centre

Rory is an 18 year old award-winning film maker who has autism. This engaging film and book explain what it's like to take everything literally, love routines and enjoy the company of calm and loving people.

Published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2007, DVD, running time 20 minutes and pbk, 32pp (Code NAS 704) ISBN 978 1 84310 546 6

£18.79 (incl VAT)

### **The National Autistic Society Umbrella**

Robust turquoise folding umbrella with NAS logo in white on four panels – a good way to show support for The National Autistic Society or to encourage autism awareness.

(Code NAS 688) £8.99

### **How to order**

Please send your order with payment directly to our distributor, Central Books Ltd, 99 Wallis Road, London E9 5LN Tel: 0845 458 9911 Fax: 0845 458 9912

Or order online @

[www.autism.org.uk/pubs](http://www.autism.org.uk/pubs)

Please send payment with order and remember to add postage

and packing: £2.00 for online and mail order with payment; £3.95 for all other UK orders. Payment may be made by postal order, cheque, credit or debit card. Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to Central Books Ltd. 10% discount for NAS members (sorry – discount not available online).

## NAS Campaign

### **Over 1 in 100 people in the UK have autism.**

Whether at school, work or in social settings, people with autism are often misunderstood. They can suffer discrimination, intolerance and isolation. For many this means a lifetime of exclusion.

Help change this by supporting our ***think differently about autism*** campaign. Together we can build much greater public understanding of autism.

### **There are several quick and easy ways you can support the campaign and help spread the word.**

Visit our campaign website

[www.think-differently.org.uk](http://www.think-differently.org.uk) to sign up to our government [petition](#) and find out about other ways to support the campaign.

Watch our [campaign films](#) and then forward them to your friends and family.

Encourage everyone you know to visit the website and support the campaign.

**IVANHOE SCHOOL YOUTH  
CLUB ASHBY- DE -LA-  
ZOUCH.**

**WE MEET THE SECOND  
AND FOURTH SATURDAY  
EACH MONTH. 10AM-  
12NOON**

The club is going really well, so far we have been

***Go Karting twice,  
Clay Pigeon shooting,  
Clay modelling,  
Christmas Card making  
Next week is a session in  
the pool Kayaking.  
ideas in the pipe line for  
January are driving lessons  
in Birmingham and a ses-  
sion at Beaumanor Hall.***

We have a WII and hand sets  
2 pool tables  
3 computers connected to the  
internet and with printers  
2 TVs for PS2  
1 TV for the WII  
1 Widescreen TV for general  
viewing  
1 Dart board.

There are also table top activi-  
ties for those that prefer some-  
thing quieter. I.e. Drawing,  
chess, jigsaws etc. Each child  
has an activity book that is  
completed each week saying  
how much they enjoyed or did-  
n't the morning and they add  
the photos that have been  
taken that day to remind  
them. Any ideas the chil-  
dren have or things they would  
like to do are listened to and  
tried to deliver. This is their  
group.....

For those that enjoy swimming  
we can join in the sessions on  
a Monday evening.

There are plenty of refresh-  
ments on hand for parents and  
children. The club is for 11  
years and above although  
younger siblings and friends  
are welcome.

Dave has been instrumental in



encouraging our young adoles-  
cents to try new things and  
achieve. I can't tell you just how  
much fun and excitement they  
had on the Go Karts, it was won-  
derful seeing their faces as they  
were allowed to be ordinary  
teenagers.

**For information contact:  
Leicestershire Children and  
Young People's Youth Service  
Dave Thomas 01530-560485  
or you can ring me Jane Hall  
on 07870-688973**



**The City Learning  
and Autism Support  
Team**

are holding a friends and family

**ASD**

**Information Event**

on

**Saturday 2nd February**

**10am - 12.30 pm**

at the Peepul Centre  
Orchardson Avenue Leicester  
LE4 6DP.

**SWIMMING  
SESSIONS AT  
BOSWORTH  
COMMUNITY SPORTS  
COLLEGE DESFORD**

The swimming sessions,  
which the LAS has provided in  
conjunction with Bosworth  
Community Sports College,  
are specifically for families  
with children on the Autistic  
Spectrum within the age range  
of 4-18 years.

The Pool is open to families  
from 3.15pm.to 5.30pm. on  
Saturdays and is staffed by a  
qualified Swimming Teacher  
and two Lifeguards. These  
staff are experienced in work-  
ing with children on the Autis-  
tic Spectrum and their aim is  
to provide a safe, secure and  
non-threatening environment  
so that the children can enjoy  
themselves and parents can  
relax and socialise. Each fam-  
ily participating in the swim-  
ming sessions is asked to con-  
tribute £2.00 to help defray the  
running costs of the project.  
The swimming sessions run  
during term time for 45 weeks  
of the year;

**New families would be most  
welcome** to join in and should  
contact Sue Cox, the Sports  
College's Pool Manger, by  
telephone (01455 822841  
ext.27) or by email at  
[suec27@boscol.leics.sch.uk](mailto:suec27@boscol.leics.sch.uk)  
for further details.

The project was established in  
January 2003 following repre-  
sentations by many parents  
about the need for this type of  
provision in view of the limited  
opportunities available to chil-  
dren on the Autistic Spectrum  
to participate in physical and  
sporting activities outside of  
normal  
school  
hours  
**David  
Hines**



## Reality

Reality holds monthly support group meetings on Thursday mornings from 11:00am to 1:00 pm at the Parkfield School on Pindar road, New Parks. The dates for the meetings in 2008 are: January 3<sup>rd</sup>, February 7<sup>th</sup>, and March 6<sup>th</sup>.

No formal diagnoses of ASD are required to attend and anyone is welcome. The meetings are always well attended and everyone is encouraged to participate. Parents can share their concerns or address any issues they may have, openly at the meeting, privately with each other, or with any of the guest speakers or visitors from within the ASD community who regularly attend Reality's meetings. Childcare workers are available to entertain your children and members will have access to the toy and book library.

Each year, as a group, Reality provides opportunities for various outings throughout the school holidays as part of its 'pro active' approach to introducing ASD children to social settings. Following on from several successful Summer events the

group once again visited Cadbury World in October to stock up on chocolate [for the kids ... honest!] and on December 22<sup>nd</sup> we will be taking the kids to the Snowdome in Tamworth, to give the little ones a chance to see Santa in a real winter setting, the larger ones a chance at Tobogganing and the adults a chance to spend some time in casualty after trying our luck Ice Skating ... For our first event in 2008 we intend to arrange a visit to the 'Think Tank' museum. All of our members will be advised of the date and details when it has been confirmed as well as the proposed dates and times for the forthcoming Outdoor Pursuits Centre activities.

Although those who attended Reality's charity event on November the 10<sup>th</sup> considered it to be one of the most enjoyable they had ever attended, the organisers feel that it is unlikely to be repeated as many of those who bought tickets chose not to attend and as a result a vast quantity of the food, as well as it's preparation time and cost to Reality was wasted.

Any suggestions for alternative

methods of financing the activities that all of the group benefits from will be welcomed.

A number of the larger prizes from the charity evenings raffle are still available and will be raffled throughout the next few months. Any raffle prizes or other donations for any of Reality's events will always be gratefully received as these are the life blood of organisations like Reality. Without them voluntary groups like ours would cease to exist.

Members will be notified of any other events and the information will also be available in future publications of LINK-UP.

Should anyone require any further information about Reality, have any suggestions for fundraising etc, or wish to be added to the group's database, please contact Leisa Smith on.

07912850517

or via e-mail at

leisa\_smith3@hotmail.com

## AUTISM OUTREACH TEAM

### WORKSHOP

### TOPICS INCLUDE

**What is Autism?  
Communication  
Approaches to Autism**

**Educational Issues  
Managing Difficult Behaviour  
The Impact on the Family**

### **FOR PARENTS OR CARERS OF CHILDREN DIAGNOSED WITH AUTISTIC SPECTRUM DISORDERS.**

**The present workshops are already running and about to finish. If you are interested the next set of workshops should take place in April/May onwards**

Contact Keely Lee, Specialist Teaching Service, Rothley House, Coalville Business Park, Jackson Street, Coalville, Leicestershire, LE67 3NR later in the new year. We will publish the dates if the next LinkUp is out before they start.

### **PARENT & CARERS COUNCIL**

The PCC are working in partnership with Christine Jarvis from ADHD solutions to support parents living in Leicestershire County Council.

Between January and March 2008 Christine will be running 1-2-3 Magic courses in various venues around the county for parents who find their child's behaviour challenging and need support in managing it. Your attendance on the course is not dependant on a diagnosis of ADHD.

For more details or to express an interest in attending please contact Christine Jarvis on 0794 7047573 directly.

For more information on PCC support groups please contact Jane Hall on 07870 688973 or Sue Harrison on 07968 857598.

## Halloween Party at Newtown Linford

The joint held Halloween Party was a great success. Organised primarily by Anne Lewis from the Red Cross, it was run on the day by volunteers - Anne, Nick, Viv from ASPIRE, my daughter Fiona and myself. We started at 9am when I went to Anne's to pick up some of the food she had prepared. Nick had also got up early and gone to ASDA to pick up fresh baguettes – because they are cheaper there than Budgens or the Co-op! Anne had already brought over to my house the decorations for the Hall and food that she had previously brought -as items on special offer such as drinks, biscuits and such like.

We started decorating the Hall at 10am, eating a bacon roll each whilst still on the go at lunchtime (thank you to the LAS for agreeing to pay for them). We had to send away a family at 12 who had arrived early as they had the wrong time and we were still decorating! The bouncy castle and slide arrived at about 12 and at 1pm we popped over the drive to the Bradgate pub for a quick drink before the onslaught! Back by 1.30pm the first families came in the door and started the party early. The party had been planned for 2-4pm for the under 10's and 5 - 7pm for the over 10's but with a bit of flexibility depending on the children, and their siblings' needs.

We had booked "Snuffy the Clown" for 3 to 4pm and 5 to 6pm. Instead of going "over the road" at 4pm for a coffee and would come back at 5pm, she arrived early and was still with us at 7! Many many thanks – she made the party go absolutely wonderfully! The younger children all had wonderful bal-

loons made such as cats, giraffes, dogs etc and they loved the magic show – so much so that we were worried that we couldn't get them out in time to tidy up for the next party at 5pm. We managed to persuade the clown that the magic show needed to end at 4.15pm and I had already shut down the bouncy castle and slides, much to the children's dismay – sorry!

Having got the younger children away with their party bags and balloons, having had a lovely time, we locked the door (so we could tidy up before the older children came in) and cleaned up and put out more food for the second group. One of the highlights was the 'horrible' jelly made by Anne which was green and complete with chewy snakes and things and orange jelly pumpkins which looked so cute! Jane Wilson also made some lovely Halloween decorated cakes for the older party.

The older boys (mixed sexes for the first party) all had ghost buster back packs and guns made out of balloons – they were a totally different group of children and it was fantastic to see them playing together as a group – Ghostbusters! A couple of the mums said how wonderful it was that the boys were having such a good time and were playing as part of the group rather than on their own. They also appreciated that they were with their own age group rather than, as sometimes happens, having to be an older child with younger children, as many activities appeal to younger children rather than older ones.

Jackie Ward came to the party early with her child because she had volunteered to do the teas for the parents, and also helped us clean up between the sessions. Denise from ASPIRE also came to help out with the younger group but had to leave

before the older party. Viv had done a craft table for the younger children, which went down well She also provided valuable assistance helping and supervising the slides and bouncy castle.

At the end of the session, many parents stopped to help us take down the decorations, put the left over food in the bin along with the disposable plates etc and to sweep the floor, clean up the kitchen etc. At 8pm we were able to turn off the lights and lock the door. I went home and had a much needed glass of wine!

It was impossible to ask for evaluations but from comments made everyone had a good time. We had the 22 children we had budgeted for at the first party – we kept the numbers down (risk assessment) to keep the rooms spacious and appropriate for the children concerned. At the older party a couple of boys did not turn up due to illness but this was fine as obviously they were bigger and it gave them more space to run around. All seemed to enjoy it and from the comments from the first party the children did not want it to end.

Parents were to send to me a deposit of £5 which reserved their place but was not cashed.

Many thanks for the Funding from the Red Cross, Jigsaw and Miracles to Believe *ln*.

I cannot believe it but Anne Lewis is already preparing for next year and talking about a Christmas party!

Carole Heubeck

## Autism Friendly Film Viewings

### Miracles to believe in - Free Film Shows at the Century Theatre, Snibston Discovery Park, Coalville

The last show was very successful -with a good crowd of families enjoying Shrek 3 at the October Half Term. There will not be one at Christmas due to the very busy time we all have with school shows etc but there will be another showing at 2pm on the Friday of the February half term holidays—Friday 15th February. Last time we did flyers to some of the Area Special Schools the week before half term which was a successful way of reminding everyone about the film. We will do the same again this time. If you want more details nearer the time -i.e. the film title! Please contact Carole by phone or email - or join the LAS email group to be kept up to date!

#### **PHEONIX—LEICESTER**

I have not been sent any details of special film shows at the Phoenix since the October half term dates. For more information contact the Phoenix direct—Sue Porter, Education & Outreach Officer and Centre Screen Co-ordinator, Phoenix on 0116 2247703

## Trip on the Great Central Railway Thomas The Tank Engine Weekend 16th February 2008



Miracles to Believe In are again running a trip for Autistic Children & their families on the Great Central Railway. We normally have a carriage reserved for our families for the first trip from Loughborough, however families may get on at Rothley, Quorn or Leicester. The ticket enables families to make as many trips as they wish or to get on or off the train at the different stations. Of special interest is the model railway at Rothley. Refreshments are available at Rothley and Loughborough as well as on the train itself. We have done this trip now for several years and the railway are always friendly and obliging—a lovely trip if your children or other members of the family enjoy trains —especially steam ones!

Cost £5 per family. Interested? Please fill in the form below or copy out the details and send to Peter Holdridge to book a place

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Post code \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ or Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

No of adults in party: \_\_\_\_\_ No of Children in party: \_\_\_\_\_

Depart: Loughborough/Quorn/Rothley/Leicester *Please indicate where you will board the train by crossing out the other stations.*

Please send this form along with £5 cheque or postal order made out to 'Miracles to Believe In' to 25 Linden Avenue, Countesthorpe, Leicester LE8 5PG. Phone number 0116 2771974

Peter will contact you via email or phone to confirm time of trip and that he has received your booking.