

Link ~ Up

No. 96 March 2007

Spare us a fiver?

The Leicestershire Autistic Society provides advice, support and information to both families and professionals via the helpline, publications and Link-Up. We represent the interests of people of all ages on the autistic spectrum on many forums in the city and county. The LAS committee is made up of representatives of support groups around the county, including our sister organisation Reality. We meet regularly to discuss how to improve provision for people of all ages on the autistic spectrum through the statutory and voluntary services. Without the efforts of the LAS over many years, much of this provision would not exist.

We are a volunteer-run charity with no paid staff and no statutory funding. We are entirely dependent on our membership subscriptions and donations. Our expenses are relatively low – the LAS effectively runs from my spare bedroom. Our main expenses are the telephone helpline and the printing and distribution of information – leaflets, directories and, most importantly, Link-Up. Running costs of the LAS last year were £3500, of which £2000 went on Link-up. Total income from subscription was £800. Only 20% of the 800+ families on our database who receive Link-Up paid the £5 annual subscription. This leaves us dependent on donations, for which

we are very grateful, but it is not a predictable or reliable source of income. If all our families paid the £5 annual subs, we could cover all our running costs and spend donations on direct services for families.

Inside this edition of Link-Up you will find a membership form. We would very much like you all to fill in the form so that we can check and update our database. If you value what the LAS does and want it to continue – please enclose a cheque for £5 with your form.

Family Support

Anne Lewis is now working four days a week as an autistic specific family support worker for the Red Cross and as many of you will know is having great success in obtaining appropriate provision for children. She has been joined by Jenny Cornwell, working one day a week for Jigsaw. See contacts list.

Phoenix

Charlotte's Web

A special screening for children on the autistic spectrum, their family and friends.

**Tuesday 3rd April
2pm**

£2 - Box office 0116 255485

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Now read on.....

...for information about the many activities and events planned by LAS groups around the county, news of playschemes, the art exhibition in April, and a special event for fathers - make sure your partners read this bit, mums!



Useful Contacts



Leicestershire Autistic Society

Treasurer: 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

Red Cross Advocacy and Family Support: Anne Lewis 0116 2710359 / 07921 492431

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

0116 270 1074 email shelagh.m.h.wilson@btopenworld.com
Website: aspergerleics.org.uk

Monday Club Project Manager: email themondayclub@hotmail.co.uk

Chair: Mrs. Jenny Fisher email – jenfisher@btinternet.com Tel. 0116 2595351

Oakham/Melton SAC Club : contact: Mo Potter on (01664) 500688

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

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

Castle Donington Support Group: contact Jane Sherwood 01332 850709

Birchwood Support group: Contact Lesley Herbert 01664 565155

Reality Support and activities for children and families, Contact Leisa Smith 078794 28553

Activity Club Contact: Jane Hall 07870 688973

Saturday Swimming Sessions at Bosworth Community College: Josh Wilson 07950 379447 email Josh@boscol.globalnet.co.uk

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, (01530) 513600

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

Rutland Autism Outreach: 01572 758496

Parent and Carers' Council: Tel. 07786 626564 e-mail enquiries@parentcarercouncil.co.uk.

Red Cross Family Support Centre: Anne Payne, Red Cross Family Support Centre, 54 Kenilworth Drive,

Oadby. Tel: (0116) 271 0359

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

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

NAS Regional Office: Ester Vickers Regional Coordinator, Central Region Kij Higgins, Regional Officer, Central Region
R e g i o n
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 Tel. 0116 236 7524.

Local Education 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 15TS Tel. 0116 2417258

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

Where have all the Dads gone?

Sadly, many marriages don't survive the stress of living with a disabled child. Usually, but not always, it is the mother who is left to cope alone.

Even where both parents still share the same house, they do not always share the burden of supporting and managing the child, seeking appropriate support, battling with statutory services and nurturing the other children in the family. Mum usually takes the responsibility for providing all the practical and emotional support, often at the expense of her own mental health.

Many children on the autistic spectrum suffer from additional related mental health problems - stress, anxiety and depression.

We have "parents" support groups around the county, but fathers are rarely spotted at the meetings. Would it help Dads to talk to and support each other? YoungMinds is putting on a special event for fathers of ASD children. Please come along and find out what help is available for you and your family.

Fathers' Evening

**NSPCC National
Training Centre
3 Gilmour Close
Beaumont Leys
Leicester LE4 1EZ**

**Thursday 26th April
2007 7.30 pm**

There is no charge, but please phone or email Lindy (see contacts list) to book a place.

Leicester/Leicestershire selected for dynamic Fathers Project:

YoungMinds is the national charity committed to promoting and improving the mental health of all babies, children and young people. YoungMinds operates the Parents' Information Service - a free, confidential, independent national telephone helpline/letter/Email service, offering information and professional advice to adults concerned about the mental health or emotional well-being of a child or young person (up to the age of 25). We speak to many parents and carers about their children regarding a wide range of issues, including depression, self harm, bullying, school problems and family conflict.

**The helpline opening hours are:
Monday and Friday: 10am – 1pm
Tuesday and Thursday: 1pm – 4pm
Wednesday: 1pm – 4pm & 6pm – 8pm.**

Tel: 0800 018 2138

We have noticed that fathers are significantly under-represented among our callers, despite their vital role in emotionally supporting their children. With this in mind, YoungMinds are undertaking a two-year study to help us better engage with Fathers. The study will be part research based, part promotion based.

As a national charity, we serve the whole of the United Kingdom; however, certain regions have been selected for initial fieldwork and Leicestershire is one of our pilot areas. Our aim is to increase fathers' awareness of our helpline, and promote their knowledge of children and young people's mental health in general. YoungMinds are looking to forge partnerships with local services to share local knowledge, resources and project benefits.

We plan to....

Deliver presentations and workshops to Fathers regarding the work of the helpline, mental health issues, and other support avenues.

Target locations where Fathers gather (i.e. sporting or social environments) with a poster/leaflet campaign. Fathers can be visually associated with responsibility for young people's mental health, through the use of pictures.

Run joint initiatives with local schools.

Run surgeries (perhaps monthly) where Dads could drop-in and discuss their concerns about a Child/young persons Mental Health.

Place information in local newspapers to generate awareness of the helpline and the project.

As a first step in this important project, it would be very helpful if fathers could complete and return the enclosed questionnaire.

Join the 100 Club!

The 100 Club, launched two years ago, has been a great success. We now have 150 members, giving a monthly prize of £75 and providing the LAS with a very useful £900 annual income. The more members we have, the larger the monthly prize.

Proceeds from the 100 club are used to support the running costs of the LAS - postage, phone bills, production of Link-Up etc

Letters are being sent out now to all members inviting them to renew their subscriptions for the year from April 2007 to March 2008 inclusive. We very much hope you will all want to continue for another year. Please return the tear-off slip to me with your cheque for £12 promptly to avoid any break in your membership.

For new members, there is an application form on the back of the membership subscription form enclosed in this edition of Link-Up. This can be returned to Carole Heubeck, our Treasurer along with your membership subs.

Please only use this form if you are a new member of the 100 club or if you wish to purchase a second number. Existing members should use the tear-off slip from their renewal letter.

Recent 100 Club winners are December – Helen Lowe No. 134 , January - Jane Hall No. 8, February No. 63 who wishes to remain anonymous.

Research Project Melton SAC Club

Researchers at Goldsmiths, University of London are looking for volunteers to take part in a research project assessing aspects of memory processing in adults with ASD. Volunteers must be aged 18 years or over and have a formal diagnosis of High Functioning Autism or Asperger syndrome.

If you would like to take part, or would like any further information, please contact Laura Crane: by post to Laura Crane, Dept. of Psychology, Goldsmiths University of London, New Cross, London, SE14 6NW, by phone on 020 7717 2226 or by e-mail on L.Crane@gold.ac.uk

The Siblings Activities Club continues to provide an exciting range of activities for the brothers and sisters of children on the autistic spectrum.

In October we had a talent show and the children brought a huge variety of skills to show each other including musical items, football skills and Michael aged 6 brought his bike which he had just learned to ride without stabilisers. We finished with Lesley's delicious meringues, a real talent.

In November we enjoyed a torchlight walk in the woods at Barnsdale and in December a very lively Xmas party.

On March 21st we are bowling at RAF Cottesmore and swimming on April 26th.

Please phone Mo (see contacts list) for more information about the group.

Debbie's Books

In the last edition of Link-Up, I told you about a book I have written about my mother. It is called A Mother's Devotion.

I have also written a little book about what my life was like before I was diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome.

It is called My Life Story Part 1 - Living With Asperger Syndrome Before Diagnosis.

I have published both books on a self-publishing website called Lulu. The web address is www.lulu.com

They are in the Biographies and Memoirs section, but I am pretty certain that if you put in the titles in the search box it will come up.

They are available to buy should you wish to do so.

Any revenue I make will be going into my charity account that I have with the Charity Aid Foundation. This is so that I can from time to time give money to charity.

From Debbie Hudson

help!2

The help!2 Parent Programme will be coming back to Leicester on June 27th & 28th. We do not have a definite booking for the venue yet but are planning to cover :

Managing Anger in Adolescents with Aspergers

Wednesday 27th-a practical seminar focussing on communication strategies and dealing with difficult behaviours. This seminar is aimed at parents/ carers of children aged 10-16 with a diagnosis of Aspergers syndrome or Autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). Looks at dealing with your child's anger and some coping strategies.

Supporting the Siblings of your Child with an ASD

Thursday 28th. This seminar is aimed at any parents/carers who have a child with an ASD and additional siblings aged up to 18 and is about sharing experiences of how siblings of children with an ASD feel and cope, to talk about ways to support the siblings of children with an ASD, including how to explain the diagnosis to the sibling to look at and share relevant materials with each other.

Both seminars are free to parents and carers of children who have received a diagnosis.

They run from 10:30 to 2:30 and unfortunately no lunch is provided and people are invited to bring their own.

If people are interested could they contact Sian Figg Tel: 0115 847 3539 sian.figg@nas.org.uk

We will put you on our database and contact you about the location of the seminars

Sibling research

Do you have a son or daughter aged between 4 and 16 who has Autism?

If the answer is "yes", you may be able to help me with my project: looking at children's experiences of their relationship with their sibling with autism.

This project is about exploring sibling relationships where one child has Autism and one child does not have Autism. I hope to talk to children aged between 6 and 12, who have a brother or sister aged between 4 and 16 who has Autism. I want to find out what it is like for children to have a brother or sister with Autism.

My name is LUCY GILLATT. I am from the UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER. If your son or daughter would like to take part, I will be the person who interviews them. If your child would like to take part I will come to talk to you and your child, so that you can ask any questions or discuss any concerns you might have about your child taking part. If after we have talked this through your child decides to take part we can arrange a day and time for the interview.

I think it is really important to find out from child siblings about their experiences. I am very keen to hear their story. I am undertaking this project because it may help to find out about the best ways of helping siblings of children with Autism.

If you think your child may be interested in taking part, or you would like further information about the project please contact me on:

Lucy Gillatt 07810 375707

laeg1@le.ac.uk

Thank you for taking the time to read this. I hope to hear from you soon.

If anyone has any news, views or comments to make about their own experiences, good or bad, we will do our best to include them in the newsletter,

As a general rule, items are published in the next newsletter unless space does not permit, in which case, timebound or urgent items take priority. No items are edited for content unless space does not permit or the contents are potentially litigious. Other changes are made only with the permission of the author.

The views expressed in any article are solely those of the author and not necessarily those of the editor, committee or any other part of the Leicestershire Autistic Society.

Deadline for next edition: 31st May 2007. Items to Lindy Hardcastle see contacts list) – by e-mail if at all possible.

Leicestershire Aspergers Support Group Art Exhibition 2007

The Guildhall Leicester

Launch Party Monday
16th April 6 -7.30 pm

Phone Shelagh 2701074
for FREE tickets

Free Exhibition

Monday 16th, Tuesday
17th, Wednesday 18th
April 2007 11am- 4 pm

Anyone with a diagnosis of Aspergers Syndrome or an Autistic Spectrum Disorder is invited to submit two-dimensional artwork (e.g. collages, drawings, paintings and photographs) for the exhibition. We may not be able to exhibit all work submitted but we will inform all artists whose work will be displayed by Saturday 14th April 2007

All art work must be:

Two-dimensional, for example, collages, drawings, paintings and photographs.

Clearly labelled on the back with the full name, age and telephone number of the artist and the name address and contact details of the school attended.

Received by Friday April 6th 2007

Send your artwork to: Shelagh Wilson, 9 Knighton Park Road, Leicester, LE2 1ZA Tel: 0116 270 1074

We regret that we will be unable to post work back to you. All artwork will be available for collection from 9 Knighton Park Road by the end of May 2007. Please telephone Shelagh on 0116 270 1074 in advance to make arrangements.

NAS Research - Adult provision

The National Autistic Society is conducting research into the issues affecting adults with autism and their families. We have been asked to distribute questionnaires to our members with an ASD adult in the family.

The research will cover the whole of the UK. The questions are wide ranging, as we hope to cover every aspect of life. They cover diagnosis, employment, Local authority assessment and support, other support services, mental health and direct payments. There are questions for carers about support received and support required. The result of the questionnaire will help the NAS to identify gaps in provision and lobby for improvements.

If you can help, please phone or email Lindy (see contacts list and I will email or post a questionnaire to you.

New school for Leicestershire

I would like to introduce you to a new school for children with autism that we are opening in Burbage, Leicestershire in April 2007.

Sketchley Horizon is the fourth school for children with autism that we have opened within Priory Education Services group and it is our first dedicated Extended Day School which will provide education and care on a flexible basis depending on need, from 8am to 8pm.

The school is being specially designed for children on the autistic spectrum aged 8 to 16 years old with severe to mild autism and associated learning difficulties. They may also have moderate challenging behaviour as a result of their communication difficulties and their lack of social understanding which many parents/carers find difficult to cope with.

By providing specialist programmes beyond the normal school day, Sketchley Horizon will be a viable alternative to residential education for many children.

Our new Head of Education, Nick Thornber, joins us from The Leicester Hospital School in January and the facility is overseen by our Executive Principal, Vanessa Wilkinson who has successfully established our Tadley Horizon School in Hampshire.

If you would like any further information or to arrange a visit to the school please contact Katrina Waller on 07795447097.

THE SHEPshed ALLeY GROUP

"A Youth Club Especially For Special Young People"

Only 16 months ago, 18 young people arrived at a brand new youth club, all with very different needs, most not knowing anyone else at the club, and had adults to work with who didn't know each other very well either!

Sixteen months later, I now look forward to each and every Friday night, as I know a lot of the young people do. How far we have all come in such a short space of time! We currently have 23 members with the majority attending every Friday night. The figures are as follows:

Male – 14 Female – 9
Autistic Spectrum Disorder – 8
Cerebral Palsy – 4
Dyspraxia – 6
Other needs/learning difficulty – 5

The children have made friends, play games as team players, talk to each other and any visitors we have, are polite and friendly towards each other and are an absolute pleasure to know. On a more personal level, I have seen friendships developing between children who have ASD and others, who find this area of social interaction very difficult. The majority are able to sit together in a group and make group decisions on what they would like to do as a Youth Group.

They have already decided to re-name their group to something a little more 'snazzy' but without the special needs label!

The majority of our Friday evenings are spent at the youth centre playing board games, doing art activities, playing pool, and playing group games like football, scooter hockey and foam polo. We have also had movie nights, been to outdoor centres and played archery and canoed up the River Soar. We have been to a local family pub and had a meal out and we have been bowling.

A good sign that an activity has gone down well with the group, is their request to repeat the activity again and again. We have had repeated evenings cycling around the school sports halls with the 'Pedal Carts' which are always enjoyed and weekend afternoon sessions of wheelchair basketball and swimming.

The tuck shop area has become a popular place for chatting and discussions about youth club and school. Each week different members have a turn at selling drinks and snacks to their friends and handling money.

The confidence that has grown in each person is shown initially every night by the reduction in how many are escorted into the centre with their parents! The young people are dropped from their cars and walk into the club to greet me with a friendly handshake! If they are lucky, they have their friends waiting for them at the door, looking out for when they all arrive.

The group is for 11 (year 7) to 18 year olds who have physical, mild learning or social interaction difficulties. There is a particular emphasis on including those children who cannot attend, or who do not want to attend, a mainstream club at present due to their condition/need, but may be able to be integrated into one with the development of their social skills and abilities. We do not have many spaces open at the moment but each term another member turns 18 and has to leave us for the adult world! If you are interested in joining us as a volunteer or a member please call Rachel Wade on 0116 2209408 for further details

The Creation Station

New Creative Play Sessions for the under 5s

New venues & Exploration Sessions starting. Please call or email to reserve a place.

Mon in the Youth Centre at Rawlins community college, Quorn, Leics Sessions at: 10.00- 10.50

Starting soon: Tues The Scout Hut, Ashby de la Zouch, Leics Session at 10.30-11.20

Existing sessions

Wed: Loughborough Leisure Centre, Leics Sessions at: 9.55-10.45 11.10-12.00

Thurs: Mountsorrel Scout Hut, Leics Sessions at: 10.00 – 10.50 11.10-12.00

Fri: Edwalton, near West Bridgford, Nott's Session at: 10.00 – 10.50 11.10-12.00

Call Sarah 08456 443882 or see website www.thecreationstation.co.uk

High Functioning Autistic Spectrum Conditions and Adult Life

I am a Postgraduate Research Student in the School of Sociology and Social Policy at the University of Nottingham.

I am conducting a study to find out about the experiences of adult life for individuals with High Functioning Autistic Spectrum Conditions/ Asperger syndrome.

This study aims to explore the opportunities people have experienced in regard to choices and self-determination in the development of their lifestyles.

Participants will be asked to discuss their experience of adult life and consider whether the environments in which they live provide opportunities for self-expression and personal development.

By gathering the opinions of adults with High Functioning Autistic Spectrum Conditions/Asperger syndrome it is hoped that this study can develop an understanding of disabling practices, people's resistance to them and their desires for social change.

Experiences that have provided positive opportunities for choice and self-determination can also lead to the development of a greater understanding of the support needs of individuals at this stage of life.

This research is being carried out as part of my Doctorate. It is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust. An NHS Local Research Ethics Committee has reviewed the study.

I would like to interview people who are aged between 25-35, live with parents/carers in the Nottinghamshire area or neighbouring counties and have a High Functioning Autistic Spectrum Condition /Asperger syndrome.

Interviews can be arranged to take place online using email or in person.

Please contact me for further details or a response to any questions by using one of the following:

Joanne Raven – Postgraduate Research Student

School of Sociology and Social Policy, University of Nottingham

University Park, Nottingham NG7 2RD

Telephone: 07875 478550 (please leave a message and I will return your call)

Email: lqxjr@nottingham.ac.uk

Thank you for taking the time to read this advertisement. I hope you will consider using this opportunity to record your valued thoughts and opinions.

Free DVD from the NAS

The NAS has produced a DVD called Transporters, an animated feature designed to help children on the autistic spectrum understand the world of emotions. It looks brilliant!

Free copies are available to parents and schools. For more information and to order online go to www.transporters.tv or phone the NAS membership department on 0207 9033563 to order by phone.

27a Access Artspace

Based in the centre of Leicester in Belvoir Street, 27a Access Artspace offers excellent facilities and trained staff to help people with disabilities develop their artistic abilities.

Currently on offer for adults are courses in creative sewing, jewellery making and ceramics.

They also run Saturday morning family sessions.

For more information telephone 2229030 or email 27access@totalise.co.uk

Leicester and Leicestershire Combined Children's Charities

"New Look" Family Fun Sponsored Walk

Date: Sunday 29th April

Time: 10 am

Place: Western Park,
Hinckley Road,
Leicester

Route: Around
Braunstone Park

Distance: Approx. 5k

Suitability: Everyone!

How is the money spent?

All money raised for the Leicester-shire Autistic society goes towards supporting families of children and young people with ASD. In previous years we have helped to fund summer playschemes, subsidised outings and trips and helped to fund a conference and regular swim sessions. We have provided books for schools and joint funded a parent support worker and an art therapy group. In the future we plan to provide funding for another support worker, fund more swim sessions and support schools if requested. We will also fund and organise trips and outing as usual, as well as playschemes.

Please do consider walking this year: the walk is short so will take up less than half a day – not too onerous for most people. It's a good opportunity to meet people and get fit at the same time as raising important funds which support families like yours!

Please contact Gillian Wisdish for more information and an application form. If you would like to help on the day, marshals are needed. Contact Gillian on 0116 2876747.

Jigsaw coffee mornings

As usual, we meet on the third Wednesday in the month, during the school term only, at the Red Cross Family support Centre, Kenilworth Drive, Oadby. We meet from 10 am to 12 noon. Jigsaw pays for all drinks, so come and have a chat and meet some new friends (and old faces!). We have a library of books and lots of other useful information. The facilities provided by the Red Cross are very good, including their own toy library, soft play and toys for your young children to enjoy while you have a coffee.

Each month there is a speaker and we plan to have Jo Bingham from the County Social Services Disabled Children's team to talk to the group on Wednesday 21st March. Transport provided by the Red Cross may be available free of charge to City parents, please contact them on 0116 2710359. If you live in the county and would like to come to the coffee morning but have no transport, please ring Gillian on 0116 2876747 and I will try to arrange a lift for you.

We shall look forward to seeing you!

Jigsaw summer playscheme 2007

This year's scheme will be held for two weeks, Monday 23rd July to Friday 27th July and Monday 30th July to Friday 3rd August. It will be held at Guthlaxton College Wigston.

As usual it will cater for children aged 5-11 years who have severe autism and additional learning difficulties. The cost will be the same as last year, £7 per day including transport and £3 per day for families in receipt of a means tested benefit. Please see the separate flyer enclosed with this issue of Link-Up to apply.

The scheme also requires staff. If there is anyone over 18 who has experience of working with children with SEN, preferably ASD, please contact Gillian Wisdish on 0116 3876747 as soon as possible.

JIGSAW FREE PLAY !

BUMPI'S BIG ADVENTURE

MERIDIAN LEISURE PARK

on Wed 30th May 10.00-12.30

£2.75 deposit per child refundable on the day, including juice. Other refreshments available from the cafe

Carers go free and are able to attend to their children if necessary in the play area

Max age 11 or height 4'9

Please ring Dawn on 0116 2127003 to book a place

Thanks

Aspergers Syndrome Support group

Next meetings of the group:

Monday 12 March 2007

Paul Mansfield from the City Council will be talking about Direct Payments

Monday 16 April

No Speaker. Please note the change from the usual date because of Easter

Monday 14 May

It is hoped to be able to get someone to talk on physiotherapy and occupational therapy

Monday 11 June

Annual general meeting when we will be electing new members of the committee. We urgently need more parents and interested parties to volunteer as we would like people with fresh ideas to drive forward new ideas. There are only 4 meetings a year so it is not a lot in terms of time commitment.

We would like to thank the anonymous donor who gave the group a donation of £200.00. We cannot thank you in person but we are very grateful for such actions.

Currently we are debating how we should use any money we raise in funds and would be very interested to hear from parents about how they would like to see such money used. Ideas that have been floated are supporting a conference on diet in the management of AS. Another possible idea is to provide some form of respite for parents. We recognize however that this could be a very tricky one to manage. Please let Shelagh Wilson (see contacts list) know your ideas.

Christmas Cards.

We are extending the deadline for entries for this competition until Friday 6 April 2007. So those of you who have already submitted your designs please be patient and we will contact you by the time of the Art Exhibition. This will allow all budding artists to get some ideas together and will allow us to exhibit them in the Art Exhibition to be held at the Guildhall. See separate article from Janie Morgan Wood who is doing the bulk of the organization.

Spectrum Market Harborough

Well, with Christmas over we have launched ourselves into a New Year with much in store for all our families.

Half term saw two arts and crafts play sessions which were well attended and produced some great works of art! We have already booked two for Easter so put these dates in your diaries.

April 2 10-12 am April 5 10-12 am

As ever these will take place at St Nicholas Church Hall Little Bowden.

We have launched our toy/special needs aids library with the help of Liz Karim who is co-ordinating things which is proving to be very popular. It's easier to see if your child gets on with an aid before maybe investing in these.

Our first Workshop takes place on April 21st on Anger Management and hopefully there will be more to follow. It is to take place at Manor School Oadby with bookings by form (see sep flier) or contact Yasmin on hdelargy@doctors.org.uk. Many thanks to Karen Ferguson for her or-

ganisational skills and drive on this one. A fee of £20 for a morning of Anger Management advice from Luke Beardon from Sheffield. A most entertaining speaker I'm told.

A social skills group is under discussion for the summer. Could the lady who contacted me and left a message please ring again as I cant decipher her number. Sorry.

If anyone has any burning issues or other topics/areas they would like to see addressed in a workshop/conference let us know via Yasmin or Ali Lehman.

Yasmin Delargy 07763823282

Alison Lehman 01858 445886

Loughborough Group

We are a small group of parents who meet on the last Monday of the month at John Storer House at 7.30pm. We run a mixture of formal and informal evenings. So far this year we have had Kim Higgins the National Autistic Regional Officer visit us in February for an informal chat and discussion of our cases/problems and the development of services in the Loughborough Area and Lucy Gillatt who came to speak about her siblings research.

We have a steady flow of newly diagnosed and undiagnosed cases and are astonished at the lack of support and information that is given to parents and their children in mainstream education - we continue to try to support and inform parents at such a difficult time.

If any one is interested in attending please just come along for coffee and a chat or give me a ring

Carole Heubeck 01530 244790.

"Playing Together"

Playscheme and Activity Week at Rawlins College, Quorn

Lynda's Legacy Lives On!

In the last edition of Link-Up, it was announced that Lynda Lowe was leaving Autism Outreach for pastures new, leaving many of you wondering if her hugely successful Summer Playscheme would still be running. With Lynda operating closely as Consultant, ASPIRE (Autism-Specific Programmes In Real-life Environments) is delighted to continue offering the Playscheme, which should ensure continuity of staff and activities, and a smooth handover.

ASPIRE is a small team of highly experienced professionals in the field of Autism and Pathological Demand Avoidance Syndrome, with three partners - Viv Boulton, Denise Jones and Jonny Lakin - who many of you may remember as Sports Coach and Group Leader on the Playscheme for the last four years. If you are successful in securing a place on the Playscheme, you and your children will be invited to an informal ASPIRE "Meet and Greet" morning, which you will be informed of nearer the time.

This year, as usual, the Playscheme will cater for children and young people with an autistic spectrum disorder aged 5 - 16, plus their siblings and friends, and will run for one week in

the Summer. Please note that places are limited and requests for places will be on a 'first come, first served' basis. The dates and times are as follows:

Monday 6th August 2007 - Friday 10th August 2007 : 10.00am - 2.00pm

Due to the expertise of staff and the planned activities, it is anticipated that children attending will have the use and understanding of basic verbal communication.

Activities will include sports, swimming, trampolining, arts and crafts, music sessions, construction games, pool, table football, outdoor activities and a Magic Day with Splats Entertainment.

The cost will be £5.00 per day per child, with reductions for parents/carers receiving a means-tested benefit. Children will need to bring a packed lunch each day.

If you wish to receive an application form for each attending child (and sibling or friend), please telephone 0870 8966540 or e-mail aspirelifefskills@hotmail.co.uk, and leave your name and address.

Treasurer's report

We have had some generous donations to the Leicestershire Autistic Society for which we are extremely grateful - without these we would not be able to continue with the work that we do. The only regular income we receive is from the £5 membership subscriptions each year - these on their own do not cover the cost of printing of the Link-Up magazine never mind the increasing cost of postage!

Amongst the donations we have received this quarter has been £210 from Mrs Margaret Morris (Anne Lewis's mother) who for her 70th birthday requested donations to our group instead of presents and invited friends and relatives to a coffee morning with a raffle - this was an incredible amount to raise and far exceeded our expectations - many thanks to Margaret and her friends.

We have received donations of £185 in memory of the Late Edna Tate and £180 collected in memory of the late Mr Douglas Hall - I am always amazed that at such a difficult time when families have such a lot to cope with that they can still think of the society and donate money to benefit our children and families.

We also received a grant of £250 from the Hickinbotham Charitable Trust which was specifically towards the cost of the Saturday swimming sessions at Bosworth College at Desford and will pay for the April sessions. After April we appear to have exhausted all options of external funding and Jigsaw have agreed to pay the costs to enable the swimming sessions to continue for another year. We also had a donation of £50 from a member who had appreciated receiving Link-up and information over the years and wished to make a contribution towards the costs incurred.

Many thanks to everyone who has helped us fundraise - if you, your family, school or company are looking to raise money for a good cause - can I ask you to think of us as a possibility.

Carole Heubeck (Treasurer)

Reality

Please note

.... ***Reality's new contact number***....

.... ***!!! 07912850517 !!!***

....

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 next few meetings are: March the 8th (there will be no meeting in April.) May 3rd, June 7th and July 5th.

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, 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. This year's first trip will be to Drayton manor, following a donation to the group of £1,500, and will be taking place during the half term break in May. Reality is currently awaiting the responses to other funding applications and hopes to announce further day trips and events for 2007 and 2008 in later publications of Link-Up.

Reality held one of its now legendary charity evenings in November, which was again extremely well attended (packed!) and raised over £1600 for the group's activity funds. Many thanks to everyone who donated gifts for the raffle. The next event is on May 19th and the entrance will be £10 a ticket, which includes the famous endless buffet and a free raffle ticket with which you could, as Karen Ferguson did, walk away with a top prize (a £100 Lush gift box). Many thanks again to all those who also purchased additional raffle tickets.

Any raffle prize donations for the May event would be gratefully received as these are the life blood of charitable evenings. Without them voluntary groups like ours would struggle to exist!

The group took the children to see The Wizard of Oz in pantomime at the Haymarket on January 2nd (perhaps the ultimate entertainment for children who believe they are not part of the fabric of this society?)

Apart from Drayton Manor, other activities for 2007 are yet to be confirmed. Members of the group will be advised as to the dates and particulars of any outings as they become available.

Should you require any further information about Reality, or wish to be added to the group's database please contact Leisa Smith on Reality's NEW number....

..... 07912850517.....

or via e-mail at
leisa_smith3@hotmail.com

Castle Donington ASPECT group

We are still meeting regularly each first and third Saturday, during SPACE, and added two extra sessions during the February half term. As well as our usual crowd, we have welcomed some new families, including one from Long Eaton.

Information about SPACE has also been sent to Shepshed schools, including Hind Leys, as Castle Donington Community College and Shepshed High School both feed this school at Year 10.

Our next meeting is 17th March, when David Taylor MP, will be visiting us. He has shown great interest in the group from the start, when he was originally contacted.

We currently have a BTEC student working on a voluntary basis during SPACE, and would welcome anyone who is interested in working with ASD children.

We will also have extra sessions of SPACE during the Easter break. These are likely to be Tuesday 2nd, Thursday 4th and Thursday 11th April, all at the usual time of 10am - 12 noon. More information from the college on 01332 810528.

Research

We receive many requests from students for volunteer families to help with their research. While we support this, we must advise families to ask students to provide a supporting letter from their university to check that they are genuine, especially if they are asking for direct access to children or vulnerable adults.