

# Link ~ Up

No. 97 June 2007

## We need a treasurer

My previous appeal for anyone to take over my various roles when I retire next year met with a deafening silence. However, we have now made a little progress. Debbie Hudson has kindly offered to take over maintaining the databases of families and professionals and printing out the labels for Link-Up. Thanks, Debbie.

The other offer has come from our current, super-efficient treasurer, Carole Heubeck. Carole produces her village's award winning parish magazine and would be the ideal person to take over Link-Up – but only if someone else takes on the treasurer post. The treasurer need not attend committee meetings, or be closely involved with the running of the LAS: we just need someone with a knowledge of book-keeping and a little spare time. If you are interested, please phone Carole (see contacts list) to discuss what would be involved.

I am willing to go on running the 100 Club and updating the Adult Directory after I retire as my contribution to the LAS, so all we need now is a Chair, a Secretary and someone to run the helpline!

## Congratulations to Anne Lewis

Anne Lewis was nominated and included in the 2007 Loughborough Echo's New Year's Honours list and attended a presentation at Lynroys in Loughborough on March 2nd to receive her award in recognition of the work she has done on behalf of families who are affected by ASD. Anne works tirelessly to support LAS families and has been very successful in gaining appropriate provision for many children. What a star!

## Have you renewed your membership?

Thank you to all of you who have renewed your membership of the 100 Club for the year 2007-8. Welcome also to our new members.

The response to the renewal request was rather disappointing. At the time of writing, nearly 30 of last year's members have not yet rejoined. I hope that for most people this is an oversight rather than a conscious decision – if you are not sure whether or not you have re-joined, please give me a call – the LAS needs your support!

Recent winners are March - No 41, Bill O'Keefe, April - No 53, Stephen Lowe, May - NO 118 Michelle Hughes.

Lindy Hardcastle

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## AGM

The LAS AGM will take place on July 9th at 7.30pm at Lindy Hardcastle's, 31 Flaxfield Close, Groby

All members are welcome: please come along and help us plan the future for the LAS. Please phone or email Lindy (contacts list) if you are able to attend so that we know numbers to cater for.



# 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](mailto: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 e-mail [shelagh.m.h.wilson@btopenworld.com](mailto:shelagh.m.h.wilson@btopenworld.com) Website: [aspergerleics.org.uk](http://aspergerleics.org.uk)

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

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

Birchwood Support group: Contact Lesley Herbert 01664 565155

Castle Donington Support Group Contact Jane Sherwood 01332 850709

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.leicesterstride.co.uk](http://josh.leicesterstride.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. 07968 857598e-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 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](mailto:autismhelpline@nas.org.uk)

NAS Regional Office: Ester Vickers, Regional Coordinator, Central Region, Kim Higgins, Regional Officer, 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 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 1 5TS Tel. 0116 2417258

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

## After-school activities -who is responsible?

*One of our members raises some interesting questions about after-school activities.*

First let me tell you that my son is very lucky to go to a great school. He is the only child there with an ASD and they have made good provision for him; he has two teaching assistants who have him for two days each and alternate Fridays and a play facilitator who engages him in play with other children at play time and lunch break. He has a special "Smart movers" time to help his co-ordination etc and a split day so that he is able to work in two classes on both the things that he excels at and the things he needs extra help with. The children are very kind and helpful and he is very happy there.

Before the "Smart movers" classes began I enrolled him on an after school sports class run by an outside organisation, but as the organisers didn't seem to have anyone suitable to be my son's helper (as he needs lots of help with co-ordination and understanding team games and simple things like, who out of all these waiting faces are you supposed to "throw the ball" to!). On a short ten week course it may take eight weeks for them to gain my son's attention and confidence, so I volunteered to be his helper. This was just as well, because there was only one staff member to twelve children for three weeks and then different staff for the other weeks, one of whom didn't turn up. No-one informed me of the changes and although the staff were very friendly they didn't seem to have any understanding of the difficulties that a child with Autism has with language,

social skills, communication and safety issues. I had to leave for five minutes, first telling the staff member that my son was not to be let out of his sight because he may wander off. I returned to find my son down the side of the school heading towards the gate that had been opened, leading to the road (he loves buses and lorries) with no staff in sight - they had gone to fetch more balls.

The whole situation was made more stressful by the fact that I had to get a sitter for my other son who is severely Autistic. A kind friend helped for the first weeks but circumstances changed and she was unable to continue to have him, so I had to take him with me. I think you can all imagine the madness of it all, without me going into detail!

So the question is, who can we turn to for help with sitting one Autistic child or any young sibling, whilst we help our other child with much needed after school sessions? Other questions.....how do we know that if we leave our children in the care of staff that run these after school activities that they understand the way Autism affects children? Do we have a right to say they should come and meet the child before hand? What qualifications do I need to see and can I be certain of continuity? If it's an after school party/disco/film run by the school and I have no sitter for my other child, does my son have to miss out? I am sure you can think of other questions, I have received this letter from Leicestershire LA and thought that others in a similar situation may be interested in the legalities involved in after school provision. I realise that knowing the legalities still doesn't mean that we can be confident our children are getting the same quality of support that we would give them ourselves, but it's a start.

## The LA response

"The DDA would apply in these circumstances, I think, as follows:

The provisions of Part 3 of the DDA on goods facilities and services apply to this kind of situation. The primary liability for any disability discrimination would rest with the service provider. The school, will, however, have some responsibility also.

4.19 where the school has a contract with someone to provide a service at the school, the responsible body will need to ensure that the service is provided with due regard to the duties of the responsible body under Part 4 of the Act. Chapter 10 provides more details on contracts and duties under Part 4 of the Act. (The responsible body in this case would be the Governing Body of the school.)

10.19 responsible bodies are also liable for anything done by their agents, if done with their authority. [S58 (2)] that authority may be explicit or implied and may have been given before or after the act in question. [S58 (3)].

This seems to me to be the legal framework Whether or not there has been any discrimination on the grounds of disability would be for an SEN disability tribunal (in the case of a School Governing Body) to determine or the courts (in the case of a third party)."

*This seems to place a significant responsibility on schools' governing bodies to ensure that activities taking place on their premises are not in breach of the DDA - I wonder if they are aware of this? With more and more after school clubs, breakfast clubs and extra curricular activities being provided in schools by outside agencies this issue may affect many of your children- what is your experience? - Editor*

## New books from the NAS

We are pleased to let you know about recent titles added to the education section of The National Autistic Society's tried and tested books list:

### **Going on trips with an Asperger pupil**

Judith Colley, illustrations by Jess Abbo

How to plan and run a trip. Useful for schools and anyone planning to travel with a child with AS.

Published by The National Autistic Society, 2006, 20pp, A5, bklt, illustrated

(Code NAS 680) ISBN 1 905722 13 3  
£1.00 plus p&p

### **A different life: Rosie's story**

The NAS Autism helpline has received many requests from parents for a DVD that explains autism in child-friendly terms. This is it! Rosie is a girl with classic autism and this is her story, told through the eyes of her brother. Originally shown on Channel 5, this DVD is aimed at children aged 5-11.

Published by Eye Television, 2006, running time 23 minutes

(Code NAS 694) ISBN 1 905722 20 6  
£15.99 incl VAT plus p&p

### **What about me? The autism survival guide for kids**

A. Koutsis, G. De Clercq and R. Galbraith

It can be really tough living with a brother or sister who has autism. Join Spike the dog as he looks at autism and check out his survival tips to help

make life a little easier.

Published by The Wantirna Heights School, 2006, 32pp, A4, hbk, illustrated in colour

(Code NAS 675) ISBN 0 646459 31 7  
£12.95 plus p&p

### **How to help your autistic spectrum child: practical ways to make life run more smoothly**

Jackie Brealy and Beverly Davies

Jackie is a parent of a child with AS and also works as an LSA.

"Full of sensible and useful advice."  
Jane Asher, president of The National Autistic Society

Published by White Ladder Press, 2006, 182pp, pbk

(Code NAS 656) 1 905410 05 0  
£7.99 plus p&p

### **Social skills stickers**

Alison Schroeder

Small rewards for asking for help, letting others join in and lots of other important social skills.

Published by LDA, 2006, 96 full colour stickers

(Code NAS 669) No ISBN  
£3.50 including VAT plus p&p

<http://www.autism.org.uk/nas/jsp/polopoly.jsp?d=538&a=11153>

And finally for the rainy days:

### **NAS Umbrella**

Robust royal blue folding umbrella with NAS logo in white on four panels – a good way to flag up autism alert and to show support for The National Autistic Society.

(Code NAS 688) £8.99 including VAT plus p&p

Please send all orders to NAS distributor:

Central Books Ltd 99 Wallis Road  
London E9 5LN

Tel 0845 458 9911

Fax 0845 458 9912

Email [nas@centralbooks.com](mailto:nas@centralbooks.com)

Or order online @ [www.autism.org.uk/pubs](http://www.autism.org.uk/pubs)

## **Bosworth swimming**

Swimming Sessions at Bosworth College, Desford are specifically for families with children on the autistic spectrum between the ages of 4 and 18. Saturdays, 3.15pm to 5.30pm. Sessions are staffed by a qualified swimming teacher plus two lifeguards who are experienced in working with children on the spectrum. Their aim is to provide a safe, secure and non-threatening environment so that the children can enjoy themselves and parents can relax. Each participating family is asked to contribute £2.00 per session to help cover running costs of the project. Please contact Josh Wilson on 07950 379447. Email at [josh.leicesterstride.co.uk](mailto:josh.leicesterstride.co.uk)

## **Chess for ASD children**

We have been contacted by Paul Findley of the Leicestershire Primary schools Chess Association. Paul has had a lot of success in schools working with children on the autistic spectrum. He says they often take to chess very readily and can excel at it. Paul is willing to come and talk to interested groups about this. He can be contacted by email at [pauljulian@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:pauljulian@hotmail.co.uk).

## Treasurer's Report

I have been kept very busy banking all the membership fees for April 2007 to March 2008 and donations that we have received recently. If you have not yet sent in your membership form there is still plenty of time! I don't want to embarrass members and mention them individually (unless you indicate you are happy for me to do so) but it is appreciated when families send in donations to us as well as membership fees. It is also lovely when so many of you say thank you and how much you enjoy and look forward to reading Link-Up – I am sure that Lindy appreciates it, as normally you get so little feedback – just a sense of achievement when yet another magazine gets sent off to the printers and you have finished for another few months!

We have been very fortunate in that so many of our members think of us and would like to say thank you yet again to Margaret Freeman for another £175 she has raised with Avon Sales. Margaret has been a regular fundraiser since before I took over as treasurer in 2001 and I don't want to embarrass her by mentioning how much she has risen in just the time I have been doing the job! It is very much appreciated!

We have also received £185 in memory of the late Mrs Edna Tate, yet again I am amazed how families can be so very kind and think of us at such a difficult period – it is much appreciated.

We have also received from Leicestershire Charity Link a cheque for £160, following an application from David Hines which is towards the Saturday swimming sessions at Bosworth Com-

munity Centre on a Saturday afternoon. If you would like to have fun, exercise and enjoy meeting other families why not come along to the special sessions specifically for ASD family and friends. Whilst David has raised lots of money to enable us to continue at Bosworth we also need to thank Jigsaw who so far this year have contributed over £900 to keep the sessions running.

I have also received a cheque for £83 which was raised by the staff and customers at the Grapevine Café which is held in Castle Donnington Methodist Church every Thursday from 9 till 12 noon. This was specifically for the Castle Donnington LAS ASD group run by Jane Sherwood. Please remember if you wish to fundraise for just one particular group of the LAS that is not a problem and would be gratefully appreciated by all!

Carole Heubeck (Treasurer)

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 August 2007. Items to Lindy Hardcastle see contacts list) – by e-mail if possible.

## Living with Autism

The DIPEX Living with Autism project is funded by The Wellcome Trust and is based at DIPEX, a research unit within the Department of Primary Health Care, University of Oxford. [www.dipex.org](http://www.dipex.org) is a website that presents people's experiences of health and illness in a text, audio and video form. The aim is for the website to be a resource for people experiencing particular health issues, health professionals who may work with them, and a teaching resource for health professionals.

The Living with Autism project will involve interviews with people with autism or Asperger syndrome over the age of 16 and parents or carers of people (including children under the age of 16) with autism or Asperger syndrome. The information given in interviews will be added to the DIPEX website, with the hope that it will produce a comprehensive picture of people's experiences of living with autism or Asperger syndrome.

The researchers are keen to interview both people with autism or Asperger syndrome, or their parents and carers. Parents and carers can take part in interviews without their children being involved. They will visit people at home to conduct the interview and the transcripts will be sent to participants so that they can remove, amend or clarify points before the information is put onto the website. If you are interested in taking part in the Living with Autism project, or would like further information, please contact: Sara Ryan Tel: 01865289374 email: [sara.ryan@dphpc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:sara.ryan@dphpc.ox.ac.uk)

# Anger Management Workshop Organised By Spectrum Market Harborough

Report by Karen Ferguson

Over the past couple of years I have had many parents share their concerns & experiences about anger problems experienced at home, with their child with an ASD. Many of those of parents suffer in silence and are often grateful that their child can manage to hold it together most days at school or college only to receive a 'kick the dog' reaction when their child returns home.

Parents, including myself have attended parenting courses aimed at parents of neuro-typical children, i.e. children mostly without autism. Add other diagnoses into the equation such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and parents can be left with very difficult situations to cope with. Coupled with the fact that many families do not have the luxury of reciprocal community arrangements e.g. I'll collect your child on Wednesday and you can have mine next week. We often also do not get the mini break of our children attending local groups or sports activities, as many cannot access these social situations without additional support which can take an age to organise & which some clubs are unwilling to be proactive on. Whilst health, social services, education & the private sector debate whose role it is to support, many children on the autistic spectrum continue to miss out and remain

isolated and lacking in self esteem building activities.

I had been looking for some autism specific advice regarding strategies for managing anger at home for some time. I was very pleased when the Spectrum Market Harborough group agreed to fund a workshop & support on the day. Thanks also to Lindy for promoting this event.

We invited Luke Beardon; Senior Lecturer in Autism from Sheffield Hallam University to speak. He runs various courses at different academic levels, in autism. He started work for The National Autistic Society (NAS) as a Service Co-ordinator assisting in the development of a residential service for young adults on the autistic spectrum. He worked within this service supporting young adults with a range of complex needs, from those with high dependency needs and severe learning disability, to individuals with a diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome; prior to this he worked in the voluntary sector in the learning disability field.

Prior to the workshop I surveyed parents to get a very brief overview of the difficulties they were experiencing. Feedback about their ASD children included frequent violent outbursts, hitting, spitting, persistent anger towards siblings and refusal to eat. Parents and professionals both expressed interest and attended the lecture.

Luke gave a lively and interesting talk giving us food for thought. One professional commented "He has made us rethink about how we look after people with Autism".

Luke made some very valid and refreshing comments such as "people with Autism are Autistic", sounds obvious, I know. He went on to clarify that we are so busy trying to cure them, change them or make them fit in, we often forget that they are Autistic. He said that individuals need time to be Autistic and to be allowed to be Autistic. I discussed with him my own child who is currently having difficulty eating. He suggested that it is OK that my lad is currently eating on his own each day, as that provides a safe haven & the predictability he currently needs to cope with his day. Different children will need different sanctuaries within their daily life. Luke gave an example of a child with ASD with a compulsion to keep flushing the toilet. He commented that if the child cannot predict when he will be able to flush the toilet he may seek to do this repetitively, reinforcing the idea of timetables, structure & routine. He asked us to explore sensory aspects that may drive behaviour too. He also mentioned that within education, arousal and anxiety levels need to be low enough in order for children to learn.

The last part of the workshop was question time. Many parents have said that they would like another session, so we will definitely organise another workshop. Luke is also very interested in the sensory aspect of Autism & is known for his Velcro and other strange items bought in a myriad of shops, sounds interesting... but he knows what he is talking about. He is definitely someone who challenges some current schools of thought and we loved him for it. We will definitely all be going to any more lectures from him, one of the best speakers we have heard.

## New youth group in Ashby

There will be a new autistic youth group for children aged 11 plus, open to family and friends.

Ivanhoe Youth Centre, Ivanhoe School, North Street, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leics

New sessions on Saturday mornings 10am-12pm

June 9th and 23rd, July 14th and 28th

These will be trial sessions to see how they go. It will be an opportunity for the young people to say what they want. We hope this group will go in the direction the users want. At present the newly built club has the usual things- ps2, wide screen tv, pool table, football etc...

We are hoping to receive funding to enable the group to be free, if not there will be a nominal fee.

If you need any more information, contact Jane Hall 07870-688973.

## Next steps for young people

If you have a child aged between 14-19 with learning disabilities and you live in the Oadby/Wigston/ Blaby area, this open meeting is for you.

South Leicestershire College, Station Road, South Wigston

Monday 25th June 3.30 – 6 pm

Find out about local services and join in workshops. Games and videos for young people. Free buffet and drinks.

Phone Gretta Tharratt on 2885051 to book a place.

## Ewan learns Bee Keeping

Ewan aged 11, is currently fascinated with bees and honey production. He has been researching on the internet, drawing bees, estimating how much a bee keeping business would cost & generally chatting to everyone he meets about bees. I have learnt a few facts lately; did you know the honeycomb in a hive is actually made of bee's sweat, which they form into the honeycomb shape? Or that only the strongest males get to mate with the Queen during the wedding flight?

On Tuesday 15th of May 2007, Ewan visited the Brooksby apiary near Melton. The teaching apiary of the Leicestershire & Rutland Bee Keepers Association (L&RBKA) which has an on site workshop and lecture facilities. This is the centre for training of new and experienced beekeepers alike with queen rearing and summer lectures from the Regional Bee Inspector and others.

The chairperson, kindly opened the apiary especially for Ewan and I. We donned the beekeeping apparel, veil, overalls & wellies before inspecting the hives. Ewan was completely calm & fascinated with the activity, (I was concentrating on being calm, did not know whether or not bees can sense apprehension). Ewan was fortunate to spot the Queen bee, see a bee being born, use the smoker and see different types of hives and bees. The bees, we were informed were in a fairly good mood during a visit & not too phased by our close inspection, helped by the smoke. Apparently, if the weather is poor they can become unhappy. I had to admit the bees did look beautiful and gave off a pleasant aroma.

After the outside session we checked we were 'bee free' and ventured inside. We changed back into civvies & Ewan studied diagrams & discussed bee keeping in general.

Thank you to the Chair person of the (L&RBKA) Mr John Randle for giving up his time & sharing his hobby with Ewan. The L&RBKA website provides a wealth of information about bees. [www.lrbka.org](http://www.lrbka.org)

By Karen Ferguson

*We hear that Ewan has been awarded a Blue peter badge for his account of this visit - well done! Ec*

## Oakham/ Melton SAC

The Siblings Activities Club has enjoyed bowling at RAF Cottesmore in March and swimming in April. On May 23rd we are having a drama session exploring some emotions that our members have experienced in relation to their brother/ sister with asd. June 27th will be my last SAC meeting as I am relocating to Norfolk in September. After 8 or maybe 9 years as the group's leader it will be an evening tinged with sadness but I'm sure the bike ride from Whitwell to Barnsdale round Rutland Water and a picnic will make me feel better.

The group will continue on September 19th with a swimming session, with Kay Smith and Cathy Hogg joining Lesley and Dorothy. I think over the years we have entertained and hopefully supported about 35 siblings, our oldest now 19, 3 of them at university.

Mo Potter

*Many thanks to Mo for her years of service and also to Lesley James, SAC treasurer who is also standing down.*

# 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 next few meetings are: 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 and will be taking place on the 30th of May. Reality is currently awaiting the responses from it's members about annual passes for Twinlakes in Melton Mowbray. This venue has been extremely popular in the past and if there is sufficient demand should prove to be again. Further day trips and events for 2007 so far are day trips to Mablethorpe and Alton Towers. Other events for 2007 and 2008 will be in later publications of LINK-UP.

Reality held another of its charity evenings on May 19th, which was again extremely well attended and raised around £1000 for the group's activity funds. Many thanks to everyone who donated gifts for the raffle and those who entertained us for the evening.

The next event will be the pre Christmas one and the date for it will be published in LINK-UP. The entrance fee includes the famous endless buffet and a raffle ticket with which you could walk away with an excellent prize. Many thanks again to all of those who purchased raffle tickets, and congratulations to a 'Ms Smith' ... (hmmm!) ....who won the first draw to pick from the extensive range of prizes.

Any raffle prizes or other donations for any of Reality's charity events will always be gratefully received as these are the life blood of charitable evenings. Without them voluntary groups like ours would struggle to exist!

Should anyone 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 07912 850517 or via e-mail at [leisa\\_smith3@hotmail.com](mailto:leisa_smith3@hotmail.com)

# Early Bird Plus

The Learning and Autism Support Team run EarlyBird Plus Programmes. For parents/carers of children aged 4yr-8yrs who have recently recieved a diagnosis of asd.(Leicester City residents.) We are planning to run one in the autumn term.

If any parents/carers are interested in finding out about the programme there is an information session taking place:

Prince Philip House, St Matthews, Leicester

20th June 9.30.

Otherwise parents/carers are welcome to contact me.

Yvette Badger

Learning and Autism Support Team  
Special Needs Teaching Service  
Leicester Tel: 0116 2254800

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## THE SHEPSHED ALLeY GROUP

(Hind Leys Special Needs Youth Group)

### WANTED -A Leader for our very special Youth Group.

£14 per hour for 3 or 4 hours per week

The SHEPSHED ALLeY GROUP is a youth group with a difference. We are a group of 11-18 year olds with physical, mild learning or social interaction difficulties; for example Cerebral Palsy, Aspergers syndrome or Dyspraxia.

We meet every Friday night at Shepshed Youth Centre (Hind Leys Campus) between 7.15 and 9.15 pm, and occasional Saturday sessions. We enjoy coming to this Youth Group because we feel accepted and we do a wide variety of activities and get to make friends.

We now need a new Leader who will continue to make our Group a success. Rachel, our present Leader, will be having a baby and will be unable to continue as Leader after August for at least a year.

If you are interested phone John Walker 01509 506392 or email [nina@theolddell13.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:nina@theolddell13.fsnet.co.uk) . **The closing date is 15th June but late applications will be considered if Link-Up is late reaching you.**

# Aspergers Syndrome Support Group

The Group has continued to meet during the year on a monthly basis and next month on June 11 we will hold our Annual General meeting. At the meeting, which is very informal, we will be asking people to stand for membership of the committee. If you would like to become actively involved with the group and have ideas for improving the range of services we can offer parents please come to the meeting and let me know you would like to be elected. It is not the formal kind of process that companies have to go through but a friendly one where if you would like to contribute and have ideas about new activities please come and volunteer. We have a number of ideas for developing services for both parents and those with AS that we would like to develop but we do need more people to help us. There are only 4 committee meetings a year so it does not take up a lot of time.

We are experiencing fewer people attending meetings and believe this is for a number of reasons. Firstly, there has been a rise in the number of other groups that have been set up during the last few years allowing parents to attend support meetings closer to home. A number of these groups have been set up by parents who have younger children and have been very successful not only as support groups but also as a means of respite as they have arranged social activities for their children. Older parents however do not perhaps need

such activities and in any case have the Monday Club which plans to set up other Monday Clubs around the county. We are experiencing more parents who have older children coming to meetings than parents with younger children. This may be because younger parents may not be able to access evening meetings. Groups like Reality and Jigsaw in the city and Support Groups in the county cater for their needs at times when children are at school.

We have also published the Junior Directory setting out a range of support systems that parents can access as well as tips for managing the behaviour of their children better. The website allows us to publish details of up and coming meetings that parents might be interested in attending and items such as our Christmas cards and the Art Exhibition.

My thanks go to Beryl Lymer who single handedly set up the site and continues to manage it. Beryl has moved back to Lancashire and I would like to express my thanks for her help and support as a committee member of the Support Group. We will miss her drive and good sense. We wish her every success and happiness in her new house.

My thanks also go to Janie Morgan Webb who has managed the production of Christmas cards, which had proved popular and enabled us to raise funds. We will have a new range of cards later on this year.

Now that we have Directories of Services for adults and children I am able

to send out a pack of information to help new parents who have recently received a diagnosis of AS. Together with Jenny Fisher we continue to attend awareness training events for professionals to give the carers' perspective and help improve their understanding of the condition.

The Art Exhibition was very successful last month. Janie will write more about this in a future Link-Up. Thanks go to Janie, Mel Coley, Julie Harman as well as Evie Coley and Luke Harman. It was wonderful to see Trish Widdowson again.

If you want this group to continue please let us come and show your support at the Annual General Meeting on June 11 2007 at 7.15pm in the Buckminster Road Baptist Church Hall. Without support the group is likely to close. I would prefer not to stand as Chair again as I have recently become Secretary of the Monday Club.

**This group needs you!**

## Help2 Seminars

There are still a few places left on the NAS Help2 Seminars

Managing anger in young people with Asperger Syndrome Wednesday June 27<sup>th</sup> June 10.30 – 2.30

Supporting siblings of your child with ASD Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> June 10.30 - 2.30

The Half Time Orange Burnmoor Street Leicester

Contact Jill Steward - 0115 8473532

# Leicester and Leicestershire Combined Children's Charities

Sponsored Walk 29th April 2007

This year's walk saw a major change in regards to the route. Instead of the usual 15 mile routethrough Bradgate Pak, the route centred in Braunstone Park. The shorter walk of 5km suited young families as well as those with disabilities and the less mobile walker, The numbers (if walkers registered were very similar to last year, and all in all the day went very well.

There were some negative comments as to why the route had been changed so significantly. There were 2 main reasons for this, both for safety. Firstly, Sierra Radio were unable to provide radio cover for the check-points and marshals. Radio communication is vital to the safety of walkers of the longer route, to enable contact to be made with transport who can then pick up struggling or injured walkers. Secondly, the walk has always struggled to recruit enough marshals to help walkers cross busy roads and show them the way to go. We felt that to provide safety for walkers this year the route would have to be shortened quite considerably. May I say a very BIG THANK YOU to those who walked, sponsored or helped in any way on the day, whether for the Autistic Society or for any of the other charities who gain from this walk.

Even though the loss of the traditional walk route, and maybe the challenge to keen walkers has diminished somewhat, the reason for walking remains the same. The walk is still the main fund raiser for each of the 7 charities under the 'umbrella' of the Leicester and Leicestershire Combined Children's Charities and, so relies heavily on donations made by sponsors of the walk. This applies to the Leicestershire Autistic Society too. Please do support the walk next year, if you can. Thank you.

Gillian Wisdish (walk committee)

## Drayton Manor Trip

SUNDAY 2nd SEPTEMBER.

Please see the enclosed flyer for further details.

## JIGSAW AGM

DATE: TUESDAY 3rd JULY 2007.

VENUE: BROCKINGTON COLLEGE,  
MILL LANE, ENDERBY TIME: 7.30pm  
'TIL 9.15PM

Please note, there will be shortage of car parking spaces at the college, due to another event on at the same time. Please try the Leisure Centre opposite. If you would like a lift please contact Gillian on: 0116 287 6747 and I will try to arrange one.

Do come along and meet committee members and find out what Jigsaw have been doing over the past year.

## JIGSAW COFFEE MORNINGS

These have been well attended recently, and parents/carers have enjoyed an informal get together over a cup of coffee, or to listen to a speaker.

Over recent months, we have invited Kim Higgins of the NAS, to talk about the work of the NAS, Jo Bingham of Leicestershire Social Services Disabled Children's Team talked about Direct Payments, and Jenny Cornwell spoke about her new role as Jigsaw's parent-support worker.

We also had a visit from Elaine Cummins who talked about Person Centred Planning. In June, Karen Ferguson is hoping to come along and give us feedback on how the recent Anger Management conference went.

As usual we meet on the 3rd Wednesday of the month, at the Special Needs Family Support Centre, Kenilworth Drive, Oadby, Leicester, from 10 am until 12 noon TERM TIME ONLY. If you live in the city you may be able to receive transport to and from the Red Cross, please contact them direct an: 0116 2710359. If you live in the county and would like a lift please contact Gillian Wisdish on; 0116 287 6747 and I will try to sort one out for you.

We shall look forward to seeing you in June!

## Miracles to believe in Film Shows at Snibston Discovery Park, Coalville

We have just had a wonderful film show on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> June at Snibston Discovery Park at the Century Theatre where we saw 'Hoodwinked'. Because of the late notice we were not able to advertise it in LinkUp last time and relied instead on word of mouth and email. Surprisingly a reasonable number of families turned up for our first showing. Snibston have kindly donated us the use of the Theatre free of charge and the technician Keith Pare and his colleagues kindly donated their time and expertise as well, which is much appreciated. Whilst we, as a Charity pay for the actual film hire through fundraising, it means that we can offer the viewing free to families and it is especially customised to meet our needs, i.e. not as dark or as loud as the normal cinema.

This will be a similar format to the successful Phoenix Film Shows, which will continue.

Advance notice so that more of you can join us next time

Friday 24<sup>th</sup> August – 'Arthur and the Invisibles' 2pm

Friday 26<sup>th</sup> October – Film to be arranged – will confirm in next LinkUp

The staff were very welcoming, were briefed to expect us, and ushered us straight through to the Theatre, without having to pay the normal Park admission charges. Several families had lunch beforehand in the cafeteria as this was an opportunity for the children to start to relax and acclimatize

before being taken into the theatre. A couple of families had arrived at 10am to enjoy the exhibits before coming to the film show making a good day out.

The Theatre itself is a wonder. It is Britain's oldest surviving mobile theatre and was built between 1948 and 1952 in Hinckley, being used to provide shows up and down the country.

If you have not been to Snibston yet it is well worth a visit. The award winning attraction explores the impact of technology on our every day lives with over 90 indoor and outdoor interactive exhibits - lots of interactive displays for the children and a superb adventure playground!

If you have any enquiries about visiting Snibston call their information line on 01530 278 444. It is also worth noting that they let 1 carer in free with a disabled child.

### Woburn Safari Park

We are planning a trip to Woburn Safari Park in the October Half Term on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> October. Picking up in Leicester, the cost is £5 per adult with children being booked, but travelling free. This includes coach travel (toilet on board) and entry into the Park.

Combine the excitement of the Safari Drive with the fun of taking the Foot Safari round the Wild World Leisure Area. Meet the animals; enjoy the many demonstrations, keeper talks and feeding times. Children can let off steam in the indoor and outdoor play areas, on the swan boats and Railway... all inclusive!

For further information and to make reservations contact Carole Heubeck on 01530 244790

Sponsored by The  
British Red Cross and  
'Miracles To Believe In'  
Working in Partnership

## HALLOWEEN PARTY

27<sup>TH</sup> October 2007

Newtown Linford Village  
Hall

2 – 4pm for 5 to 10 age group

5 – 7pm for 11 to 16 age group

There will be a Bouncy Castle, Large Bouncy Slide

Plus food, and entertainment in the other room with a magician!

This is a special party for ASD youngsters and their siblings/friends.

Come in fancy dress (but no problem if you don't like to dress up!)

To book a place contact Ann Lewis Autism Specific Family Support Worker on the following number 07921 492431 and leave a message

A refundable deposit of £5 will be required to secure a place and avoid disappointment

Places limited – first come – first served

# Proposed Monthly Youth Club for 5 – 19 year olds in Charnwood

"Miracles to Believe In" a charity for children with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder and ASPIRE: Lifeskills, are currently working together to investigate the level of interest in establishing a monthly Youth Club in the Charnwood area, starting in September 2007.

Offering a range of leisure and recreational activities, such as Sports and outdoor activities (treasure hunts, orienteering), Arts, Crafts and Construction (art work, model-making), Biscuit and Cake Making and Musical Therapy, the Youth Club would be accessible to 5 – 19 year olds, and would specifically focus on creating and developing opportunities for play and social interaction. This will be a well subsidised Youth Club due to the high level of adults per children ratio and will meet the needs of children on a wide range of the spectrum

It is anticipated that the Youth Club would be held at Shelthorpe Primary School, Loughborough, on the last Saturday morning of every month, with 20 places (plus 5 for siblings) available on a 'first come, first served' basis. The cost of attending will be £10.00 per session, whilst for off-site activities such as swimming, bowling and visiting a farm/park, parents/carers will be requested to contribute £15.00, which will include transport.

If you would like to register your interest in this monthly Youth Club, please telephone Eileen, on 01509 506126 or e-mail eileen112@btinternet.com, leaving

your name and address, and we will contact you with an update on the project.

ASPIRE: Lifeskills and "Miracles To Believe In" thank you for your participation in this project, which, with your help, may start in September 2007.

ASPIRE: LifeskillsTel: 0870 8966540 (Voicemail)

Mobile: 0785 4918579 / 0785 4918575 / 0790 3137897

E-mail: [aspirelifeskills@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:aspirelifeskills@hotmail.co.uk)

## Loughborough Support Group

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

At our June meeting, we are delighted to welcome Maggie McCormack from Sinclair's Solicitors (in Birmingham), Leading Experts in Education Law who will hold a workshop evening for parents. This will deal with the complex issues surrounding the education of children with special needs. Please note that for this evening only, we start at 7.15pm prompt. This meeting is open to everyone who wished to attend (as of course they all are!). Please come along and enjoy an evening of useful information, informal chat and a cup of coffee or tea. For more details please contact Carole on 01530 244790.

There are no meetings in July and August due to the summer holidays.

In September we welcome Elaine Cummings, from Leicestershire County Council's Valuing People Team) who will be talking to us about Person Centred Planning. This is being used in schools for all students from the age of 13 onwards. She will be explaining what it is, what important changes there will be and what it will mean for us and our children..

In October, Charles Huddleston from CLASP – The Carers Centre will be coming to talk to us. If you do not yet get their Newsletter, which is well worth reading, please contact CLASP on 0116 2510999. CLASP also has a new website being launched soon - so keep checking [www.claspthecarerscentre.org.uk](http://www.claspthecarerscentre.org.uk) for all the latest information

November will be our end of the year Social Evening because I have severe doubts that anyone would want to meet on the last Monday in December – New Years Eve!

Please come along and join us for a coffee and friendly chat.

Carole Heubeck 01530 244790

### Phoenix Film Show

### Met the Robinsons

Wed 1<sup>st</sup> August 1pm

£ 2

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