

Hillingdon Autistic Care and Support

Registered Charity No 1066859

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HACS NEWSLETTER WINTER 2009

Dear Members

This is our first newsletter since we moved into our new premises. The relocation went well and took place over a couple of weeks as each day we transported various parts of HACS to the new premises in the back of our cars (I would never have believed that I could fit the Resource Library in the back of my car). HACS would like to thank Mr and Mrs Patel, members of HACS, for all the help they gave us transporting the larger items in their van and the general assistance he gave us throughout the relocation.

HACS facilitated a workshop in September with Sandy Teal, Head of the Wing Centre, Cambian Education, which was oversubscribed and a great success. The content of the workshop focused on inappropriate socio-behaviour, sexual issues and strategies and solutions. We hope to book Sandy Teal again as she proved to be a very interesting speaker. Currently we are securing speakers for our conference which will be held on 8th May 2010 and at present we have booked Wendy Lawson.

Members and their families enjoyed the Halloween fun day and Christmas party. We also arranged a fund raising Christmas shopping trip to Canterbury which everyone enjoyed. Unfortunately, we had to cancel a number of monthly support meetings due to insufficient numbers attending. This is an issue we will be looking at when arranging our events for 2010 and we may decide to alternate monthly support meetings on an evening and daytime basis. We would appreciate any feedback from members on events and support meetings and all new ideas would be appreciated. We will be sending out a Dates for Your Diary in the New Year.

Louise Underwood - Editor

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NEWS FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Members,

With Christmas and the New Year drawing close, it is a good time to reflect over the past year at HACS and celebrate all of our achievements. We have been fortunate to secure new premises which will enable us to provide more services for families. I would like to personally thank Councillor Raymond Puddifoot, Leader of Hillingdon Council for his hard work and determination in finding us a new home. The past year has been somewhat difficult in finding premises as there is such a shortage of building within the Borough. We are fortunate to have secured office space for up to eight members of staff, two purpose built classrooms which have access to outdoor space which has been designed for young children, a conference suite where we can host small workshops. As Louise said in her letter, we will be contacting you early 2010 with a list of dates for your diary.

There is not enough space for me to thank everyone who has contributed to our organisation over the year. I would like to especially thank the Trustees, staff and volunteers for all their hard work and support. During our playscheme week, it was especially rewarding to see some of youth that have attended the playscheme during past years, return in a volunteering role to assist the staff in the Little Gems Group. Given the fact we are in a time of recession, we are delighted to share that we have received ongoing support from Barclays Bank PLC, Hasbro and the Youth Opportunities Fund. My thanks especially to Nicholas Smith, Community and Events Manager for Barclays Bank PLC. and Chair of HACS, for supporting so many events over the year.

At the AGM Meeting two new Trustees were appointed to the Board. On behalf of the Trustees, I would like to extend a very warm welcome to Pam Sicklemore and Fliss Davenport. Pam has over 30 years experience in working in the field of Autism. Fliss is a specialist Teacher and a parent of a young boy with Asperger Syndrome. We are very fortunate to have a Board of Trustees who bring with them excellent range of skills from Finance, HR, Legal, Educational background and, most importantly, an understanding of Autistic Spectrum Conditions, and are committed in making a difference for people affected by Autism.

On a positive note, I am delighted to share that the Trustees of HACS have agreed to fund a part time Family Support Worker. The Hillingdon Community Trust has agreed to match fund this post. In the New Year we will be advertising for two part time Family Support Workers. We hope to have the successful applicants in post by February 2010.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to wish each and every one of you a very Happy Christmas and Prosperous New Year. To those of you who sent messages, cards when we moved, and for the Christmas period, on behalf of the staff, I send a very big thank you.

Antoinette Mullally

FUNDRAISING NEWS

Our thanks to The Chimes centre management for their kind donation of £460. This money was awarded to us for multi cultural resources for our out of school holiday playschemes and library resources.

We will be holding our Summer Ball on Saturday 12th June 2010 at the Radisson Edwardian Hotel, Bath Rd, Hayes - final details to be confirmed. If you would like to get involved by way of volunteering to contact local companies for sponsorship, donating raffle prizes, offering/arranging auction bids please contact Louise at HACS.



BARCLAYS PLC

Our thanks go to Barclays Bank PLC, especially Nicholas Smith, James Holland and Mark Harfield, for their continuous support matching £ for £ and sponsoring various events



THANK YOU

HACS would like to say a BIG THANK YOU to our regular Christmas Wrapping volunteers, Emma Aldons Blackman (and family), Christine Black, Alison Milne, Fliss Davenport, Maggi Gaylor, Samantha Lomasney, Ross and Mark Baillie, Stacey Moore, Sandra and Rita Ross, Claire George, Alex Batters, Adrianna Cahrs, HASBRO and anyone else who helped. The amount raised will be matched £ for £ by Barclays PLC

CHRISTMAS

Christmas can be very stressful especially for people with an autistic spectrum disorder as it often means there is a change to routine. The National Autistic Society has produced a handy guide for parents and carers and this can be accessed via <http://www.autism.org.uk/christmas>

Tips include:-

Make a schedule - this visual timetable can be used to say when the Christmas tree and decorations will be put up, what happens on Christmas Eve and even when the Christmas decorations are coming down. For my son the main focus will be when the Christmas special of Doctor Who is on. I also found that in my household Advent calendars are very useful in marking down the days until Christmas

Involve your child in Christmas activities - you may wish to give your child a particular task i.e. decorating the tree or arranging a small Christmas area. This will help them feel more involved and hopefully anxious.

Sensory issues - if your child has sensory issues and finds the lights, smells etc distressing then a Christmas free area can be set aside in the house.

Christmas presents - children with an ASD often do not like surprises and it may be that they prefer to be given presents that are not wrapped up or if they want to partake of the festivities then they are wrapped in clear wrapping. I have learnt to resist the urge to buy "surprises" for my child and he is happy as long as I stick strictly to the Christmas list he has written.

Be prepared - before giving presents ensure they have batteries installed, all excess wrapping, tape and ties are removed so the present can be played with immediately it is unwrapped. I myself have been very stressed spending a good 30 minutes trying to remove security tags, wire ties, install batteries and then read instructions whilst trying to deal with a child who is desperate to play with the present.

Christmas shopping - if possible avoid shopping with your child but if it unavoidable a visual aid such a shopping list will help. Each shop can be ticked off the list by the child. Alternatively, I made credit card sized cards with the name and logo of each shop, these were then inserted in order, into a credit card wallet. My son then was able to refer to each shop in order and the last card was always a treat to look forward eg a trip to his favourite for a drink and cake.

Full details can be obtained via the link <http://www.autism.org.uk/christmas> or if you have difficulty accessing this please contact HACS for a copy.

AUTISM AND EMPLOYMENT



WHY A FIRM WANTS STAFF WITH AUTISM By Jane Dreaper, Health correspondent, BBC News

A computer company in Denmark which has made huge strides in employing workers with autism is expecting to begin work in the UK soon. Specialisterne was started by a Danish man whose own son has autism. Thorkil Sonne now employs more than 40 people with autism. He is finalising plans to set up a branch in Glasgow in the coming months. He hopes to hire 50 workers in the first three years of operating in Scotland.

Autism affects about 1% of the population across Europe. According to the National Autistic Society (NAS), people with the condition say a job is the one thing that would really improve their lives. And yet a survey by Autism Europe shows 62% of adults with autism do not have any work at all.

Difficulties - I visited Specialisterne and met Soeren Ljunghan, 42. He has a form of autism called Asperger's Syndrome. It gives him focus and persistence - traits which have helped him become a champion weight-lifter. But autistic people find social interaction and unpredictability difficult. Soeren endured a spell of unemployment. He said: "It was a living hell. I kept going to job interviews but coming second and wondering why I wasn't chosen. It was very stressful. I began to question whether I would work again." At Specialisterne, Soeren works 25 hours a week testing software. He said: "I like the work because I know what to expect from each day."

The company's founder, Thorkil Sonne, recognises his staff with autism need a quiet environment and fixed routines. Given the right conditions, they excel at technical tasks. Robots and Lego models are used to test their skills. Thorkil Sonne said: "People come to me who've had difficulties in the labour market and got depressed. They're like computers that need re-booting. I see them grow in self-esteem. It's the most motivating part of my work and a magical moment for me, as the father of a boy with autism." Thorkil's son Lars was diagnosed at the age of three. He is now 12.

Fulfilling lives - Thorkil told me: "I read up about the condition - but there were too many books describing what people can't do. And yet my staff are able to go and work at the premises of our customers. I'm so proud. I didn't think that would be possible when I started the company five years ago."

The experience in Denmark shows autistic workers are an untapped resource. Politicians in the UK are developing plans to help adults with autism lead more fulfilling lives. Special strategies have been published in Wales and Northern Ireland. A bill that will provide the first specific legislation on autism for England is making its way through Parliament at the moment, with good cross-party support. It will lead to formal guidance for local authorities and the NHS about how to help adults with autism. Charities say this cannot come soon enough.

CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS AND MEETINGS

Autism Education Trust

The Autism Education Trust invites you to join them at one of their FREE events this Winter. Part of a series of events focusing on the theme 'Transition', the 2010 programme is as follows:

28th January 2010 - Savoy Place, London

9th February 2010 - Radisson SAS, Birmingham

11th February 2010 - Jury's Inn, Newcastle

25th February 2010 - Ramada Jarvis Hotel, Hull

9th March 2010 - Hilton Brighton Metropole, Brighton

The events are aimed at all those working in the autism education sector, the schools workforce, local authority representatives, health professionals, adults and young people with autism and their parents and carers. The theme is 'Transition: practical steps for moving forward' and each event will include a range of speakers and practical seminars.

Attendance is free of charge (including lunch and refreshments) but places must be booked in advance. To book your place please visit www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk to download a booking form. Alternatively you can telephone us on 0115 911 3367 or email aetevents@nas.org.uk.

Please feel free to forward this invitation to anyone that you think may also be interested in attending one of these forthcoming events.

If you would like to find out more about the Autism Education Trust please contact us on 020 79235754 or visit www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk.

Autism Oxford

Asperger's syndrome - The Inside Story

Featuring Marc Fleisher and other young people with Asperger Syndrome, the afternoon will give invaluable insights into living life on the Autistic Spectrum.

Sat 30th Jan 12.15pm to 5pm at Headington School, Oxford OX3 7TD

The cost for parents/carers is £20

To book a place please call 01844 353292 or email info@autismoxford.org.uk

HACS LIBRARY SERVICE

The latest addition to the library is a very useful book called "Ten Things Every Child With Autism Wishes You Knew". If you wish to borrow this book please contact Louise at HACS.

Ten Things Every Child With Autism Wishes You Knew by Ellen Notbohm

When "Ten Things" was first published as a magazine article by Ellen Notbohm, it drew rave reviews from around the world. "This piece should be required reading for all social service workers, teachers, and relatives of children with autism," wrote one. Another expanded its impact: "Priceless. It should be given to every organization that services children, including schools and churches." Still another captured the level of enthusiasm people have when they read "Ten Things": "It screams wisdom throughout every word and sentence."

The much-demanded book, *Ten Things*. . . hits a homerun as well because it combines the author's first person experience with the perspective of the child, written in the child's voice. Chapter headings tell the story:

1. I am first and foremost a child
2. My sensory perceptions are disordered
3. Distinguish between won't (I choose not to) and can't (I am not able to)
4. I am a concrete thinker. I interpret language literally
5. Be patient with my limited vocabulary
6. I am visually oriented
7. Focus and build on what I can do rather than what I can't do
8. Help me with social interactions
9. Identify what triggers my meltdowns
10. Love me unconditionally

Ellen Notbohm characterizes the "Ten Things" as "signposts along the way (on) a journey towards a productive, independent adulthood" but they also inform anyone around a child with autism about its most basic elements. Anyone with such a child shouldn't buy one book: they should buy as many as they can, to give as gifts of understanding.

CHARITY WALK ALONG THE INCA TRAIL TO MACHU PICCHU, PERU

On the 1st May 2010 Mike Gingell and Jim Jay will take the famous Inca trail to the legendary site of Machu Picchu in Peru. It is something that both of them had thought about doing for a long time. This year after watching Chris Moyles do the Kilimanjaro charity walk, they decided that this was the time to do it. After booking places on the trek, it was decided that they would also raise some money for charity. It was decided that the charities would be the Hillingdon Diabeticare unit and the Hillingdon Autistic Care and Support (HACS).

Although it may seem like a 13 day holiday they will in fact be working. Part of the schedule for this trek is working for 3 days on a refurbishment project for a school in Cusco. After their 3 days work they then have to trek for 4 days up and down mountains, at fairly high altitude, finally arriving at Machu Picchu.

Mike is chairman and chief instructor of Grange Judo Club. The club is based in Hayes Rugby Club in Kingshill Avenue, Hayes and runs classes 4 nights a week. About 8 years ago Mike started a Special Needs class on a Thursday evening for people with physical, behavioural and learning disabilities. Since then it has grown in popularity and has over 20 members. He is helped on the mat by his wife Lesley, his son Ian and some of the senior members of the club as well as some of the parents, carers and support staff of Hillingdon Manor School.

Jim is an aerobic/fitness instructor and personal trainer. He holds classes at Barnhill Community Centre, Hayes on Monday evenings and works in a Spa Hotel as a fitness instructor. He also runs personal training sessions in the Hayes and Cotswolds areas for individuals.

We would like to thank you for sponsoring them for this event and are sure that it will be appreciated by both charities.

The Family Commission Survey

"We think that families are important! That's why we are undertaking one of the biggest consultations ever to find out about family life today and the kind of help families like yours need to get ahead. It's all part of our new Family Commission which I am chairing. Over the next year we will be talking to families around the country and looking at ways that Government and all of us can help. We will launch our recommendations next year and will be urging Government to take action. Please tell us about your family and help put families in the spotlight everywhere."

Esther Rantzen CBE, Chair of The Family Commission

See Link <http://www.thefamilycommission.org.uk/about.html>

Events organised by DASH

Supported by Hillingdon Community trust

- Monday:** Drama, 1pm to 2:30pm. Beck Theatre, Grange Road, Hayes.
Arts and Crafts, 7pm to 9pm. Minet Country Park Springfield Road, Hayes.
- Tuesday:** Keep Fit, 2pm to 3pm, Barnhill Community Centre, Ayles Road, Hayes.
- Wednesday:** Activities 4 All meeting 1:30pm to 3:30pm, Crown Centre for the Deaf, Chestnut Avenue, Yiewsley.
- Thursday:** Yoga 1pm to 2:30pm, Christchurch, Redford Way Uxbridge.
Football 3pm to 4pm, Hayes Stadium, Judge Heath Lane Hayes.
- Friday:** Multi Sports Session, 12:30 pm to 2:30pm Hayes Stadium, Judge Heath Lane, Hayes.
- Saturday:** Swimming 5pm to 6pm , Highgrove Pool, Eastcote.
- All enquiries to Eugene at DASH 020 8848 8319**

Multi Sports Club

Multi sports club for young people with special needs age 8 to 19 years. Activities include trampolining, football, basketball, boccia and kurling. Please bring a parent/carer and siblings are welcome.

Every Saturday 12noon to 1.30pm at Queensmead Sports Centre, South Ruislip

Contact Yolanda Edwards on 01895 or email yedwards@hillingdon.gov.uk

USEFUL INFO

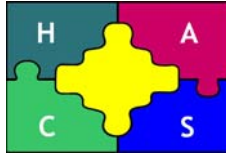
Toilet training - free charts with a wide range of styles - Dora the Explorer, Thomas the Tank Engine, Cars, girl's charts, boys charts etc. See following link:-

<http://www.pottytrainingconcepts.com/CTGY/FREE-Potty-Training-Charts.html>

Information and application form from www.ceacard.co.uk. If you do not have access to the internet please contact Louise at HACS who will apply on your behalf.

www.thethomascentre.co.uk or contact 01507 363 463

www.scoutbase.org.uk/hq/holhomes/index.htm or by phone 0208 433 7290 or 0208 433 7291.



Hillingdon Autistic Care and Support

Registered Charity No. 1066859

As from Monday 7th December 2009

H.A.C.S. has relocated to new premises.

Our contact details are as follows:-

HILLINGDON AUTISTIC CARE AND SUPPORT

DUDLEY PLACE

OFF PINKWELL LANE

HAYES

MIDDX UB3 1PB

