



Special Matters
Staffordshire
Moorlands

Newsletter February 09
Support Group for Parents



WEBSITE
J's PLAY CENTRE
PARENT STORY

Welcome to you all!!!

It's been a while since the last newsletter. Hope you all had a good Christmas and New year. It does seem a long time ago now. As you can see we have our website up and running so please have a look. We have some activities coming up over the next few months.

If there is anyone who needs a chat on the phone or a home visit please do not hesitate to contact me either by phone, email or texting and I will phone you back. Please inform me of any activity days or support groups that you and your family are interested in and would like to see happening over the next year.

The next newsletter will be out just before Easter, if anyone would like to put something it please contact me on 07966 053040 or email faith.asplin@staffordshire.gov.uk.

Faith

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SPECIAL MATTERS WEBSITE

Our website is now up and running. Over the last few months we have been working to get all the information together. On the website you can look at the latest newsletters, activity days and much more. There is a section for parents and children to have a look at. On the parents section there are stories from other parents. Also we have been talking to Contact a Family so they have a section where you can link up with other parents from around the country who have children with the same condition as your child and have a chat on line with them.

We have a gallery section with some photos over the years on the activities days. Also there is a links page with information which might be useful.

Please have a look and let us know if there is anything else you would like to see on there. We shall be updating the site every three months.

The web address is www.specialmatters.co.uk

Special Matters

Part of the Moorlands
Rural Children's Centre

JJ'S Sensory Play Centre

JJ's sensory play centre is a unique it has a soft padded mutli- sensory facility, sensory equipment and encourages all children with or without special needs. Please have a look at the website to see what they can offer for your child/ren. Their will be a light snacks or please bring your own food if children have special dietary requirement. We are limited to a number so please phone the office to book your place by the 12th February. A donation towards the day of £2 per a family.



**Wednesday 18th February
11.15am - 1.15pm**

www.jjsplaycentre.co.uk

Cheadle Children Centre

In April we are having a activity day in Cheadle Children Centre. There are two rooms available, one with lots of toys/puzzle etc, we will have some crèche team doing some messy art and craft, the sensory equipment will be there. Hopefully by then the weather will be warmer that we will be able to go outside and play with the parachute which we have a lot of fun with. Lunch will be provided for you. So please phone the office or me to book your place by the 1st April.

**Friday 17th April
11.00am - 2.00pm**



Support Group in Leek

Over the last year the Leek support group as not been very well attended. So on the 17th March it will be the last one. We will meet at Homestart starting at 7.30pm. I will bring some food with me. I will have with me the documentary/drama for the DVD which I will be showing. We are looking at starting something in the day time based in Leek. If you have any ideas for daytime support group please contact me.

**Tuesday 17th March
7.30pm**

Support Group in Cheadle

Cheadle support group is having Hilary McFadyen from Parent Partnership a project called Skillshare. Skillshare provides workshops and information days for children with additional and special needs. Hilary would like to come along and talk to Parents about what workshop you would like to have in the North Staffs area. Please come along and have your input. Everyone is welcome to come along and have a cuppa and a chat. We meet at the Cheadle Children Centre, The Avenue, Cheadle.

**Monday 2nd March
7.30pm**

Parent Story

My name is Sarah and I would like to tell you about my little girl Megan, she is nearly 7 years old and we live with Tim (Megan's Dad) and Sydney (Megan's Brother) who is 19 months old.

Megan was born (full term) weighing just 4lbs and 15ozs, she was so tiny that her baby grows and nappies just hung off her frail little body. Just hours after her delivery she suffered a fit and turned blue, she was taken down to the neo-natal unit where she spent her first week. That's when we found out that she had a rare chromosome disorder written as "del 13 (q31.2) (q32) which means that part of her 13th chromosome is missing. The specialist hadn't seen this before and the prognosis was that they didn't know if she would be able to eat, walk or talk properly. How do you bring a perfect, gorgeous looking baby home while your heart is breaking because there's something wrong?

As the months passed she started to gain weight (very slowly) and she did start hitting the small milestones—smiling, holding her head up and even eating solids! Then her development started to slow down—she didn't cut a tooth until she was one, she started to walk when she was two and there was no sign of any words. When she started nursery she used to bite other children out of frustration of not being understood, that's when she started Speech and Language Therapy. Potty training never worked and when she started mainstream school she still had accidents every single day, that's when we became aware of her other problems, she couldn't concentrate or communicate with her peers or teacher so the SENCO teacher was introduced to us.

Megan was issued with a statement of Special Educational Needs in October, it has taken a long and hard time to gain as so many professionals are involved with her but at least she is getting all of the help that she needs. The school nurse has set up a care plan so that she is taken to the toilet every hour and changed when necessary, so those little accidents aren't a problem anymore.

We now receive Disability Living Allowance and Cares Allowance because Megan has no sense of danger on roads, or strangers or dangerous situations and because of her global development delay she has to be supervised around the clock (even at night because she wakes most nights).

Despite all of her problems, Megan is a very happy little girl who had brought a whole new meaning to the word love to us, she touches every bodies life who she meets with her buddy personality. Most of all we love her and we wouldn't change a single thing about her even if we could and we know that her prognosis isn't good so everything that she achieves is a bonus.

Sarah & Family

Family walk

The walk is suitable for wheelchairs and pushchairs. Please remember to wear suitable footwear. If anyone needs help with transport, when booking in please mention it to the staff, also can you please mention that you are from Special Matters. The next family walk is on the **Monday 6th April** at **Oakamoor** starts at **10.00am - 2.00pm** so please bring your picnic along and have a great time. Please phone the office to book your place.



The Trip to Gladstone Pottery

Tim pushed through the turnstile and quickly made his way towards the brightly lit gift shop crowded with souvenirs, ceramics and a special collection of friends from Special Matters. The excitement of the children was obvious, clearly relishing their luck of being allowed to wait in a shop, and desperate to purchase spooky toy spiders and squishy eyeballs for Halloween. To the obvious relief of the adults it was not long before we were shown upstairs where someone explained we could make a pot, or paint a plate art deco style. I quite liked the idea of following in the footsteps of Susie Cooper to delicately decorate a plate, or copy Clarice Cliff by designing bold patterns of bright orange and flaming red, but Tim was far more attracted to the idea of getting messy with clay and opted to make a pot. Thoughtfully armed with plastic aprons we were ushered into a room filled with a large rectangular table. This had been set with plates of hunks of deep grey clay, next to wooden boards and jars filled with brushes stuck in a thick grey soup. At the far end a lady in a white coat began to demonstrate how to tear chunks from the clay clumps, roll these between the palm of the hands to make a small sausage and then placing the sausage on the board use the palm of both hands to roll the sausage backwards and forwards until it became a long thin sausage, the same length as the width of the board. (Don't worry if you are struggling to make sense of this, because you're not alone.

I never quite got the hang of it!). We were then shown how to take each carefully rolled sausage and curl it neatly around the base of a tall thin cylinder. We had to repeat the process until the cylinder was completely covered in neat rings of clay. Tim and I diligently set to, doing our best to imitate the carefully constructed



demonstration pot, but as each length of clay rolled off the board resembling a chipolata sausage at one end and a thick pork butchers sausage at the other, I quickly realised that our handmade creation would never be heralded as a Staffordshire masterpiece on the Antiques Road Show , and although I did search under the table, I was unable to find one we could produce as an example of one made earlier. However, it didn't matter at all, as Tim, thoroughly enjoying squashing and rolling the clay, as I repeatedly tore off chunks to keep up the pace of production, exclaimed, 'That's it Mum, team work!' By the time we had reached the top of the cylinder the old adage of practice makes perfect had begun to come true, only to discover that the lady had already moved on, and was gradually pressing her fingers up and down the clay to smooth out each perfectly formed ring! After this we were shown some techniques on how to create shapes, which we could stick on with slip (liquid clay) to make faces. Tim had great fun using a garlic press to create spaghetti strings of clay, which we used to create clumps of hair and eyebrows to create a very scary looking pot



With hardly a moment to catch our breath and pat ourselves on the back we were told we could design a plate after all. We had just half an hour to complete the task, but the children were unperturbed and fired by their own imagination drew fantastic outlines and eagerly dipped brushes into palettes filled with bright poster paints to colour them in. Towards the end the lady supervising the production got alarmed that we wouldn't finish and the scene descended into the organised chaos of a Greek restaurant, as frantically dashing to and fro and balancing armfuls of plates, she rushed to collect the freshly painted plates, place them in racks to dry and deliver the dry versions back to the children, so they could draw black outlines around each coloured shape, to reproduce that authentic art deco look and provide the perfect finishing touch.

After this we quickly made our way to a private room for lunch. Famished by so much creativity we devoured huge plates of sandwiches and trays of gaily decorated fairy cakes, emptied the pots of tea and coffee and jugs of orange and red juice. Amazingly the museum had entrusted us with some of their best china and so we felt like very important guests.



Having dined like lord and ladies (except perhaps for the crisps slipping off plates, no I'll repeat that, having dined like lords and ladies!) we were given the freedom to roam the museum and discover its historical delights at will. The bravery of this decision soon became apparent as Tim, hot on the trail of the other children, chased through an intricate network of low rooms and cobbled yards and passageways, suddenly emerged into a room where they were offering the opportunity to throw a pot. Behaving in a very determined and grown up manner he patiently queued and paid to have a go. At last it was his turn and a gleeful look in his eye revealed a mischievous ambition to spin the wheel at speed and splatter clay everywhere, but especially over his mum! It was then to find the others, some of whom were on a treasure hunt searching for plaster skulls hidden all around the museum, which when found would reveal a letter and clue to spell a word and the opportunity to enter a prize draw. At last we were ready to leave and returned to the reception where our collection of handmade plates and pots had been gathered together ready for us to take home.

It must have been a happy sight to see a long chain of chattering children and parents laden with boxes of handmade crafts, many destined to be Christmas gifts for grandparents, weaving its way down the street to the car park. A far cry from the grey days of less than a 100 years ago, where children of the same age must have trudged to and from work!

Tim's Mum

Brand New Sensory Play

Every Friday

Starting from Friday 30th January 09 1:00pm - 3:00pm
St Edwards First School, Cheddleton, Leek, Staffs.

Families who have child/children with special or additional needs and who live within the Cheddleton and Leek area are invited to join our qualified staff at our all new sensory play sessions, admission is free of charge. We have a wonderful sensory corner in our classroom and additional sensory play equipment will be available.

For more info please contact St Edwards First School on 01538 360435, Please ask for Kath Walker.
Or Dawn Forester on 07976191289

In partnership with Westwood
Community & Learning Partnership



Tilly Meets Sarah Webb



Sarah Webb's magical visit to Rudyard Sailability brightened the hearts and spirits of all at Rudyard Sailability.

Sarah's natural charm and engaging personality inspired and charmed everyone present. We were all so impressed that Sarah took such time out of her busy schedule and had driven up from the South Coast to sail with Tilly. The two lovely ladies set sail in Britannia's fingertip-controlled, bright pink dinghy, "Barbie", and chatted and laughed effortlessly exchanging sailing stories. It was Sarah's first trip out in a Sailability Access dinghy, so amazingly, it was Tilly showing Sarah some of the ropes!

Sarah Webb enchanted and delighted us all afterwards when she presented sisters, Candice and Tilly with their RYA Level 2 Sailing Certificates, and then presented three Sport England Volunteer Certificates for exceptional volunteering to Gary Lowe, Senior Instructor, Clive Heathcoat, Volunteer, and our Planning Dream Team who have dedicated so much of their time to try to secure planning permission for a new boat store, with accessible toilet and changing facility, for Rudyard Sailability.

Sarah brought along her two Olympic Gold Medals, from Athens and Beijing, and graciously allowed close inspection of such treasures.

Sarah also stayed to watch the newly created RYA DVD all about "Sailability" which features lots of footage of Rudyard Sailability. This visit represented Sarah's first experience of Sailability, and

she included in her address the moment of incredulity when she saw the film of Tilly sailing solo at The Pride of Britain Awards. Sarah explained that she was deeply moved to hear Tilly describing the freedom that sailing gives her out of her wheelchair, and Sarah confirmed that that is exactly how she feels, and is astounded to see that Tilly can achieve exactly the same experience, in spite of her disability.

Everyone at Rudyard Sailability was immensely grateful to this charming Olympic Hero, Sarah Webb, who certainly left us with a golden glow to see us through the winter, and fortified our spirits for the future.

Jackie

Workshop Meeting

We are having a meeting with Borderlines at the New Vic in Newcastle to have a look at the DVD and how to go forward with the training/workshops to take out and present to professionals. We are looking at about 2 or 3 workshops a year. We would like parents to come along and have their input into how we put the training together. So please any parents who would like to be involved with this, please come along to a meeting on the 11th February at the New Vic at 11.00am. Many thanks to you all who took part in the whole conference the DVD looks great.

Wednesday 11th February
11.00am

Kidz in the Middle Exhibition

Thursday 12th March 2009

9.30am - 5.00pm

Ricoh Arena

71 Phoenix Way, Foleshill
Coventry, CV6 6GE



Disabled Living organises the largest UK exhibitions totally dedicated to disabled children, their families and the health and social care professionals who work with them. Information on mobility, seating, beds, communication access, education, toys, transport, style, sensory, leisure and more.....

A programme of **FREE** seminars and discussions for both parents and professionals will take place alongside the exhibition. These cover a wide range of issues of interest to families with disabled children and the health and social care professionals who work with them. Entry is on a first come, first serve basis. For healthcare professionals, certificates of attendance will be available to collect on the day to boost your CPD portfolio..

For FREE tickets

call Disabled Living, Manchester on 0161 214 5962 or
email: kidzinthemiddle@disabledliving.co.uk

Dates for your Diary

Support Group

We are having the support groups in Leek, Biddulph and Cheadle. Biddulph in The Talbot pub and Leek at Homestart, Cheadle in the Cheadle Children Centre, meeting at 7.30pm. Please come and join us, it would be great to see you there to have a cuppa and a chat.

<u>Leek - Homestart</u>	<u>Biddulph - The Talbot</u>	<u>Cheadle - Children Centre</u>
17th March	26th February	2nd February
	23rd April	2nd March
	18th June	6th April (to be confirmed)

Activity Days/Meeting

6th February - Sensory afternoon / every Friday term time only
11th February - Workshop/Training meeting
18th February - JJ's Play Centre
12th March - Kidz in the Middle Exhibition
6th April - Family Walk/Oakamoor
17th April - Cheadle Children Centre/Activity Day

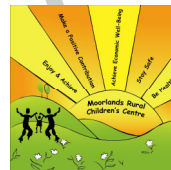
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