



Special Matters
Staffordshire
Moorlands

Newsletter January 10
Support Group for Parents



Frontline Dance Activity
Health Visitor Update

and more...

Hi Everyone

Happy New Year to you all. Hope you all have had an enjoyable Christmas and New Year. The weather has hit us this year. Well the days are getting longer and spring is just around the corner, hopefully we will get a summer this year.

We have had some interesting activities over the last few months and some more coming up. Also Jackie, Jen and I have been attending the Health Visitor re-launch of the checklist which has gone very well.

We have just updated the website, we are in the middle of setting up a blog on the website, for you to make comments and talk to each other. Please have a look out for this and we will inform you when it's ready. Please have a read through the newsletter and find out what else has been happening and what being planned.

The last two activities were booked up very quickly and we had to have a reserve list. If you are interested in coming to the activities please book as soon as you can to avoid any disappointment.

The next newsletter will be out in April 2010, if anyone would like to put something in please contact me on 07966 053040 or email faith.asplin@staffordshire.gov.uk. Remember to look at the website www.specialmatters.co.uk

Faith

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North Staffs Orthotics Campaign

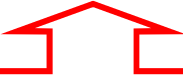
If you, your child or someone you care for uses the Orthotics service the North Staffs Orthotics Campaign would like to hear from you. The Campaign would like to hear positive feedback or about any problems you may have encountered in using the University Hospital of North Staffordshire Orthotics Service. If you are interested please look at their website:

www.nsoc.org.uk

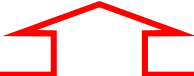
Activities

Swimming at Shelton Swimming pool

We have booked a couple more exclusive Special Matters family swimming sessions on Sundays afternoon in the coming months. As the October session went very well and the families had a great time. This swimming pool is heated at a good temperature and also has a hoist for children who need it. The swimming pool has a ramp going down into the pools which will make it easier for the children to get into and out of the pool. There will be a qualified life guard and there will be floats etc in the water for the children to play with.



7th February
1.00pm - 3.00pm




21st March
1.00pm - 3.00pm

Please book before for 25th January for 7th February and 8th March for 21st March.

Frontline Dance

We are planning a session from Frontline Dance at Leek High in the dance studios. Where there will be different workshops movement development, street dance, creative dance, also an aid to relaxation and also a performance from frontline dance. We also going to have some craft and sensory equipment for the children to enjoy. Please phone the office to book on either of these activities places are limited. Please book before Monday 1st February.



16th February 2010
10.00am - 2.00pm

Health Visitor Update

The Health Visitor Best Practice Guidelines were re-launched during the last few months of 2009. These guidelines were devised as a direct result of consultation between Health Visitors and the Special Matters parents support and action groups. At the first ever support group in Leek in 2003 parents discussed the vital role of the Health Visitor before, during and following diagnosis of a Special Need. Many parents spoke positively about the experience, help and support offered by their Health Visitor. Some were less fortunate but felt that they could have benefited more. This information was passed to the Special Matters Action Group and as a result Health Professionals, Parents/ Carers and members of the Action Group formulated the Guidelines which were then launched in Stoke and finally at the National Health Visitor Conference in Harrogate.

These guidelines, which suggested additional visits and extra support for families where a child was diagnosed with Special Needs, have been used by Health Visitors to a varying degree since the launch. Jackie Griffiths, Faith and I have been most fortunate to attend the re-launch training sessions in the Moorlands and Stoke area. Jackie made several heartfelt presentations which illustrated powerfully the difference Health Visitors can make to Special Needs families. Faith and I were able to thank the Health Visitors on behalf of Special Matters for taking this work forward and also to witness the impact of the guidelines.

Most importantly we are able to bring back the great news to you all of the difference Special Matters Families have been able to make for families in the future. Thank you.

Jenny

Griffiths Blog

A few months ago our family was asked by The Donna Louise Children's Trust, Treetops, to take part in a year's project with BBC Radio Stoke. It was decided that Reporter, Becky Wood, would come along at intervals and record the various activities that happen in our life, including the good and not so good, in the hope of showing what it can be like when living with disability. Alongside this project it was suggested that I write a Blog to 'fill in the gaps' between recordings. I am surprised by how much I enjoy writing the entries and Rolf is great at putting in photographs where appropriate. The girls are pleased to be part of this project and are forever saying now "put this on the Blog, Mum!". I hope that my writing will be of interest to Special Matters, and also that it might be a helpful source of information as I try to include all the things that have proved to be beneficial to us.



If you find yourselves with time to spare then you can dip into the Blog on <http://tillys-house.blogspot.com/> . I would be very happy to hear your comments and sugges-

*from
Griffiths Family*


Support Groups

The daytime support group is going really well. We have been pleased to welcome a number of new parents and carers into the group. We have invited Anne George along to our next support group on 20th January to talk about direct payments. If you are interested in this and have any questions about direct payment please come along. If you know anybody else who is interested in this subject you are more than welcome to bring them with you.

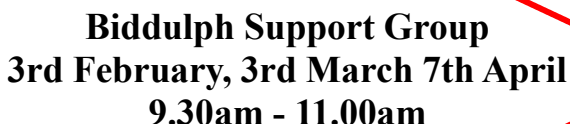
Any of the support groups we put on are yours and if you are interested in coming and there is something you would like to see happen please just ask. i.e. someone to come in and do a talk about something please let us know and we will try our hardest to fulfil it. The Leek support group is held at Meadows special school. The Cheadle one is in the evening at Cheadle Children Centre. There is also a group at Biddulph meeting at the Staffordshire Moorlands children centre.



Leek Support Group
20th January,
10th February
17th March
10.00am - 12.00pm



Cheadle Support Group
1st February, 1st March
29th March
7.30pm - 9.30pm



Biddulph Support Group
3rd February, 3rd March 7th April
9.30am - 11.00am

Santa Lunch Feedback



It was Sunday 29th November and I was taking my daughter Becky to Alton Towers to see Santa with Special Matters. As you would expect from Alton Towers it was the most magical day.

As soon as we got there Becky went to watch a puppet show which kept Becky very amused until it was time for dinner. We tucked into a delicious three course meal, the highlight of which for Becky was the array of different flavored ice creams. She would have liked to have sampled all, but we managed to narrow this down to three.

After dinner we set off with some other Special Matters families on the monorail to the farmyard rides. It was there that Becky actually got to see Santa's reindeer and sit in his sleigh. One or two rides later it was time to see Santa. We were lead up to Santa's grotto by and Elf who was very nice and waited with us until Santa had finished talking to some other boys and girls. Once in Santa's grotto Becky became a little star struck and wouldn't talk to Santa. She did at least manage to tell him she had sent a letter to him, so he said he would look at that later.



After we left Santa we headed to the Sea life centre which Becky loved and then it was time to go back to the hotel on the monorail, where we decided a visit to Splash Landings would finish the day off nicely. By the time Becky got in the water she was squealing

with so much excitement, it was lovely to see. After an hour and a lot of splashing later we headed home, very tired, but very happy.



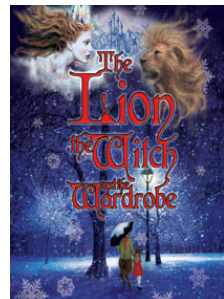
Thanks very much to everyone who helped organized a great day.

*Love from
Sarah and Becky*

Theatre Trip Feedback

On the 9th January we went to New Vic Theatre to watch the magical Lion, Witch and the Wardrobe. It was touch and go because of the weather but most people made the show, the others are going to see it soon. We all sat down and waited for the show to begin. I watched the children and their eyes were wide and waiting in anticipation of what was going to happen.

Half way through the show we had an interval and some of the children had a drink and a cake to enjoy while waiting for the second half to begin. The show ended and all the children were very good and enjoyed the show.



Make a Difference

Special Matters Families once again have the opportunity to make a BIG difference.

Aim? To devise workshops focused on the issues your family faces on a daily basis.

Who? working with the New Vic Borderlines project Special Matters Parents and Children can contribute their thoughts, suggestions and stories.

Outcome? A training package which can be used by Special Matters Representatives to inform a variety of Professionals/ Agencies and encourage best practice.

Commitment? As little or as much as you choose, any ideas will be gratefully received!

We having a meeting on the 2nd February at Rudyard Lake at 10-00am - 12.00pm. Please come along if you want more details please contact me or Jenny.

Brough Park/Parkwood Leisure centre

Our Community Development and Information Officer, Erica Taylor and Jen will be attending a meeting at the Brough Park Leisure Centre in Leek at the end of the month. The purpose is to discuss the accessibility of the facilities for babies and toddlers and specifically for children with Special Needs. If you have any comments either positive or otherwise regarding temperature of the water, changing facilities, special equipment etc. please make contact on 01298 687162 or email erica.taylor@staffordshire.gov.uk or jennifer.hurst@staffordshire.gov.uk by 25th January so that we can pass on your views.

Dates for your Diary

Support Groups

We are having the support groups in Leek, Biddulph and Cheadle. Cheadle in the Cheadle Children Centre, meeting at 7.30pm, Leek is a daytime one at the Meadows Special School starting 10.00am and one in Biddulph at the Staffordshire Moorlands Children Centre starting at 9.30am . Please come and join us, it would be great to see you there to have a cuppa and a chat.

Cheadle - Children Centre Leek - Meadows

1st February

20th January

1st March

10th February

29th March

17th March

Biddulph - Staffordshire Moorlands Children Centre

6th January

3rd March

3rd February

7th April

Activity Days/Meeting

7th February - Shelton Swimming pool

16th February - Frontline dance

21st January - Shelton Swimming pool

2nd February - Make a difference meeting, Rudyard

21st March - Shelton Swimming Pool

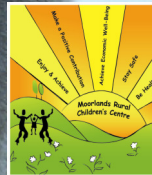
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Community & Learning Partnerships