



Special Matters
Staffordshire
Moorlands

Newsletter February 08
Support Group for Parents

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Special Matters
Staffordshire
Moorlands

Happy New Year
Happy New Year

Volunteer

The Caudwell Trust

Ten Pin Bowling &

Pizza Making

and more...

Hi Everyone

Happy New Year to you all. Hope you have all had a good Christmas and New Year.

We have some interesting things happening. We have some activity days so have a good read and see if you and the family can come long and join in the fun.

If anyone needs me to help with anything and would like a home visit, please contact me.

Faith

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Dates for your Diary

Support Group

We are having the support group in Leek and Biddulph alternating between the two. Biddulph in The Talbot pub and Leek one in The Swan, meeting at 7.30pm. Please come and join us, it would be great to see you there.

Thursday 21st Feb - The Talbot, Biddulph

Tuesday 18th March - The Swan, Leek

Thursday 17th April - The Talbot, Biddulph

Breakfast Club

(Leek)

The Breakfast Club in Leek will be held at Brough Park in the meeting room between 9.30am and 11.30am.

Thursday 7th February 08

Thursday 6th March 08

Thursday 3rd April 08

Activity Days

10th February - Pizza Making & Ten Pin Bowling

14th February - The Caudwell Trust

Workshop - to be confirmed in Easter holidays

Meetings

Mother's Union - 19th February at Brough Park 1.00 - 3.00

Special Matters Forum - 26th February at the New Vic

10.30 - 12.30

Mother's Union

We are working with the Mother's Union to explore ways in which Mothers' Union and Special Matters can work together to support families of Children with Special Needs.

This idea had originated from the Parallel Worlds Conference at the New Vic where the parents identified a need for a "Mary Poppins" figure who is able to give "Grandparent" type support to the family. Representatives of Mothers' Union have already attended a Special Matters Activity Day at Blackbrook Zoological Park – this outing enabled them to meet the families informally.

We have a meeting with the Mothers Union on the 19th February at Brough Park meeting at 1.00pm until 3.00pm. If parent would like to come along and share idea about how this could work for them that would be great, please come and join us.

Special Matters Forum

We would like to draw together other groups that work in similar ways with families of children with Special Needs for an information sharing meeting to enable better understanding of the support groups across Staffordshire. This will be for parents and professional, so please come and join us, and discuss and see what changes we can make.

To be held in the
Potters Bar at the New Victoria Theatre,
Hartshill,
Newcastle under Lyme
26th February 08
from 10.30 am until 12.30

If you would like to attend please phone
The Moorlands Rural Children's Centre on
01298 687162

Activity Day

Ten Pin Bowling & Pizza Making



In February half-term we are having an activity day at Frankie and Bennies in Uttoxeter. The children will be able to make their own pizza and decide what they would like on it so they can enjoy eating it. Afterwards we can go across to Cinebowl, Ten Pin Bowling where old and young children can take part. There will be bowling ramps available, so if the bowls are too heavy for the children they can push it down the ramp.

This sounds a fantastic day so please contact the office or me to book your place by 4th February, by noon. We need to ask £5 per family to cover the cost. Places are limited.

Sunday 10th February 08
11.30 am
Frankie & Benny's
1.00pm
Cinebowl, Uttoxeter



Website

We have an opportunity to have a website designed. We are getting together some parents who would like to come along with us when we start planning the design. If you would like to be part of this team, please contact me. If you have any ideas but don't feel you can commit to the team we are still very interested in your ideas. You are the people who will be using this website and we need to know what you would like to see on this website, so get in contact with me with your ideas.

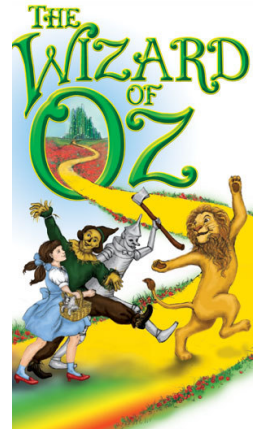
Conference

We have another opportunity to do a conference which is very exciting. Within this conference we would like to have a drama and workshops to take it to another level from the last conference which we had last year. We have been talking to some parents, and they have been saying that they would like the drama to be filmed, so we can use it as a training tool kit. We are talking to a video production company to put together a film with the drama and also talking to some families and to have it all on one dvd. On this dvd we will be able to have chapters so when we are doing the training we can use the parts which are best for that time.

We would love to have your input into the conference. We are having a workshop day at Easter time, so come along and have fun and express what you would like to see in this conference.

Conference will be in September waiting the date to be confirmed. Workshop will be at Easter waiting for date to be confirmed.

After Christmas we went to the theatre, we went over two nights with about 40 of us. As last year we had new children who had never been to the theatre and really enjoyed the magical experience. When the scarecrow came on it was amazing to see the children's faces light up and how excited they were. It was an unforgettable experience.



Pantomime Visit

Last year I did think about taking the boys to a local Pantomime but I kept visualising the looks from other theatre goers if Liam decided to 'throw a wobblers,' or he fancied a walk about during the show, so it felt easier to give it a miss!

This year I felt braver and the fact that there would be other families there from special matters gave us a feeling of safety in numbers! Thank goodness we went. They had a fantastic time, Liam absolutely loved it, he recognised that scarecrow from songs he sings at school and he loved it when the scarecrow fell over, he kept giggling all the way through. Owen kept a keen eye on the exit in case the witch showed up again! I just wanted to say a huge thank you for giving us the opportunity to experience a family outing, which I felt so uncertain about doing before. The New Vic has a stage 'in the round' so the audience sit in a circle and are very close to the action, even at the back of the theatre. The staff were very accommodating and helpful, we will be looking out for future shows there, thanks again.

Lucy (Mum of Liam aged 5 and Owen aged 3).

Christmas and New Year Activity's

Before Christmas we had a activity day 'Santa and Steam' at Froghall. We had about 50 adults and children who came along. The weather was not really nice but that did not stop us having a good time.



Christmas fun for families

It was the morning of Saturday 8th December and the girls got up really excited, they were going on a steam train. I must admit I was looking forward to it as well; the only problem was the weather it was pouring down. We were getting on the at 1.45pm so I thought it may get better, but it didn't! Never mind we were going to have a good time, having some fun and being with friends.

Once we found Froghall we parked the car and went onto the platform, we were soon on the train. It was nice as Special Matters had a carriage just for the group, so we were all together. Not long and we were on the move. Just after we started moving a magician came along and did a couple of tricks for us. We then had a couple dressed in period costume giving a mince pie and drop of sherry to the adults and chocolate and a drink of orange to the children. Then the children were getting excited because they could see Santa down the aisle, he came along talking to all the children and gave them all a present. Then it was time for us to go back, the girls had really enjoyed their time on the steam train, even though we couldn't see out of the window.

Alison and Family



help! Provides support for parents and cares of school ages children young people and adults who have a recent diagnosis of an ASD. The programme session cover.

- What are autistic spectrum disorders - a brief overview
- Top tips for communication and social interaction
- Education legislation plus practical strategies
- Accessing support service, your rights and benefits
- Information

Lunch will be provided on both days.

Two members per family may attend (or one family member with a friend)

Places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

The programme, which runs for 2 sessions, is for parents /cares for children ages between 5 and 11 years and who have received a diagnosis of an autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) within the last 18 months.

Dates of sessions: 4th & 5th March 08, 9.45am - 2.45pm on both days. Venue: North Staffs Adventure Playground, Stanier Street, Newcastle - Under - Lyme, ST5 2SU.

To book your place please phone Gill Phillips on 0115 847 3530.

Volunteer



We would like to welcome Andrea Fairclough who is a volunteer with Special Matters. Andrea is helping us supporting families on our support groups and activities days you may have seen her around. So we would like to say welcome to Special Matters and we look forward to working with her.

Staffordshire Adults Autistic Society

Our Autistic World
Conference
On
7th May 08
At

Port Vale Football Club
Hamil Road
Burslem

Key Speaker - Carol Povey
NAS Head of Adult Service

Other Speakers: National & International Autism Speakers with
ASD throughout the day.

ASD £10 - Parents/Cares - £25
Professional - £60
Including a buffet

To book please phone
Kevin Healey 07751 223065



Working with The Cauldwell Trust

The Cauldwell trust has got in contact with us about doing a life size 3D animal. We would be doing an elephant. An artist would be working with the children to develop designs which will be transferred by an artist onto life sizes 3D animal Sculptures.

This would be during Cheadle festival week which is 8th - 15th March. They would like to have some workshops where there would be a consolation discussion Cheadle Past - Present - Future and split into three groups. There are two other groups joining us. You do not have to live in Cheadle to take part, this is for any families of Special Matters. The sibling and parents can take part as well. There will be a number of art/support people to help with this on the day.

The example of the elephant below is so you can see a previous example of what can be achieved. If you are interested in this please contact me as soon as possible. This seems to be a great opportunity for the children.

14th February 10.00am - 3.00pm, please bring a packed lunch with you. Also can you please phone the office or me, to book your place by 8th February. The venue to be confirmed.

