

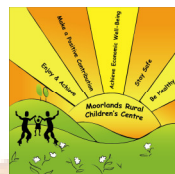
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Working together with the
Community & Learning Partnerships



Special Matters
Staffordshire
Moorlands

Newsletter October 08
Support Group for Parents

Gladstones
Parent Story
Award for Children
and more . . .

Welcome to you all!!!

It's been a very busy month with the conference. Read up on how the conference went, and other things that have been going on. We have some activities over the next few months please have a read and if you would like to come along please book.

Please if anyone would like to add something into the newsletter please let me know, if your child has done something and they would like to share it or you as a family would like to see something in the newsletter or anything else please don't hesitate to contact me.

Also please take note of my new e-mail address
faith.asplin@staffordshire.gov.uk

Faith

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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.

<u>Leek - Homestart</u>	<u>Biddulph - The Talbot</u>	<u>Cheadle - Children Centre</u>
18th November	16th October	3rd November
20th January	26th February	8th December
17th March		2nd February

Activity Days

Gladstone's - 29th October 11.00 - 2.30pm
New Vic Theatre - 6th December , 2.15pm
Mango Tree - 8th December, 8pm

Dragon Boat Race

Just want to say a big thank you to all of you who took part in the dragon boat race this year. The weather was not great to start with, but when we got there the weather was fine and you all did a great job.

Hope you are all raring to go for next year.

Thank you

Summer Activities

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust

ST. MICHAELS FIRST SCHOOL, HORTON

We arrived by minibus to the school. I went with my Mum and 2 brothers. The school was very nice and the other adults in charge were very helpful and friendly. First we went into the woods, which are located on the school grounds. We went into groups and began collecting branches, twigs, foliage, berries and wire to use in making a den. This was great fun and everybody made really good dens!



We had a packed lunch and sat together to eat. Afterwards we went back into the woods and made tree spirits -we used clay, twigs, stones, berries, and leaves. I really enjoyed doing this. Then, we

played some games and used paints to decorate t-shirts and plant pots. The plant pots were filled with soil and seeds - I chose cress seeds to go in my pot.

The day went really quickly and it was soon time to go home. We all really enjoyed the day and it was good to break up the summer holidays with a trip.

From Chanel



Conference

Parallel Worlds, Shared Places



Our second Special Matters Conference was a BIG experience for everyone. We asked you to get involved and you did just that every step of the way! Parents and children contributed ideas, participated in workshops, sang and danced. You facilitated and supported workshops on the Conference day, confused the delegates front of house and worked alongside Borderlines, ourselves, other agencies and professionals.

Everyone involved should feel very proud of themselves,
WELL DONE and **THANKYOU**.

The delegates were very impressed, moved to tears and the impact was **powerful**. The whole day offered a unique experience which will not easily be forgotten. Parents who attended on the day told us that "we got it right" – this is what really matters and it was only through your commitment that this could be achieved.

Delegate comments included:

"I feel tearful, encouraged and inspired"

"I feel enlightened and humble"

"Everyone I spoke with during the day was very impressed. My understanding of the day to day issues faced by families with S.E.N. children was greatly increased. The personal impact was very forceful and moving"

"A super day which makes you think-

I wish everybody could see it"

To share more evaluation and your thoughts on the conference please join us for a post conference meeting on Saturday, 08th November from 10.30 – 12 noon at Rudyard Activity Centre. Our film makers, junction 15 will be joining us – they would like to film a few more interviews with anyone who is willing!



Hope to see you there and THANKS AGAIN you were all superb especially the children.

Gladstone's Pottery Museum



Our next activity day will be at Gladstone's Pottery Museum. Where the children can make and decorate pottery. We went to the museum a few years ago and had a really good time the children had a great time with the paints and getting clay all over their hands. After the fun craft activity we will go to the tea rooms to have some lunch which will be provided for you. When you have finished your lunch you can go around the museum and have a look at how the pottery was made.

Please contact me or phone the office to book your place, before 22nd October 08. We would like a donation of £3 per a adult and £1.50 per a child towards the cost.

29th October 08
11.00am - 2.30pm

Support Group

The support group in Cheadle is having Julie Bennett the Health Visitor coming to talk and update us on the checklist and see how they can improve support. Please come along on 3rd November, starting at 7.30pm in the Cheadle children centre.

The Leek support group in on the 18th November at Homestart starting at 7.30pm. Please come along and meet other parents and have a chat.

Summer Activities



Where do I begin?, Special Matters has definitely kept our family busy this summer, we began back in July with the first of 2 sessions of drama workshops at the New Vic, a great opportunity to explore our creative sides, Anakin thoroughly enjoyed himself developing a short play about the seasons, resisting all our encouragement to incorporate all the usual "Spring" ideas, opting for a more radical "Evil Spirit of Spring", Anakin cast himself as the good hero who finally slain the evil spirit into the river, saving the future of Spring forever.

Soon enough it was time to visit Blackbrook Zoological Park, this time Anakin's sister Cerys was able to join us, we were treated to a guided visit and particularly enjoyed feeding Meercats and Penguins and stroking owls and rabbits, the heavens opened and not deterred we pulled on raincoats, opened umbrellas and the sun was soon back out.



Our final outing for the holidays would be horse riding at Scropton Riding Centre, Anakin could hardly contain his excitement and particularly so when his horse Jasmine arrived, the Staff at the centre were excellent and although I was not surprised at how Anakin related to Jasmine because of his love for animals, I was pleased when he followed the instructions and concentrated hard to ride, when he trotted though his head wobbled so much from laughing he broke the helmet, obviously a technique he needs to work at.

We are so grateful to Special Matters for the summers events, it has made such a difference for us to be able to meet new friends and receive support from Faith, Tracey and Jenny, and Anakin has been given the opportunity to try activities which we wouldn't otherwise be able to access.

Thank you and we look forward to the next time !!!!

Saffron

face2face

Parents supporting Parents of Disabled Children

The following are activities which face 2 face have put on please contact Denise Deakin if you are interested in going along to any of the following. Phone: 01782 874974
Email: denise.denkin@scope.org.uk

After School Club 4pm till 6pm

Crescent Children's Centre, Meir, Carers must stay in the centre
Tuesday 21st October siblings are welcome
Tuesday 25th November
Tuesday 23rd December
Tuesday 20th January 2009

After School Club 4pm till 6pm

Treehouse Children's Centre, Bentilee, Carers must stay in the centre
Monday 10th November siblings are welcome
Monday 8th December

Saturday Morning Session 10am till 12noon

Westfield Children Centre, Longton, Carers must stay in the centre
Saturday 1st November siblings are welcome
Saturday 6th December
Saturday 3rd January 2009
Saturday 7th February 2009
Saturday 7th March 2009

Dads/Male Carers Gatherings

Friday 7th November : Curry & Comedy at Port Vale 6pm
Friday 5th December : To Be arranged

Mums /Female Carers "Time for You"

Westfield Children Centre, Longton
Starts again on 26th September
Term time Friday's 10.30am till 12.30pm



Support Group

On 8th December at 8pm, Cheadle Support Group is going out for a evening at the Mango Tree in Draycott. If anybody would like to join us you are more than welcome. It £9.95 per person plus drinks. If you would to like look at the website it is www.the-mango-tree.co.uk/draycott

Please phone me to book your place by 1st November.

Theatre Arabian Nights



The last two years we have gone to the theatre and parents have been surprised and delighted to see their children sitting, watching and enjoying the wonderful plays. The parents were pleased that they had taken the children to watch the play. So we had requests if we can go to the theatre again this year. This year is 'Arabian Night' when the nights falls, the adventure begins. If your families are interested in coming please book your tickets either through me or phone the office, before the 1st November 08. We would like a donation of £3 per a adult and £1.50 per a child towards the cost.

6th December 08
2.15pm Matinee Performance
New Vic Theatre

Parent Story

Hi, my name is Sarah my husband is called Keith, and we have two children, Daniel who is 10 and Rebecca who is 7 and who has Down's Syndrome. It was quite a shock when Becky was born as having a child with a disability was one of those things that you think will only happen to someone else. Although I did not know she had Down's Syndrome until she was born I was worried about how the pregnancy was progressing as she didn't move much and was very small. In the end the hospital decided to induce me 2 weeks early. As soon as I saw Becky I thought she looked like she might have Down's Syndrome, but my husband didn't seem to notice and neither did the midwife so I tried to convince myself I was being silly. I then spent most of the night watching her thinking yes she has or no she hasn't. The next morning I asked one of the nurses to help me bath Becky. The nurse became concerned about Becky's muscle tone and reactions when being bathed. I knew then that she did have Down's Syndrome and I felt like my whole world had just fell apart.

We then spent the next 10 days in hospital in the mother and baby unit as Becky blood sugar needed to stabilise and she was having problems feeding. To begin with I found it hard to bond with her as she was in an incubator and I wasn't looking after her, but once she had stabilised and I could start to care for her a strong bond did start to develop.

Over the next few years there have been many ups and downs. At times it can be quite heart breaking watching everyone else's child hitting all the milestone, but when she did achieve it made it all the more special. When Becky was small she went to Happy Hours nursery, but as she did not walk until she was 3, she couldn't join in the same way so I took her to a special needs nursery in Newcastle called Peter Pans. She also used to attend physio every fortnight with a group of children all with Down's Syndrome. This was a lovely time for me as mixing with so many other families with disabled children I suddenly didn't feel so alone, and also met a lot of families who had to deal with a lot more problems than I did.



expertise, to enable them to address their own needs and the needs of the person they care for. Sessions will include workshops surrounding identifying and managing stress and promoting self confidence.

Ultimately we would like to develop Carer networks within Carers own communities to reduce isolation and loneliness.

So who are we?

The CRASH team itself is made up of three specialist Carers Development Workers.

Physical/Sensory Disabilities	Lynn Robinson
Older People	Joanne Plant
Learning Disability/Parent Carer	Anna Dunn

Keep your eyes on this project as it will be shortly providing a 24hour Crisis Service which is unique to North Staffordshire.....



North Staffs Carers Association

CRASH PROJECT

(Carers.Rapid.Action.Support.Help)

We would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to the CRASH PROJECT. This has been funded for five years by the Big Lottery Fund. The project will provide Carers with a seamless service of crisis support.

The CRASH team provides a free and confidential service to all adult Carers living in North Staffordshire. Whether it is information about local services, assessments, benefit entitlement, the CRASH team are here for you!

The aims of the C.R.A.S.H. project are very important to us as a team, and they are to:

- Enable Carers to be more aware of their own needs
- Encourage Carers to lead a healthy lifestyle
- To involve Carers in group activities, to help reduce isolation and increase autonomy

To enable Carers to be empowered and confident in their caring role.

These aims will be met in a number of different ways , one of the new innovative programmes will be rolling Well-Being Workshops.

These workshops are designed to support Carers, the sessions will be informal lasting for 2 hours and running every week for ten weeks. We aim to provide Carers with knowledge and

Although she enjoyed Peter Pans I felt mainstream school would be the best for her, and she started in the school nursery, although she wasn't toilet trained yet. Becky has come on so much during her time at school although it hasn't always been easy, especially once she started reception, but we always seemed to be able to work through most problems even if it meant several meetings with the school teachers. We worked really hard to get her toilet trained and also the school set up a year 6 buddy system for Becky to support her at lunchtimes and breaks, and this worked really well.

Just when I thought things might be settling down and we had overcome most problems at school we hit the worst nightmare of her little life. Becky had a small hole in her heart which they said would need correcting by keyhole surgery. She went into Birmingham Children's Hospital in the February half term when she was in year 1. All seemed to go well and she came out and had been at home for about 1 week when she suffered a bad reaction. She woke up about 5 am on the Fri morning saying she felt ill and then started to have what looked like a fit. We called 999 and when they came out her heart beat was only 20 beats a minute. They rushed her into hospital and while we were in A+E her heart stopped about 5 times, and I thought we had lost her, but in the end they did manage to stabilize her. Arrangements were made to transfer her to Birmingham Children's Hospital where she needed emergency open heart surgery. The surgeon said that it was the 1st time they had ever had this reaction to the keyhole surgery since they had started doing this procedure 5 years ago and they asked to record the operation so that they could learn why it had gone wrong.

We spent the next week in Birmingham Children's Hospital watching her slowly getting better and finally we were able to bring her home. The trauma of it all did affect her for a while after and she suffered terrible night terrors. I would just have to lie with her watching DVD's all night trying to comfort her. Since the operation though Becky has gone from strength to strength.

Although Becky has caused us a lot of worry, she has also brought us

cont. . .

more joy than we would have ever thought possible when she was first born. She has such a lively and cheeky personality. She has managed to take part in most things that other children do and I was especially proud when she took part in a ballet and tap show which was on for 5 nights at Cheadle High School with Vivienne Shelly's dance class. We have been really proud again this week when she has started to be able to swim without armbands for a short period. This has come after about 2 years of lessons where I wondered if she would ever manage it.

Overall there have been some lows, but the highs definitely make it all worth while, and just to see her little smile makes my day.

Sarah & Family

Peter Pan Nursery, If you would like to know more details.
www.peterpan-specialneeds-nursery.co.uk Tel: 01782 715219

Award for Sophie

Sophie Dempsey is 7 years old and goes to Springfield Special School in Leek. She thoroughly enjoys going to school each day and there isn't an activity that she doesn't want to take part in. Earlier this year her enthusiasm for sports was rewarded with an award. The most enthusiastic girl award was presented to her at Leek high school. As parents we were both really pleased that she was given this award. It was an honour for us to see her receive the award at the ceremony.



For Sophie to go to this award ceremony was also an honour. She does find it very hard to be in a room full of people and the hall on this evening was full.

Alison & Kevin

Award for Tilly

The moment that Torvill and Dean skated up to Tilly and announced that she was a winner of this year's Pride of Britain Awards, our hearts filled with joy Tilly's beam at being on the ice with her all-time heroes, and Candice's thrill at receiving skating lessons from Superstars signalled the start of an amazing journey for us all.



We were all speechless as we were shown to our suite of rooms which overlooked Westminster, and with regular time checks on Big Ben, we donned our sparkly outfits for dinner with Carol Vorderman, and to meet the other Award winners. We were all incredibly impressed with Carol Vorderman's commitment and passion for the Awards and how she made each and every one of us feel comfortable. A real Pro!

The studio was filled with a magnitude of sparkling stars – Michael Caine, Joan Collins, Shirley Bassey, Gordon Ramsey, Bruce Forsythe, Kevin Spacey, Emma Bunton, etc the list went on and on. Tilly was delighted to see that she had her hero, Dame Kelly Holmes sitting right beside her. No matter how bright these folk shined, for us there were none more sparkling than our two little girls who bravely went up and collected the beautiful award. It was a night that we will treasure forever.

However, the magic had not yet finished, the next day, following a brief appearance on GMTV, we found ourselves having brunch at No. 10 Downing Street, with the Prime Minister and his wife. This was the perfect end to a spectacular time.

Tilly would say herself that she is a lucky little girl who gets to do lots of wonderful things, because she is loved and supported by countless outstanding, special people, organisations, charities, services, neighbours, family, friends, teachers, the list is actually endless

These incredible people are the real superstars and heroes in this story – without their support, Tilly would not have made the journey to The Pride of Britain Awards.

Thank You.

Jackie