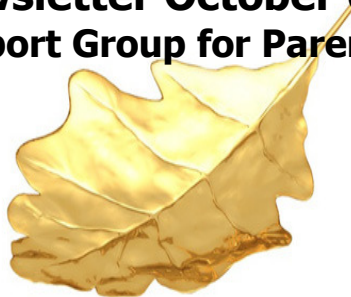




Special Matters
Staffordshire
Moorlands

Newsletter October 09
Support Group for Parents



Parent Story
Saying Goodbye
New Daytime Support Group
and more...

Welcome to you all!!!

Hi, it's been a while. The summer has come and gone, the autumn is here and Christmas is creeping up on us.

We have had a number of activities over the summer and we also have had a new daytime support group starting up in Leek. It has gone very well we had a quite number of parents come along, also we have had a number of new parents joined Special Matters over the last few months, so we would like to welcome them to Special Matters.

We have interested activities going on in the next few months, so have a read of the newsletter and if you would like to come along anything please book in.

The next newsletter will be out in January 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 the website www.specialmatters.co.uk

Faith

Contents

Saying Goodbye & Child of Courage Award - pg2

Parent Story - Pg 3 & 4

New Daytime Support Group - pg 5

Shelton Swimming Activity - pg6

Make a Different - pg 7

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust Day - pg 8

Sailability Day - pg 9

Dates for your Dairy's - pg13

Contact Details - back page

Saying Goodbye

We have to say goodbye to a member of the Special Matters family. Lee, Saffron and family have been part of Special Matters for a few years but have now moved away to Wales. We send all our best wishes to them and hope their new life in Wales will be great and full of fun and adventure. We all send our best wishes to Anakin and Cerys as they start their new schools. I have heard from them and the children are doing great and have settled down well at school. Hopefully see you again soon.

All The Best Passam Family

Child of Courage Award

One of our families has received a Child of Courage Award in Stoke on Trent. Ryan Lomas came second in the award. Ryan is now 12 years old and was diagnosed at an early age with epilepsy and learning difficulties.

On the evening the award was given out to Ryan, his Mum (Sue), was with him as he met a number of celebrities including Gordon Banks, Nick Hancock and Anthea Turner, but the one Ryan was most looking forward to meeting was Jonathan Wilkes – Ryan had his photo taken with Jonathan with a big grin on his face.

So we would like to say a very big congratulations to Ryan, well done.

Congratulations Ryan

Parents Story

A Learning Experience

Living with a disabled child, whatever the disability, makes life more complicated, but it can also be a learning experience. Last year I was struggling to accept Richard's autism as part of our family life and began to almost resent the difficulties it caused.



We visited several High Schools making me think more about Richard's future and his disability. I felt stressed and burdened with the decisions we had to make. I was fearful that a wrong decision would ruin his life as he moves into secondary education. I was juggling a part-time job, family responsibilities and having to deal with Richard's disruptive behaviour at school. I felt like I was drowning.

Then after reaching an all-time low, I decided that I had to make a change to my life. I did something I dreaded doing- I asked for help. I was referred to Social Services and after a while, I was given a social worker to assess our needs as a family. In the meantime I visited CAMHS and had the opportunity to discuss my true feelings without feeling guilty. She advised me on steps that I could take to improve Richard's behaviour at home. The results were immediate. We introduced a firm routine for every morning and every evening. Richard's outbursts reduced greatly. I realised these outbursts caused extra stress in our home. It became easier to take Richard out. I attended courses on how to deal with undesirable behaviour. I learnt not to give myself such a hard time, that every time he had an incident it was because of his autism not that I was a bad mother. I learnt to set realistic targets and to only worry about the



important issues. And one of the most useful things that I learnt was to “stop, look and listen” when dealing with Richard’s behaviour. When you catch him cutting his pyjamas up, it was better not to fly off the handle, but to stop and assess the situation, and talk to him. When I spoke to him, he wanted short summer pyjamas not long ones, so when I found him his summer pyjamas he was happy and I was calm.

What have we learnt this year? I have learnt to accept help and now we receive DLA and Carer’s allowance. Our social worker isn’t scary; she is the loveliest person and has helped us to obtain 5 hours of direct payments. This means we employ a helper who takes Richard out to the cinema or bowling and will help him to be more independent. This last year we have discovered a new joy in family life. I have fallen in love with my children all over again. By making changes in our home and by accepting help we have become closer as a family. This resulted in me deciding to finish working and to concentrate on our home and children.

You’re probably wondering why I’ve talked about me more than my son. I wanted to encourage you, as a parent, that you are not alone in your concerns. I want to encourage you to ask for help if you need it or get a babysitter in if you need a break. Join a parent group and talk to other parents, it can help relieve stress and you can learn tips from other parents. Living with a disabled child makes life more complicated but it’s also full of joy and constant surprises.

Path & Family



Daytime Support Group



We are starting up a new support group in the daytime. Parents, families or carers of a child with special needs are welcome to come along with or without your child or children . It will be an informal, friendly group where we have a cuppa and have an opportunity to meet other parents for a chat. Also if you as parents would like a professional to come along to discuss anything we can arrange it for you.



This support group will be meeting at the Meadows School in the flat, ground floor, Springfield Road, Leek. If you need a lift please contact us and we will see if we can help in anyway possible.

**Wednesday 21st October, 18th November,
16th December and 20th January
From 10 am until 12 noon**

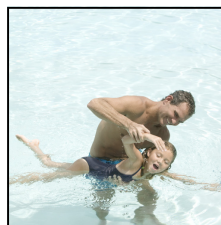


Also there is a daytime support group in Biddulph it is very similar to the one in Leek. A get together to meet other parents and have a chat. If you would like more details please contact Lynsey Hurst from the Staffordshire Moorlands Children Centre 01782 297970. The venue is the Staffordshire Moorlands Children Centre in the Family Suite.

**The first Wednesday of each month
7th October, 4th November & 2nd December
9.30am - 11.30am**

Shelton Swimming Session

Our activity day this October is going to be at Shelton swimming pool. This swimming pool is heated at a good temperature and also has a hoist for the children who need it. The swimming pool has a ramp going down into the pool so it will make it easier for the children to get into and out of the pool. We have a qualified life guard, and there will also be floats etc in the water for the children to play with. At the swimming pool there is a separate hydrotherapy pool. At the beginning of the year improvements were made to the changing area. There is a separate changing area for families with disabled children who need a changing table.



Please contact the office or Faith to book your place, by the 15th October.

**Sunday 25th October
2.30pm – 4.30pm**

Buggy Needed for a family

Major buggy needed for a girl named Dahlia aged 5 years who has Retts syndrome. She has a slim build. Dahlia is learning to walk a few steps. Dahlia lives in Romania and there is no support for her or her family.

If anyone has any robust educational toys that are no longer played with we would appreciate if you could donate them.

Please contact Judith Taylor at MRCC 01298 687162

Make A Difference

Together with The New Victoria Theatre Borderlines Project we are offering the opportunity for families of children with additional needs to make their voices heard. The focus is on the emotional impact of having a child with additional needs – the good times and the difficult times. This is a chance for you to “tell it like it is” and make a difference

Parents: would you like your story told– to tell it, to be recorded or to write it and let someone else tell it? Would you like to “put the professionals in your shoes”?

THE AIM:

To devise a workshop that can be delivered by the Special Matters group to a variety of professionals and agencies.

The groundwork for this project has already been done:parents have given ideas, we have films, recordings and information the next step is to create a workshop with this material.

Please let us know if you are interested in working alongside Parents/Carers, New Vic Borderlines and Special Matters to make this happen.

We would really like parents/ carers and interested professionals/ agencies to get involved

Please contact Faith 07966 053040 or faith.asplin@staffordshire.gov.uk

Or email: special.matters@staffordshire.gov.uk

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust



We had another great day with the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust team at St Michael Horton School, Rudyard, in the summer. The weather was not great but we had a very good time. I think we only had one shower on the day, but this did not spoil the day. The children

who came along had a great time playing in the woods and looking for insects and other creatures.

We had a picnic under a fabulous tent, and afterwards the children decorated their own t-shirts and painted plant pots to take home.



While we were sitting in the bird hide, watching the birds and other creatures, the children were all excited. When the day came to an end the children did not want to go home. One of the children wanted to stay until the hedgehogs came out. We were waiting, waiting and waiting to see if we could see the hedgehogs but they did not come out. It was home time. We had a wonderful day, and thanks to everyone who made this day great for the children.

ARE YOU AWARE

Health Visitors and School Nurses working with children with special or complex needs are relaunching Best Practice Guidelines to ensure you get the support when required and at an appropriate time for your family. For further information please contact your health visitor or school nurse.



North Staffordshire

NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE

Sailability



Special Matters enjoyed another great day at Sailability in spite of the weather! It was wonderful to have the comfortable, welcoming facilities at the Rudyard Activity Centre as a backdrop for the sailing activities.

Families arrived at 11am and were welcomed with a warm drink and the opportunity to chat and enjoy the play and craft activities provided by Mary. Parents and children were soon out on the Lake having fun paddling the Bell Boats. Some families chose to take a trip on "Honey" the trip boat – Ray gave trips around the lake and told interesting tales about the past. One family reported that their little girl "never stopped smiling all the way round" Some of the children chose to be taken out in adapted sailing boats – Dennis was on hand to supervise this with the help of his committed volunteers including Tilly and Candice.



Between activities the families were able to shelter and keep warm in the Activity Centre. They were treated to a delicious BBQ expertly provided by Brian and James and ate it while chatting and admiring the fabulous views of the lake. More sailing and paddling followed and the day was over all too soon!



We would like to say a big thank you to all who helped to make the day such a success. Many thanks to the families who attended and please watch out for more activities with Sailability next year!

Dates for your Diary

Support Groups

We are having the support groups in Leek, Biddulph and Cheadle. Biddulph in The Talbot pub, 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.

Biddulph - The Talbot Cheadle - Children Centre Leek - Meadows

15th October

5th October

21st October

10th December

2nd November

18th November

25th February

7th December (Meal) 16th December

Biddulph - Staffordshire Moorlands Children Centre

7th October

4th November

2nd December

Activity Days/Meeting

25th October - Shelton Swimming

