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Fun Run, Joydens Wood
18th September 2011



Sunday September 18th was a wonderful day in Joydens Wood for us. We were blessed with good weather and a great turnout of approximately 200 entrants in the first 10K/5K run/walk for The Parents Consortium.

Even our children got in on the act with a great display of fancy dress from our weekly Kidsclub team, organised by Esther Dawson. The children really seemed to enjoy it, especially when they were photographed by the local newspapers.

A real family atmosphere in the woods with music, bouncy castle, games and refreshments made the whole day a success.

XXX For our neXt Xtra special event **XXX**

Yes, you could be going to the X Factor final thanks to our supporters at Marks and Spencer.

See page 10 for details.

SERVICE DIRECTORS REPORT



As you're all aware the Parents Consortium is a membership organisation, which is a registered Charity and a Company Limited by Guarantee. This requires a huge amount of responsibility, in particular, to sit with a small group of people who are Trustees and Directors of the organisation - they do this on a completely voluntary basis.

Within any charity there is a requirement to adhere to strict processes around setting out and reporting information and one example I want to flag up is the requirement for us to hold an AGM and set out what the organisation has been involved with in the previous year, and at the same time present its annual financial accounts.

Now whilst I appreciate that AGM's are not the most riveting occasions and might all seem a bit on the formal side, they are there to ensure compliance with charity law. Now I'm not going to flag up all the procedure stuff surrounding the AGM but rather focus on the role that the Trustees in particular play in ensuring this organisation functions, and where you fit in.

My take on an AGM is, it provides a once in the year opportunity for people to recognise the role the Trustees play and to say thank you. I can well imagine that there's a few raised eyebrows on reading this and a mixed view of opinions extending to 'that's a bit of a cheek' on the one hand, and 'yes that's a good shout', and 'we should be supporting the efforts made on our behalf' on the other.

Now, the reason I'm raising this is due to the fact that on the 6th October we held our AGM and we had four parents attend. Now notwithstanding the disappointment of only having two couples attending from a membership which now sits at around 950 families, this also raises issues of being quorate (enough voting members attending) when making decisions or introducing resolutions that might affect the charity - so that's me off my soapbox now.

I feel the headline in our annual report really should acknowledge that the Parents Consortium continues to deliver some fantastic work across Swanley, Dartford and Gravesham primarily, and in respect of the Direct Payments Support Service, the whole of Kent, and it's a fantastic testimony to all our staff that in doing this they are making a positive difference to the lives of disabled C&YP and their families.

During the AGM I flagged up some of the concerns relating directly to disabled children and their families which we are keeping ears close to the ground on.

Whilst there has been good news around the funding of short break services, against this is an erosion of confidence which stems from a whole range of policy reviews which just talk about major changes, cuts and how families with disabled children inevitably are part of the of 'austerity measures' which we find hard to escape from when we turn on the TV or radio.

And so I thought this would be a useful opportunity to highlight some of these:

- Well the Government itself has released figures that its policy to halve disability benefit additions for low income and out of work families with disabled children will impact on up to 70,000 more families than it had originally estimated. So we are talking about 170,000 families here.
- We have the review of the DLA mobility component, with its threat to remove it from children and young people attending residential schools and colleges. As someone with a 21 year old with severe learning difficulties in a residential college this would have a direct impact, and one I find hard to justify.
- Welfare Reform Bill. The Bill abolishes DLA and replaces it with a new benefit, the Personal Independence Payment (PIP). Initially PIP will only be apply to adults aged 16 - 65, however the Government plans to eventually bring disabled children onto PIP.)
- The Campaign that is warning that Universal Credit proposals will not 'make work pay' for families with disabled children.

So my message is around the fact that families with disabled children are taking a bit of a bashing at the moment and why it is so important that we continue to rise to the challenges we face as an organisation and in doing so always strive to do the very best we can through our direct services, activities and lobbying.

Moving closer to home I'm sure it's not gone unnoticed that our SAIL Family Advice Service has been subject to some funding difficulties. Now I think it's already unquestionable that this has had a direct and significant impact through the feedback we have already received from parents who are reliant on the advice and support offered by Tracey and the Team. Now what we can't say is there's any quick fix around the corner, and other than doubling our efforts to get further funding in place the service, for the immediate future it will operate on a reduced level, with predominantly most cases being dealt with by phone. I'm sure you'll join us all in keeping fingers crossed that we can get it back up and running to the level we know it needs in the not too distant future.

Alan Milner

Kidsclub - Allsworth Court

This club runs on Thursday evenings (term time only). Sessions run from 4.30pm - 6pm and are open to members aged 5 - 11yrs inclusive. A waiting list is in operation.

Kidsclub - Sprints

Based at Sprints Youth Centre, Northfleet, runs on Wednesday evenings (term time only). Sessions run from 5pm - 6.30pm and are open to members aged 5 - 11yrs inclusive. There is plenty to do at this club including games in the sports hall and a variety of activities happening in every corner upstairs! We currently have spaces at this club.

Youth Club - Allsworth Court

The Youth Club at Allsworth Court runs term time only on Wednesday evenings. The club is open to members aged 12 - 19yrs and runs from 5 - 7pm. A waiting list is in operation.

No personal care can be provided at these clubs.

Siblings Club

Our Siblings Club is still running very successfully at Cascades Leisure Centre on a Saturday mornings 10am - 12pm for young people aged 5 - 11 yrs and 1pm - 3pm for 12 - 17 yrs. Please contact office for details.

Kidscamp summer 2011

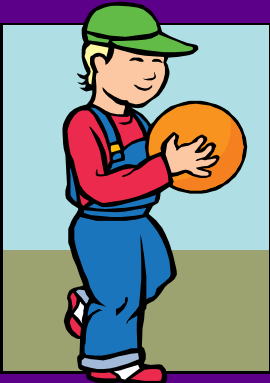
This was very successful and well received, all the children/young people enjoyed themselves and feedback was very positive.

Summer Playscheme 2011

This was very successful and well received, all the children/young people enjoyed themselves and feedback was very positive.

Calvert Trust

Six young people have been given the opportunity to attend an adventure holiday to the Calvert Trust in Devon this October half-term.



***** Important Information *******Christmas Party at Monkey Bizz**

We are holding our annual Christmas Party at Monkey Bizz on Sunday 18th December 2011. Please contact Leisure Services on 01322 665 474 or via email on leisureadmin@parentsconsortium.co.uk if you require further information or/and booking form. Tickets are £7.00 for adults and young people, included in this price is food, entertainment and Father Christmas.

Places for this event will be on a first come first served basis and places fill fast.

End of Year

All support plans will be sent out at the beginning of December for yearly updates for families requiring services. This is **VERY** important that you check and amend where necessary, please contact the office on the number above if you require any additional/spare sheets.

We require these support plans back by 30th December. If you would like to come in and complete your support plan or require any assistance then please contact us on the above number to book an appointment.

All clubs and holiday playschemes are subject to a completed support plan. If you require a support plan or any further information please contact the LS office on 01322 665474.

Contact Details:

Tracey Riley - Leisure Services Manager - 01322 665 474

Lee Manning - Leisure Services Co-ordinator - 01322 665 474

Dot Schofield - Leisure Services Administrator - 01322 665 474

leisureadmin@parentsconsortium.co.uk

Golf Day

Once again, Lee Manning came up trumps with his organisation of the Charity Golf Day and so far we expect to raise £6000 for a group of our teenagers to attend the Calvert Trust adventure holiday. These are all fantastic achievements especially in the tight financial climate that we are all in.



ADHD Support Group News

Our ADHD Support Group in Gravesend takes place between 10 am and 12 noon in the Family Room at Raynehurst Community Primary School, Cerne Road, Gravesend, DA12 4BN.

Dates are as follows:

Tuesday 29th November

We also have a group in Dartford who meet at Family Action, 16 Larch Road, DA1 2LF.

Dates are as follows:

Wednesday 9th November 2011

This Group runs from 10 am—12 noon

Carers Support Service Info

Carers Support Service have advised us of a change in the way they work. Home Visits will only be made for new DLA applications. Review clients will, now, have to go into the office.



If any members/supporters would like to have a copy of the PC Annual Audited Accounts, please contact the General Office.

Additional sessions for the Autism and Asperger Group Gravesend.

Parents asked if we could consider holding this group each month in Gravesend. Riverside Children's Centre have been kind enough to offer us a room to facilitate this. Therefore as from September 2011 this group will meet on a monthly basis.

Autism and Aspergers Support Group

These informal and friendly groups are held at The Riverside Centre, Dickens Road, Gravesend and Family Action, 16 Larch Road, Dartford. DA1 2LF

Forthcoming dates for Gravesend are:

Wednesday 16th November 2011

Wednesday 14th December 2011

This group runs from 10:30—12:30

Forthcoming dates for Dartford are:

Tuesday 1st November 2011

This Group runs from 10 am—12 noon

PLEASE STAY IN TOUCH!

Please let us know if:

- Your address has changed
- Your e-mail has changed
- Your telephone or mobile has changed
- You wish to change how you receive correspondence from us.



Please print your details clearly so we don't misread them, frustrating for you and for us if we try to e-mail an address that doesn't exist due to a spelling mistake!

Email fundraising@parentsconsortium.co.uk or 01322 668501

Autism Evening Talks

The following evening talks have been arranged by Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley Multi-agency Autism Group. The Partnership includes representatives from Health, Education, Social Services, Voluntary Agencies and parents. The aim is to give families and carers information, confidence and skills for managing the children in their care.

The evening talks are held at the Rochester Building, Oakfield Community Primary School, Oakfield Lane, Dartford DA1 2SW

The dates for the next talks are:

Wednesday 30th November 2011

Wednesday 25th January 2012

Wednesday 29th February 2012

The talks run from 6.45pm – 9pm

To book a place please contact Lois Spearing, The Children's Resource Centre, Darent Valley Hospital, Dartford, Kent. DA2 8DA

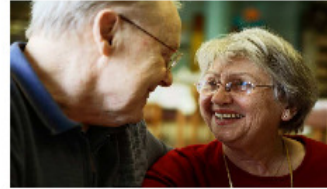
Telephone 01322 428240 or email lois.spearing@wkpct.nhs.uk

Disabled Childrens Access to Childcare (DCATCH)

On pages 9 and 10 you will find important information about this project, it's research and development.

If you would like to join our Child Care Parent Focus Workshops to help shape the projects above or obtain a copy of the Executive Summary or full report (which contains the full list of recommendations etc.) please contact Jacqueline Bobb, Parent Champion for DCATCH at dcatch@parentsconsortium.co.uk or phone 07918 911 749

**Do You Look After Someone
who couldn't look after themselves?**



FREE Carers Support Programme

Confidently Caring - A three hour session held one day a week for Three weeks – Helping Carers take better care of themselves and those they care for. Sessions are being held all over the Kent County,

WHY? - because **"CARERS MATTER"**

Contact your local Voluntary Carer Support Service to book your place or contact us direct

T: 01474 – 535457

E: info@carersmattercic.org



in Partnership with



Information on educational matters

Douglas Silas is a solicitor specialising in educational matters. He has a website with some excellent factsheets covering a range of educational issues.

[www.specialeducationalneeds.co.uk/
FREEDownloads](http://www.specialeducationalneeds.co.uk/FREEDownloads)

Research findings: Child Care for families with disabled children

Thank you to everyone who responded to our survey and took part in our workshops. We interviewed a total of 74 people whose children had a variety of disabilities.

The findings were as follows :-

- Parents want and need a flexible service.
- Only 1/3 of respondents worked (although this may have been due to the timing of the parent support groups), whilst 2/3 of their partners worked either full or part time.
- For many families going back to work was not their top priority at the present time, compared to dealing with general family life.
- There was a heavy reliance on relatives to care for the children (12 out of the 20 who used child care relied on relatives).
- The most popular form of child care requested was regular after school and breakfast clubs.

The top 6 barriers for parents accessing child care were :-

- Suitability of the provision (carer training and qualifications, type of carer and the environment)
- The cost of child care (which can be more expensive than non-disabled child care)
- The timing of child care (i.e. lack of care during the school holidays and after school, lack of flexibility)
- Awareness of what is available
- Issues around the child's condition (their irrational fears, medical needs, eating disorder, not settling with strangers etc.)
- Lack of suitable child care for older children (12 years +)

A number of the recommendations made by the parents are currently being developed :-

Sitting Service (for children and young people) (main purpose: to provide short breaks which would improve quality of life, give parents some space to discuss plans for the future, including possibilities of returning to work with their spouse, family or close friends)

Assessment sessions* taking the format of an event/coffee morning/system for parents and potential child care providers to discuss the child's needs before signing up with potential child care providers (main purpose: build confidence of parents to access suitable child care and give child care providers the opportunity to understand the children's needs better)

- Develop the Parents Consortium **website** and populate with information about child care opportunities etc.
- Develop a '**Buddy Mentor Scheme**' for Child minders and other child care providers to build confidence in working with disabled children (main purpose: to build the confidence and skills of current child care providers)
- Develop a series of **Fun days** (main purpose: to increase awareness of support available to parents who want to return to work, networking opportunity for parents who may go onto develop relationships of mutual support)

Other recommendations made included :- 1. There needs to be more provision of **short breaks** for all ages and disabilities. If parents are able to access short breaks this would improve their quality of life and in time give them to confidence to consider returning to work. 2. **Quality Assurance for Child Care Providers** - Devise a simple QA for those providers who receive positive feedback from parents of disabled children and young people (and the children and young people themselves) (main purpose: to give parents a more informed choice of high quality providers). 3. **After school and holiday clubs** to run throughout the school breaks (main purpose: to make child care available so that parents can work throughout the year. 4. **Capped childcare** (i.e. top up grant for child care providers from Government) (main purpose: to encourage providers to take more disabled children (particularly private child minders), increase access to child care). 5. Extend the **free workshops** which were offered through the DCATCH project 2010-2011 for child care providers (main purpose: to increase the knowledge and skills of the child care workforce, to increase access to child care)



NEW....

Sitting Service for disabled children and young people from December 2011

Are you looking for a Sitter for your disabled son or daughter?
The Parents Consortium will shortly be offering a 'brokerage' service between parents and potential Sitters.

If you would like to register for this service please email dcatch@parentsconsortium.co.uk or contact Jacqueline Bobb, Parent Champion (Child Care) on 07918 911 749. (Please note that you will need to **be** a member of The Parents Consortium)

WANTED - Sitters

for our new Sitting Service for disabled children and young people (launch date: December 2011)

Are you interested in providing paid child care/sitting services to families with disabled children and young people?

Do you have experience of working with disabled children and young people?

If you are interested in becoming a Sitter or for more information about free training please email dcatch@parentsconsortium.co.uk or contact Jacqueline Bobb, Parent Champion (Child Care) on 07918 911 749

KellyStore Fun Raisers raises £10,000 + for the The Parents Consortium.



The Mayor of Dartford opened the event and even joined in the mass group warm up. As well as teams from local running clubs, Barclays Bank (Swanley), The London Stock Exchange, Portal tax Claims and McBrides Auditors, some of our families joined in the fun.

Franny Norman, Nicole Ward-Corderoy and Alan Milner championed the 2K route which was accessible to wheelchair users. This was a challenging triumph as there were several hills involved !!!

We have to say special thanks to our families that really got behind us in this event and helped us to reach the sum of £10,000 with their own fundraising. Thanks goes to The Atkins family, Robin Adams, Kerrie and Logan Clubb, Alan Cooke, The Freeman family, The Pimm family, The Meloy family, The Wren family and Nicole Ward-Corderoy. Sorry if I have left anyone out but thank you to all that supported us in whatever capacity.

Special thanks also to our sessional workers who as well as running for us, helped promote and raise funds.



This is an amazing prize. Two tickets to join Louis, Gary, Kelly and Tulisa at Wembley Arena December 11th to watch the Grand Final of X factor where the winner of 2011 will be crowned.

What a fantastic Christmas treat to be part of the Xtravaganza. Last year, Rhianna, Christina Aguilera and Take That... This year...who knows, but you can be there to see them all !!! You will not be able to buy these tickets anywhere....these are priceless !!!

Raffle tickets enclosed. Just £5.00 per ticket or three tickets for £10.00. Please send stubbs and cheques to The Parents Consortium. Please return unsold tickets.

Draw will take place Monday 21st November 2011. Not much time, so don't miss out.

All proceeds of this raffle will help to save the Family Advice Service (SAIL) at the Parents Consortium.

A big thank you to all the organisations and individuals who have supported us with donations:

Dartford Lions Club - Donated cuddly toys for our Christmas Party Raffle.

Alison Pimm who donated hanging baskets brightening up Allsworth Court for the Summer.

Barclays Bank Swanley who donated Golf Umbrellas towards the 2011 Charity Golf Day

Portal tax Claims who has made multiple donations this Summer through their training sessions and published articles which total so far as £1,346.39.

Sam Dowler through sheer determination and stamina in his Hell Rider event raised an amazing £375.00

The Pavilion Players of Wilmington donated £150.00

Gill Fish and the Rising Sun at Fawkham who raised £60.00 through their collection tin.

Sarah Redpath who completed the London to Southend Bike Ride and raised £145.00 for the Parents Consortium.

Bobby Brown from Swanley who has paid a couple of visits here at Allsworth Court and kindly donated £60.00

A.K Barbers of Swanley who have donated a raffle prize.

Marks & Spencer who donated £250.00 worth of vouchers for us to use in our future raffle prizes.

The London Stock Exchange who as well as entering a team in the Joydens Wood 10K run have raised a total of £1,249.50 in sponsorship.

Sean Stone donated a desktop to be used at Allsworth Court.

Daniel Evans donated two printers to be used in our Short Breaks Unit by our young people.

ICEX LTD Corporate IT Recycling who have donated two laptops that will be used in the Short Break Unit by our young people.

Asda Swanley who kindly donated £100 of champagne that was used as prizes for the Joydens Wood Event.

Mr & Mrs Etheridge who once again supported the Charity Golf Day and the Joydens Wood event by donating trophies.

K Square Prints of Erith who kindly donated printed T shirts that were used by our staff in the Joydens Wood event.

Sweatshop Bluewater who supported our Joydens Wood run by donating Sweatshop vouchers for our prizes as well as vouchers for all of our runners.

Rowhill Grange Hotel donated 2 day spa passes used as raffle prizes.

The Bull Beefeater Grill in Swanley has donated a group tasting session to be used in a future raffle.

Mcbrides Auditors who generously raised £311 in sponsorship for the Joydens Wood event.

All the families who have made a magnificent contribution in raising the £10,000 from the Joydens Wood event.

Lumos who once again donated £150.00 on a recent visit to Allsworth Court.

Generous donations from the Barry family, the Day family, the Lindopp family and the Piper family.

PLEASE NOTE

While every care is taken with the newsletter, the Parents Consortium can't be held responsible for any errors or omissions, nor accept any responsibility for any goods or services mentioned.

The Parents Consortium

Allsworth Court

St Davids Road

Hextable

Kent BR8 7RJ

Telephone: 01322 668501

Email: admin@parentsconsortium.co.uk

Website: www.parentsconsortium.co.uk

Charity No: 1054129

The Parents Consortium was established in 1996 by parents who believed that services for disabled children would only be truly responsive if they were directly accountable to the parents, carers and young people themselves.

The young people who use our services are those with any form of physical, learning or sensory impairment. We provide appropriate activities for children of all abilities, which may mean full-time one-to-one support for some of the children. Above all, we provide lots of fun!

Our facilities are open to families, schools, hospitals and other organisations. We cater for parents and siblings too,

We are an independent charitable company, with membership open to parents/carers with a disabled child aged 0-19 living in the Dartford, Gravesham or Swanley areas.

Our funding comes through grants, donations, charitable giving and a supportive community/business sector working alongside Kent County Council Social Services.