

Under the Umbrella
eNews

The eNews for Umbrella Autism (Registered Charity No. 1096993)

STOP PRESS: Review a video on managing challenging behaviour!

(see newsletter below for details --- ring and book in now!)

STOP PRESS: NAS Workshop on independent living

(includes personal perspective from Thomas Madar)

17 June 6.30-8.30pm

At The Meadows Community Centre, St Catherine's Road, Cambridge.

For people on the spectrum (free), Carers/parents/Umbrella members (5); other professionals (25). Book by phone please with Sarah Smith on 0115-9113360

STOP PRESS: Parents Event

23 June 9.45am-1.30pm

At The Meadows Community Centre, St Catherine's Road, Cambridge

For parents of children or young people that use, have used or are waiting to use the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services in Cambridge and Ely then you are most welcome to this free event to share your views and ideas for these services. To book a place, contact Cath Mitchell on 01223 712055 or email Julie Collinson at mail@collinsonclan.fsnet.co.uk

Umbrella Summer Highlights

New charity status for Umbrella

More donations and project grants

Open meeting on Tuesday 1 July: A comprehensive family autism service?(with Brian Gale from the LEA)

Help with challenging behaviour: review a video

Family picnic Sunday 27 July

Bring and Share supper for parents

Education Programme for 16-20s with AS

Umbrella AS youth groups rule OK!

Saturday work with Sunshine Club

Newsflash: Message to users of Goodnight Sitting Service
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The Details

New charitable status for Umbrella!

We've just become an independent charity, but we've also retained affiliated group status with the National Autistic Society (NAS). It's the best of both worlds, we think.

As a Branch of the NAS, we found the information and development support was excellent but we were very restricted in where we could apply for funding. We've shown we have good ideas for services that would really help. We've begun to make the links that will help us make partnerships that can things happening. Now that we have independent charity status we can still work closely with the NAS, form local partnerships and apply for grants to get new services, shaped the way we need, up and running in and around Cambridge.

Donations and a project grant

Jacqui Radford, Umbrella Treasurer, recently received a cheque for 750 From the South Cambridgeshire District Council, who have been fundraising for Umbrella. Jacqui has also received a cheque from the St John's College School PTA for 7,800 raised at their annual auction for charity and reported in our last newsletter. Thank you to all who've fund raised for us. The Trustees of Umbrella will be considering ways of using the money for maximum impact . Want to get involved in the decision-making? Join the management committee or, better yet, become a trustee! Ring Jacqui on 01954-210075 or Robin on 01223-368203

We applied for and have received a grant for Umbrella Autism to extend and develop volunteering for Umbrella among Cambridge University students and staff. The funding comes through the University but from the government's Active Communities Fund. It will support expansion of this year's pilot volunteering scheme and the inclusion of small workshops for the volunteers to explore their autism knowledge in light of experience. Many thanks the funder for this support. For the coming year, Umbrella activities will be supported by our own team of volunteers. Anyone interested in this project ring 01223-368203 and leave your details.

Open meeting:

A comprehensive family autism service!?

Tuesday 1st July 7.30 pm (see end of newsletter for time & venue)

with Brian Gale (LEA)

What would a comprehensive autism service for families look like? Is there a need for such a service? Is there the will to provide such a service? What would you expect it to include?

There is a proposal to set up a joint Social Services and Education Service which would aim at reducing the number of out of county residential placements. This is an opportunity to ask questions about what is being proposed and why. Everyone welcome.

Autism-friendly Family Picnic on Sunday 27 July 3-5pm

Our annual members autism-friendly family picnic will take place in the Kings College Fellows Garden, where Umbrella members will be guests of a College Fellow. Entrance for Umbrella members and friends will be sign-posted near the corner of West Road and Queens Road. Parking in nearby streets. Loos on site. (Sorry --- NO BALLS ALLOWED!) All Umbrella members, their families and friends are very welcome.

Parents Bring and Share Supper Tuesday, 24 June

The next meeting of the support group for parents of older teens and young adults will be an open bring and share event for all parents. On this occasion we invite any parents, whatever the age of their children, to come and meet each other. Parents of younger children may welcome this opportunity to meet other parents and to share ideas about what kinds of support they feel should be available for parents. For more information, ring Jacqui on 01954-210075. Hilltop Carer's Centre, Primrose Street, 7.30-9pm (see Diary below)

Live in Bottisham, Burwell or Linton?

Yes? Then you are living in one of the county's most active community education and family learning areas!

On 30th July Burwell Village College there is going to be a holiday activity for families with children with communication difficulties. The event is for families and primary aged children with communication difficulties and their siblings living in the Burwell/Bottisham/Linton areas. From 11.00-2.00 to include activities and a BBQ. Booking essential. Maximum 10 families. Contact Samara Philpot (01638-743658) or Susan Owen (01638-508430).

Living in another area? Console yourself in the knowledge that other areas may follow Burwell's innovative lead --- ask at your local secondary school Community Education office!

Education for 16-20's with AS

As we've reported in our last newsletter, the Aspirations Education Programme is clearly meeting a need. There are two established groups (20-35's; 35+) --- and a new group starts in September for school leavers aged 16-20. Coordinator, Susan Owen, is meeting people now who may be interested in joining, or helping someone they know consider joining the programme in September. Its a specially designed and accredited programme for people with social communication difficulties. Small, welcoming and flexible, its proving a great success. If you're interested or know

someone who might be, leave a message for Susan on 01638-508430 or ring Turning The Red Lights Green on 01223-811662 to find out more.

From A Team to... the X Team?!

Our Youth Club for 9-12's with AS has proved a happy and popular activity for pre-teens. Credit for this goes to the A Team members themselves, the Cambridge University Umbrella volunteers and Cat Burgess, our very able Youth Worker, for translating people's needs and wants into a club with a cool ethos.

Over the years, we've been contacted by numerous individual parents of teens with AS or high functioning autism asking if there was a Youth Club for teens. The Umbrella CU volunteers have been inspired by the success of the A Team to start thinking about a club for 13-18s. We envisage running a small group for girls from October along similar times to the A Team (an X Team, perhaps?!), also staffed mainly by CU volunteers. A mixed group or a group for AS boys might start in January. Many CU volunteers come to us with real insight and understanding --- sometimes through a friend or relative or work experience --- of what its like to be a not "typical" kid.

Parents and young people interested in seeing groups for teens started up can contact umbrella@hosking.com or phone Karen on 01223-413032 with your contact details. So... what's the catch? We need parents or carers who are willing to help behind the scenes on the Youth Clubs Committee or, as and when needed, with specific tasks for the Club.

Saturday work with Sunshine Club Saturday Playscheme

Our partners, Crossroads for Carers, are continuing to develop and raise funds for the Sunshine Club, the Saturday Club for 4-11s with autistic spectrum conditions. The Club is providing fun and relaxing activities for children with ASD, whilst providing parents and siblings with essential respite. The Club is divided into two groups that meet on alternate weeks. As well as recreation and respite for children and families, the Club also offers an excellent opportunity for extending and learning skills in working with children on the autistic spectrum. Coordinator, Julyan, who helped set up the Club, is moving to new horizons, so applications are being received for that post at the moment. For more information on jobs or the joining Club, contact Anna Bainbridge at Crossroads on 01353 652138.

Help with challenging behaviour: review a video

We are fortunate to have among our members a number of professionals keen to learn and to make a real difference to the lives of people affected by autism. One such Umbrella member, Isabel Clare, writes:

Would you like to review a video?

I have been asked to review a video about intensive interaction with young people (early adulthood) with severe learning disabilities, autism, and 'challenging behaviour' for 'Autism', one of the NAS journals, for 14th July. The length of the review is flexible - the more important it's thought to be, the more space it warrants.

The video itself is about 40 mins long and shows Phoebe Caldwell (who developed

this method) and paid carers working with a young man, followed by descriptions of past work with three other young people. What I'd like to do (and I already know it is OK with the journal) is get the views of carers (whether paid or unpaid). Is the video interesting and/or helpful? The method overlaps with what I think Tandy Harrison was talking about at the AGM, for those who were able to attend.

I've know a couple of people interested already and would very much like to hear from others. Then I'd like to arrange a viewing, as a group if at all possible, and a discussion. From there, I'll prepare a draft review for each person's comments/amendments. If there are markedly different views, I'll try to reflect these. The review will include the names of all those who participate, and the video will go to Umbrella Autism afterwards for borrowing.

If you're interested, please contact me - Isabel Clare ichc2@hermes.cam.ac.uk or 01223-323128/ 07775-793-825

Summer Reading Suggestions

Freaks, Geeks and Asperger Syndrome by Luke Jackson (on adolescence)

Loving Mr Spock by Barbara Jacobs

An Asperger Marriage by Christopher & Gisela Slater-Walker

The Essential Difference by Simon Baron-Cohen (for a fascinating interpretation of research)

Newsflash: Message to users of Goodnight Sitting Service
A message from Good Night to their users:

Some of you may have heard rumours regarding the future of Good Night.

The Sitting Service has recently been going through a very difficult time with regard to funding which has seriously threatened our ability to continue. However, there is now light at the end of the tunnel as Cambridge Mencap have offered support with the possibility of eventually taking Good Night over in its present form. This will enable us to continue to provide a service to the families who currently have a Good Night sitter and to recruit volunteers for those on our waiting list.

Discussions with Mencap are ongoing and the whole process is likely to take some time. In the meantime, however, we would like to reassure parents/carers that Good Night will be continuing as normal.

GOOD NIGHT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Umbrella Diary for 2003

Umbrella Open Meetings (members and non-members welcome) at Hilltop Carer's Centre, Primrose Street (Off Victoria Road) in Cambridge. Parking at

the end of Green Street or nearby streets. 7.30-9pm with networking from 9-9.30.

Tuesday July 1st Thurs October 2nd Weds Dec 3rd (to be confirmed)

Support meetings for parents of older teens and adults (venue and times same as Open Meetings) are Tuesdays, generally the last Tuesday of the month. For details in June ring Jacqui on 01954-210075. Ring Phyl Lewery (01223-709827 from July.

24 June: bring & share supper for parents of children of ALL AGES

28 Sept 25 Nov 16 Dec

Do contact us if you have news, views or suggestions: rww20@cam.ac.uk

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