

August 2009

Families Enjoy A **BIG DAY OUT** To Celebrate 30th Anniversary



The British weather held out and in fact the sun shone as disabled children, their families and friends all came together for a **BIG DAY OUT** in London's Hyde Park to help Contact a Family mark its 30th birthday in style!

On hand to keep everyone entertained were clowns teaching circus skills, balloon-making and performing magic tricks, and children's face painters. The more adventurous could try their hand at Bollywood dancing thanks to instruction from professional Bollywood dancers.



"The opportunity to enjoy play and leisure together for families with disabled children is often poor or unsatisfactory. The BIG DAY OUT hopes to change that."

As part of Contact a Family's 30th celebrations, 'Big Day Out' events are being held throughout the summer to encourage families with disabled children to get out and about and enjoy play and leisure together.



Claire Pimm, Contact a Family's Director of Policy and Communications, said: "Our latest research shows that the opportunity to enjoy play and leisure together for families with disabled children is often poor or unsatisfactory. The Big Day Out hopes to change that and we would like to see as many families as possible outdoors, taking part in a picnic together, visiting a local attraction, going to the beach or nearby beauty spot, or popping along to their local cinema.



30 years of strengthening families with disabled children



In Scotland, Contact a Family has teamed up with some of the country's leading visitor attractions to enable families with disabled children to enjoy their own 'Big Day Out'.

In Edinburgh, National Galleries for Scotland has generously provided 10 free family passes for families with a disabled child for their exhibition The Discovery of Spain. National Trust for Scotland have given 200 passes for entry to any of their properties across Scotland.

Other attractions taking part include Loudoun Castle theme park in Ayrshire, Drumlanrig Castle in Dumfriesshire, Landmark centre in Highland and Cream O'Galloway in Galloway, who have all offered discounts on entry to their sites especially for families of disabled children.

Supporters' Update

Parents Tell Their Story In New Web Films

Contact a Family has made three new web videos featuring parents talking about their experiences of raising a child with a disability and the best sources of help they have found.

Contact a Family, supporting families with disabled children focuses on the support services the charity provides and facilitates, and features parents who have benefited from that support.

In **Meet the Parents** families talk about the importance of sharing experiences with other parents and gaining support from each other to reduce isolation.

Meet the Fathers features two dads talking about their experiences and some of the issues they have come across as dads of disabled children.



Nigel (left), from Oxfordshire whose son Matthew has a very rare condition called Peters anomaly, says in the film:

"When I first learnt about it, it was just a complete shock. I can remember for about the first four days

just crying continuously. Mainly because I think I was looking forward to the future and saw it would be very very different... That affected me at that time quite hard.

Contact a Family was a really good resource, helping us to navigate our way through the maze of benefits and getting statements and all those things that are new when you've got a disabled child.

One of their great functions is...being able to give you the right information as to where you should go and where you can find the correct support."

And Tim, (right) whose son has a rare condition says:

"There are people [at Contact a Family] who can really help you get the information you need to face the emotional battle of getting what you need ...You do become very socially isolated because you're spending 24 hours a day looking after a child. Things like friendships tend to go to the wall. Organisations like Contact a Family help you to realise you're not alone."



View the films at www.youtube.com/user/cafamily or www.cafamily.org.uk/parentstories/videos.html

Attitudes Towards Disability Shocking

Families with disabled children in the UK feel stigmatised and shut out from society, according to new research by Contact a Family.

'*What Makes My Family Stronger*' found negative attitudes towards disability coupled with a lack of services to be the main barriers preventing families with disabled children from leading ordinary lives. While some families show resilience, imagination and great strength in attempting to overcome these barriers, there are some who cannot cope any longer and are at breaking point.

Key findings of the report are:

- Almost 70% of families with disabled children said that understanding and acceptance of disability from their community or society is poor or unsatisfactory.
- Over 60% of families said they don't feel listened to by professionals.
- Vital support services such as short breaks, a key worker and childcare are unavailable to almost half of families.
- Over 60% of families said they don't feel valued by society in their role as carers.
- Half of families with disabled children said the opportunity to enjoy play and leisure together is poor or unsatisfactory.

Families with disabled children have enough challenges to overcome...without also having to cope with prejudice and ignorance

Srabani Sen, Chief Executive of Contact a Family, said: "It is shocking that in the UK today, attitudes towards disabled children, from professionals and members of the public, are among the barriers preventing families from leading ordinary lives. Families with disabled children have enough challenges to overcome to secure the support they need without also having to cope with prejudice and ignorance."

Srabani added: "Families with disabled children want the same things as other families. They want to see their children reach their full potential, they want to be included and accepted by their community and they want to enjoy time together and have fun.

"For this to happen, professionals need to recognise each child's capabilities rather than seeing only disability. They must also recognise the value and expertise of parent carers. And every one of us needs to be more understanding and accepting of disability."

Marathon Heroes Raise Record Amount

On Sunday 26th April, 14 intrepid runners took to the streets of London to raise vital funds for Contact a Family in this year's Flora London Marathon.

Running 26.2 miles is no mean feat; it takes strength of mind, courage and motivation, as well as fitness.

On top of all the training is the daunting task of raising sponsorship from family, friends, colleagues and anyone else they can persuade to dig in. Fundraising can be hard, but help is always at hand from the Contact a Family fundraising team.

This year's team of 3 women and 11 men put in a fantastic effort, and they are now on target to have raised a staggering £80,000 towards supporting families with disabled children. Two of our runners even travelled from as far afield as Germany and Spain to take part.



Jonathan, left back, and Jason, far right, with their family.

British soldier Jason Pascoe, and brother Jonathan Wright, a striker for Workington Reds football team, ran the London Marathon in memory of their other brother Richard Wright, who died in 2007 at the age of 24.

Richard had learning difficulties and Microcephaly, a neurological disorder which affects the size of the brain.

They said: "We ran the London Marathon to raise awareness about the condition Richard had, but also to raise awareness of all disabilities and the hundreds of thousands of families bringing up disabled children in the UK today."

Robin Hindle Fisher, one of Contact a Family's trustees, set himself a huge personal challenge for his 50th birthday of running the London Marathon and raising £50,000 for the charity. Robin, who was affected by



Robin, second from right, celebrates with his family

Thalidomide in the late 1950's, completed the course in a very respectable time and looks likely to exceed his fundraising target, which is a tremendous achievement.

Other runners included Jon Morcom, who ran for Contact a Family because of his link with a local support group in Plymouth. He ran with his friend Mike, a local fireman.

Team member Nick Breakspear is the son of our volunteer parent representative for Orkney, Trudy Marwick, and has a brother with autism. He finished in 5 hours 7 mins.



John Morcom and friend Mike prepare for the race ahead

Another runner, Peter Cooper, chose Contact a Family as his charity for the marathon because his sister-in-law's brother has a disability and the family benefited from our support.

Massive thanks and huge congratulations go to all the team: Nick Breakspear, Peter Cooper, Rachel Dench, Brian East, Alejandro Martinez Fuster, Kate

Gardner, Fiona Grist, Matthew Grist, Robin Hindle Fisher, Jon Morcom, Jason Pascoe, Mike Porter, Mike Sawiki and Jonny Wright.

If our runners have inspired you to take part in the 2010 London Marathon, contact our fundraising team on 020 7608 8733 or e-mail fr@cafamily.org.uk for details on how to register.

5 Ladies - 3 Peaks!

On Saturday 21st June, 5 plucky young ladies supported by 3 expert drivers, took on the challenge of climbing the UK's 3 highest mountains, Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdon, in just 24 hours!!

To prepare themselves they underwent a rigorous training programme that involved walking the South Downs on freezing cold mornings for up to 8 hours. It paid off as they completed the challenge in the magnificent time of 22hrs 25mins!



Emma, far right, with friends Cassandra, Vanessa, Alison and Karen

After reading an article on the struggles faced by families caring for a disabled child and being inspired by the work of Contact a Family, Emma decided to dedicate her part in this challenge to fundraise for us. She has already exceeded her fundraising target of £500 and this is set to rise as Emma's employer (BAA) will be boosting her total by another £250.

Congratulations to all the team for surviving the challenge and a big thank you to Emma for selecting Contact a Family.

Supporters' Update

Help Us To Help More Families

Please accept my donation of £

- I enclose a cheque made payable to Contact a Family
- I enclose a CAF voucher made payable to Contact a Family

giftaid it Increase your donation by almost a third at no extra cost to you

- I am a UK taxpayer and want Contact a Family to reclaim the tax on this donation and all donations I make in the future until I notify you otherwise

To qualify for Gift Aid what you pay in income or capital gains tax must at least equal the amount we reclaim in the tax year

- I am not a UK taxpayer

To make a secure donation online by credit or debit card visit our website:

www.cafamily.org.uk/supportus/donate.html

Supporter Reference No

First Name

Surname

Address

Postcode

Tel

email

Date

Please send me more details about:

- Taking part in a sponsored event
- Increasing my regular donation to Contact a Family
- Leaving a gift in my will to Contact a Family
- Please tick here if you DO NOT require a receipt for your donation

Data Protection: Contact a Family is committed to the confidentiality of your personal information. Personal data will be held and used in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and will not be shared with any third parties for commercial use.

**Return to: Contact a Family, FREEPOST
LON8801, LONDON, EC1B 1EE.**

Get Supporters' Update By Email!

Sign up now by emailing us at fr@cafamily.org.uk with your name and Supporter Reference number and 'supporters update' as the subject line. You will then be sent a link to a PDF version of the next newsletter to read online.

"Keep Us In Mind, Tam"

Representatives of Scotland's disabled children delivered an important message to Scotland's new Children's Commissioner on 16th July.

Finola Forman, 17 and Adam Bojelian, 9 visited the Children's Commissioner, Tam Bailey, (pictured) with a



welcoming card from Contact a Family Scotland. The card - a painting of Edinburgh Castle - was painted by Finola who has Cerebral Palsy. Inside the message "Keep us in mind Tam" was signed by Contact a Family Scotland on behalf of all disabled children in Scotland.

Ellenor Anwyl, Director of Contact a Family Scotland, said: "We wanted to extend a warm welcome to Scotland's new Children's Commissioner and to remind him of the importance of including disabled children in any future policy or planning. Disabled children and their families want to lead ordinary lives. They want the same opportunities and to reach their full potential, so please keep us in mind."

To mark our 30th anniversary year we are seeking 30 men to take part in the **5K SANTA RUN** which takes place on the 6th December in Greenwich Park, London.

Santa costumes provided!

For more details contact 020 7608 8733

Opposite: Colleagues from National Schools Partnership raised £1,300 for the Wandsworth Contact a Family Project by taking part in a Triathlon in July. The team swam, cycled and ran their hearts out but said they got a "real buzz out of it".



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