

contact a family
for families with disabled children

incorporating
The Lady Hoare Trust

in contact



The newsletter of Contact a Family West Midlands

www.cafamily.org.uk/wmids

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New and extended helpline opening hours

**Contact a Family's freephone helpline is now open Monday to Friday
9.30am to 5pm.**

Staffed by a team of friendly, expert parent advisers, our helpline provides advice, information and support to families on any aspect of raising a disabled child. The helpline also provides information to professionals working with families.

The helpline will no longer be open on Monday evenings, but will instead have extended hours throughout the week. This will help us to increase the number of calls we answer and advise more people. Our helpline advisers can help with:

- **benefits or tax credits issues**
- **assessments and statements of special educational needs**
- **details of local parent support groups**
- **details of Contact a Family services in your area, including one-to-one support, family events and parent workshops**
- **information about your child's condition**
- **how to access help with getting a break from caring**
- **details of charities which give grants to families with disabled children**
- **advice and information on any other aspect of caring for a disabled child.**

The helpline has access to interpreters in over 170 languages.

If you need advice on any issue about raising a disabled child, ring the Contact a Family helpline **0808 808 3555**, Monday to Friday 9.30am to 5pm.



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Update of recent events...

Yoga and Relaxation and Tactile Play workshops for families in Telford

A small number of families joined us and Martin and Kath from DICE for a yoga and relaxation workshop in the morning followed by a tactile play workshop in the afternoon. Parents and children had fun together and took away ideas and techniques to practise at home.

Picnic in the Park August 24th

Despite a somewhat cold and blustery day families with disabled children turned out in force from across the West Midlands region to our joint summer event with Link Upp. Outside they enjoyed the beauty of Cannon Hill park, took the opportunity to try out adapted bikes, joined in with the African drummers, asked Bernard to model something from balloons, enjoyed our children's entertainers and tried their hand at making something in the craft gazebo. In the Midland Arts Centre there were plenty of useful information stands, a chance to have your face painted, hot drinks and space to chill out. Some families took the opportunity to go onto the Nature Centre at reduced rates.

Counting the costs 2010



Contact a Family's latest research report finds some families with disabled children are going without food and heating. The survey, a repeat of one carried out in 2008, asked over 1,100 UK parents caring for a disabled child about their current financial situation.

To read more about this, visit the Contact a Family website at www.cafamily.org.uk or call 0121 415 4624 for a copy of the report

Contact a Family's future events...

Our inclusive First Aid courses run in partnership with the British Red Cross have proved very popular and we are hoping to run some more. Anyone who has left us their details will be contacted.

There are still a few places at our two workshops "Working with our children to improve behaviour". These workshops are being run in partnership with Marches Family Network and will be held in Hereford. Dr Rachel Stretton and Jean Lees, both clinical psychologists will be leading the workshops. Tuesday 2nd November for parents of primary aged children and Tuesday 16th November for parents of secondary aged children. For further details please ring Lynda Clifton on 01568 614908 or email Lynda@marchesfamilynetwork.org.uk.

Watch this space. We can't guarantee any of the following events but these are our thoughts so far for the coming year, in response to what you have told us: two family events, workshops on sleep and incontinence, an event for dads and their child and maybe repeats of some of the workshops we have run this year.

Face 2 Face is a network of schemes providing support to parents of disabled children and children with support needs. Local schemes recruit and train volunteers who are themselves parents of disabled children to befriend other parents. Befrienders are able to empathise with other parents because of their own experiences and they support new parents to make positive adjustments to their situation.

Each service is developed in response to the needs of local parents and provides support in a variety of ways including one to one befriending, support groups, dads' groups and family events. There are established Face 2 Face services across the Midlands in Birmingham, Stoke on Trent, Shropshire, Leicestershire and Northamptonshire. We are also setting up a new service in Sandwell where we are recruiting parents to be trained as befrienders. In areas where there is not a local service parents can access support via our online service.

For further information visit our website www.face2facenetwork.org.uk

Support Pathways – a service for all the family

Midland Mencap's 'Support Pathways' is a new service, working to improve access to opportunities for individuals with learning disabilities and their families and carers. Families often feel overwhelmed by their situation and struggle with the day to day responsibilities that having a family member with a learning disability may bring. The added pressure of not knowing where to go for additional help or advice is often a huge barrier to improving all of the family's quality of life experience. Having the right advice, information, support and guidance can open up a new world for these families.

The Big Lottery-funded service supports people to access a wide range of information and opportunities, from benefits advice to taking up a new hobby or getting back into education or employment.

Referrals can come from professionals or individuals, so the team takes a flexible approach to how they work with people.

Another key role for Support Pathways is its free, tailor-made awareness training for organisations.

For more information on the Support Pathways Service or the free awareness training contact the Support Pathways Team at Midland Mencap
on 0121 442 2944
or e-mail: supportpathways@midlandmencap.org.uk



Stop press...

We recently came across a new website giving over 700 great tips from parents, teachers and therapists - people with everyday experience of learning disability. Check it out!

www.netbuddy.org.uk

Spotlight on...

We hold a database of many groups, service providers and provisions throughout the West Midlands, and try to feature just some of them in our Newsletter. If you would like us to spread the word about your group, please let Liz know on 0121 415 4624.

Funny Blood recently held a BBQ and raised a fantastic £500 for Contact a Family! Many people went along on what was a lovely day. There was live music, a raffle, face painting and of course the BBQ! Our thanks go to Ruth from Funny Blood!

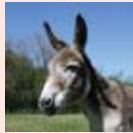
For information please go to www.funnyblood.co.uk



Lunchtime Linkup @ Allens Croft

Children's Centre, Kings Heath, B14 6RP. A support group for families with children under 5 years with a disability or special needs. Monthly meetings from 1.30 – 3pm. Please call Ann or Clare on 0121 675 2835 for further details

Pilkington Donkey Centre
Sutton Park, Sutton Coldfield
B74 2YT.
0121 354 9444



Saturday Club for children with special needs and their families!

Please call for details of appointments or go to www.elisabethsvendsentrust.org.uk



Do you look after a child with additional needs in Wolverhampton?

Parent Carer Support worker, Helen Nicholls is now based at the Gem Centre, with the Disabled Children and Young Peoples Team. Helen can be contacted on 01902 553409. Or visit

www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/carers

CATS

Children action team support in Balsall Heath.

Promoting social inclusion through play and supporting children with high needs to take part in activities. Including a Saturday playscheme, family trips, training, sports activities and parent workshops.

0121 440 1007



Toy libraries in Birmingham

Did you know there are over 80 toy libraries in Birmingham? You can borrow anything from baby toys, games, outdoor play equipment, as well as sensory and specialist items.

For further details please go to www.birmingham.toylibraries.org.uk

Or call 07823 329 287

London 2012 will be looking for volunteers!!



Many of the roles will require volunteers to be 18 or over by 1 January 2012, but they want to give young people the chance to volunteer at the Olympic and Paralympic Games too! They will unveil their Young Games Maker programme for under 18s in Summer 2011 – so keep an eye out here for more information www.london2012.com

Spotlight on...

Ambassador Clubs are coming to Birmingham, Dudley, Shrewsbury and Stoke on Trent!



Are you a physically disabled person aged 10 – 25 years?
Are you interested in making new friends in a fun environment?
Do you want to be a part of a new club that has loads of activities and events throughout the year?

If you've answered yes to all these questions then the brand new Ambassador Clubs are just for you! At your club you will have loads of opportunities to meet up regularly with other young people, learn new skills, get a work placement, go on days out and even have a chance to attend an awards ceremony at the House of Commons in London!

The ethos of Ambassador Clubs is based on 'fun and friendship' and themes include things like: healthy living, creativity, leadership, teamwork and loads of other fun activities and challenges.

There will be on average 10 - 15 young people (called Ambassadors) attending who are all aged around 10 – 18 years old (the age limit is 25). Each club will run from 10am to 3.30pm every six weeks and will take place on Saturdays and during the school holidays.

The Kidz Unlimited programme is designed so that you can get the most out of being a member of your club, some of the opportunities on offer include: a chance to learn key life skills to make you more independent, managing your own regional campaign (including the budget), becoming a leader, playing new sports including developing a fitness plan, wheelchair skills, taking part in drama and music activities, as well as having the opportunity to make new friends and have fun.

When you attend your first club you will receive an Ambassador Club welcome pack including a ruck sack, tee shirt, stickers, and loads of other goodies.

Becoming an Ambassador and attending each club is free (Whizz-Kidz can even help with travel expenses!). All we ask for in return is that you try and attend as many meetings as possible; this will also help you to get the most from being an Ambassador. If you attend all eight meetings you will receive some great vouchers and will automatically be entered into the grand prize draw for an iPod Touch!

Club activities are aimed at young disabled people with no or mild-moderate learning difficulties.

For young disabled people with severe learning difficulties we will offer support and advice, as well as signposting to other relevant organisations and the chance to attend other Whizz-Kidz events.

We only have 15 places available on a first-come-first-served basis, to book your place and become a Whizz-Kidz Ambassador please email ambassadors@whizz-kidz.org.uk or call 0800 151 3350.

Stop press...

Our thanks go to all of you who completed evaluations at our Picnic in the Park. The winners of the £10 vouchers were Shebina Hussain, Shahbeen Akhtar and Mrs Murray!

Well Done and Thank You!

Spotlight on...

...Siblings

Children and young people who do a lot to help look after their disabled brothers and sisters are called **young carers**. Often siblings may feel left out or jealous of the attention given to their brother or sister, sad when they are ill, embarrassed about people staring or perhaps lonely when their sibling is in hospital. However, they can also be proud of themselves when they have learnt sign language, or taught their sibling to catch a ball, or pleased when they get to meet other siblings.

There are a number of support networks and services available, and also some books which may be helpful. Please let Liz know if you come across other useful books or websites on 0121 415 4624.

www.youngcarers.net
www.sibs.org.uk
www.kids.org.uk
www.coventryyoungcarers.org.uk
www.sandwellyc.org.uk
www.warwickshireyoungcarers.org.uk
www.telfordyoungcarers.org.uk



Recommended Reading

Siblings Without Rivalry, by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish.

A real classic—a quick and easy read with powerful techniques you can start using right away

It Isn't Fair! Edited by Stanley D. Klein and Maxwell J. Schleifer

Presents a wide range of perspectives on the relationship of siblings to children with disabilities, written by parents, young adult siblings, younger siblings, and professionals. The issues of fairness, expectations, rewards, punishments, caretaking responsibilities, and negative feelings are all thoroughly discussed.

Living with a Brother or Sister with Special Needs: A Book for Siblings, by Donald Meyer and Patricia Vadasy.

Contact a Family also produce a guide for Siblings which is available from our freephone helpline.

My Sister

We asked Tom about his sister, and this is what he said...

'Me and my sister Vicki are twins, and she has Down syndrome. Sometimes it's a real pain, its hard to live with because when we go to town and we are walking round it's hard to look at any shops because we are spending a lot of time watching Vicki in case she does a runner! It's also hard when I go out with my friends to the shops as she has to stay at home. She sometimes asks 'why can't I go out with my friends', and that makes me feel guilty. But on the good side, she comes out with some funny sentences and made up words, which makes me laugh!'

Spotlight on...

Family Fun in Barmouth...thanks to Amy, our Family Worker

Amy was recently successful in obtaining a grant for the Morris family, enabling them to have a well earned holiday.

The WED Trust and the Birchington Convalescent Fund gave £400 to the family which included mum, dad, auntie, uncle and 10 year old Rachel, who has Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis. They spent a week in Barmouth, and although the weather was mixed it didn't stop them enjoying themselves. They spent their days visiting Harlech Castle, going to the beach and crab fishing as well as treating themselves to meals out!

Well done Amy and the Morris family – you deserved a great time!

Welcome to Over The Wall

We provide residential activity camps during the Easter and summer holidays to children aged 8-17, who are affected by serious illnesses.



Thousands of children are affected every year by serious and life limiting illnesses. Many spend months, even years in and out of hospital undergoing treatments which can be frightening and painful. Many have endured isolation and lack of childhood experiences.

At camp we help children rebuild their confidence and self esteem by encouraging them to take part in a range of activities such as kayaking, climbing, horse riding, archery, arts & crafts, technology and media, as well as a weekly talent show and disco. Perhaps the most remarked on part of camp from all the children is the number of new friends they make.

The children are supported during the week by Over The Wall staff, a dedicated team of volunteers who work with the children on a one to one basis and finally a paediatric specialised team of doctors and nurses who kindly volunteer their time (and join in all the activities with the children!)

While the children are staying with us their parents are able to take a much needed break knowing the children are having a fantastic time and being cared for 24/7.

We also ensure that siblings are not forgotten; during Easter and Autumn school holidays we run camps that give siblings a break from the stresses of home life with a sick brother or sister. The activity programme is exactly the same for both sets of children.

Finally, we run an Outreach Programme in hospitals throughout the UK to give children confined to hospital wards a taste of camp life with the hope that once they are well enough they will join us for a full week of fun and magic.

Please call on 02392 477110 for further details or go to www.otw.org.uk

Spotlight on...

Can you help us with an introduction?

In these difficult times we at Contact a Family need to increase the number of companies that we talk with to gain their financial support and we would like your help with this.

Many companies want to help charities. It is good for their well being as it can improve staff motivation, supplier and customer support and public relations. However they receive many requests from charities but can only support a few. The most successful discussions come about with an introduction from an employee of the company.

Do you work for a company or know somebody who does? Could you provide us with an introduction to the person we should contact for support? If so, please contact Peter Herbert, Head of Corporate & Major Donor Fundraising, on 07802 274047 or by email on peter.herbert@cafamily.org.uk

We will then approach the company and see what possibilities there are for support.

Please remember that we offer advice and support to families of children and young people up 19 years old. Please let us know if you no longer fit these criteria.

If you are reading somebody else's copy of 'in contact' please let us know so that we can add you to our database! You'll then find out about information, up and coming events, and activities straight away!



Jan, Liz and Amy would like to thank all of you for your support during the past few months, and look forward to working with you and seeing you at future events and family activities during the coming months!

The Editor retains the right to omit, include or edit any contributions. The views and suggestions in this newsletter are those of individual contributions and not necessarily supported by Contact a Family. Contact a Family cannot accept responsibility for any goods or services mentioned in or enclosed in this newsletter.



LOTTERY FUNDED

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