

contact a family
for families with disabled children

incorporating
The Lady Hoare Trust

in **contact**



The newsletter of Contact a Family North West
www.cafamily.org.uk/northwest

Issue 23 Spring 2007

Family Fun

Parents have told us how difficult it can be over the school holidays. Since we last sent out a newsletter, we have organised a summer programme of events where the whole family could come along and have fun and also a cinema event at half term and a Christmas party. It was also a chance for families to meet other families and share ideas and experiences.



If you didn't get a chance to go on these events, please call us so you can be added to the mailing list. We will be doing more events in 2007. The next event is on 12 February – please see page 7 for more details.

Best Wishes, Sharon (editor).

Write or call **Helen, Karen, Jo** or **Sharon**
We'll phone you back.

Contact a Family North West
6th Floor, St James House,
Pendleton Way, Salford, M6 5FW
tel: 0161 743 0700
fax: 0161 743 0711
e-mail: northwest.office@cafamily.org.uk

This Newsletter was produced with a generous donation from Pannone. To read more about them please go to page 5.

Contact a Family would like to thank the following for their generous support of our work in the North of England:

- The Freemason's Grand Charity
- Children In Need
- Parenting Fund
- Scottish Power Energy Group Trust

The views and suggestions in this newsletter are those of individual contributors and not necessarily supported by Contact a Family. Contact a Family cannot accept responsibility for goods and services mentioned in this newsletter.

Your team at Contact a Family

Contact a Family North west 0161 743 0700

Helen Bourke
Jo Palmer
Sharon Clarke

North of England Manager
Development Officer (Pounds for Parents)
Family Events Officer
& Development Officer (Manchester)
Project Administrator
Family Worker (Blackpool)



North West local parent representatives

Pat Fleming
Ruth Card

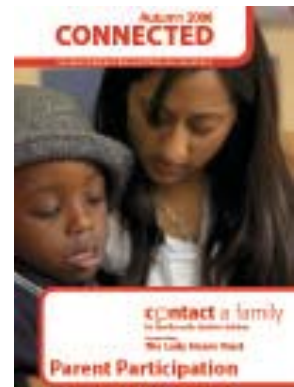
Lancashire 01254 854604
St Helens 01942 721323

We are delighted to welcome Karen as Project Administrator. Karen will be working part-time for us from January. Karen has many years experience running a national support group and will be a great addition to our team.

Connected

After 25 years of faithful service our Share an Idea magazine has been relaunched as Connected. The Autumn 2006 edition focuses on Parent Participation and can be downloaded in Adobe Acrobat pdf format from our website

<http://www.cafamily.org.uk/Connected063.pdf> .



New free service for Arabic/Somali/Farsi/ Chinese speaking families with disabled children

One of our main aims is to help families affected by disability to contact one another. We are delighted to tell you that we have a new, free, Internet based service which helps families to contact one another anonymously to get mutual support and information.

Our service, www.makingcontact.org has been available to English speakers for two years and is used by almost 3,000 families across the world to chat to one another. From October 2006, the service is also available to speakers of Arabic, Somali, Farsi and Chinese (simplified). All the instructions appear in the chosen language. We would very much like your help in making any parents with disabled children that you are in touch with aware of the service. Disabled adults are also free to use the service to talk to one another by email. Users allocate themselves an anonymous username – so they cannot be identified in any way by those they are contacting.

Our free helpline has access to language line interpreters and we are very happy to answer parents' enquiries about their rights to education, services and benefits – call 0808 808 3555.

Contact a Family North West: 0161 743 0700

Information for Local Groups

Little Lagoon, Shaw

Little Lagoon is a family run indoor interactive playground specially designed for all young children 0-7 years. There is a two-tier play area with a slide, ball pool and much more. The baby area has an interactive aquatic bubble tube, fibre optics and plenty of high interest and stimulating toys. Little Lagoon can be hired for a private session. Hire costs are £4 per child for a 90-minute session (minimum 10 children). Sessions are available weekdays, weekends and school holidays. For more information call 01706 841800.

J.J's Sensory Play Centre, Macclesfield

J.J's Sensory Play Centre is a large, soft padded multi-sensory facility for children and adults who have additional needs. There is a sensory room with calming and sensory equipment, an imagination room where children can develop their fine motor, gross motor and cognitive experiences, a softy play area and a chill out area. J.J's also take bookings from support groups and can organise birthday parties. They also support toddler groups and all non-disabled children pre-school age are welcome too.

They are hosting many events in the coming months including sign a long sessions, open coffee mornings and clothing sessions from a company that designs clothes for children with additional needs. They are open Tuesday to Sunday 9.30am-6.00pm and provide hourly sessions. For more information contact Jane or Joanne on 01625 667872 or email jjisplay@hotmail.co.uk.

Changing places - Changing lives

A new national campaign, *Changing Places* has been launched by a consortium of organisations including charities Mencap and PAMIS, and is calling for support from people across the UK. Thousands of people with profound and multiple learning disabilities need *Changing Places* toilets. These are rooms equipped to allow people to use the toilet with assistance or have their continence pads changed. They include an adult-sized height adjustable changing bench, a hoist, a toilet with space either side for a carer, and plenty of space. Without these facilities carers are often forced to change family members on a dirty toilet floor with little or no privacy – this is unhygienic and dangerous. However the alternative is to limit outings to a couple of hours or to not go out at all. For more information visit www.changing-places.org

Chorley and South Ribble CVS Carers Project

Parent Carer Group

Do you care for a child with disabilities? Do you live in Chorley and South Ribble? Would you like to meet with other parent carers? Meetings take place on the 3rd Tuesday of each month in Chorley or Leyland. For further details contact Cathy Openshaw on 01772 455459.

Parents for Play

A group of enthusiastic parents/volunteers are aiming to bring a sensory and soft play centre to the Hollinwood area of Oldham. The centre would also feature a café and a community room. The centre would be run by local people for local people. The group is looking for individuals and businesses to help them to develop the dream to become a reality. Anyone who would like to be involved and feel they could dedicate the time and energy can find out more by calling Sarah Furbey on 0161 345 3466 or by emailing her on sarah@parentsforplay.org.uk. The web site is www.parentsforplay.org.uk

Contact a Family North West: 0161 743 0700

Pounds for Parents

What is the Pounds for Parents campaign?

It is a three-year campaign run by Contact a Family to encourage parents with disabled children to claim the benefits, tax credits and other concessions that they are entitled to.

Why are we doing it?

Every day the Contact a Family helpline takes calls from families with disabled children who are not claiming the benefits they're due, and are missing out on vital extra income. At the same time, families with disabled children tend to have lower incomes and higher expenses than other families - this means that around half of disabled children grow up in, or at the margins of poverty. Often parents don't know where to go for information and find out about benefits and services from friends and family, in an ad hoc way. When they do track down benefits information, it can be difficult to understand. In addition, the benefits system itself is very complex, with eligibility for one benefit sometimes dependent upon eligibility for another, and parents find it difficult to navigate their way through.

How will the Pounds for Parents campaign benefit parents across the UK?

As part of the campaign, Contact a Family has extended the specialist welfare rights advice service available via our freephone helpline. If you would like a benefits check call our helpline on 0808 808 3555, Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm and Mondays 5.30pm to 7.30pm. The call is free and confidential, and we have access to interpreters if you would prefer to speak to us in a language other than English. Also, we have built on the range of free information leaflets we produce, explaining parents' entitlements in plain English, with many more in the pipeline over the next 3 years. You can download all these factsheets from the Contact a Family website www.cafamily.org.uk.

What is happening in the North West?

In the North West, Jo, our development worker is working with groups and voluntary organisations to put on information days and workshops to get the message out to parents in their local areas. If you are running an event and would like a 'Pounds for Parents' information stand; would like to run your own Pounds for Parents information day or workshop; or would just like Jo to come and chat to your group, then give us a ring on 0161 743 0700.

Does your family use one of the Manchester Children's hospitals? Worried about debt?

- credit card bills / loans
- mortgage / rent payments

Contact a Family is involved with a pilot project with some local Citizens Advice Bureaux to give face to face debt advice for families with disabled children. If you are worried about getting into debt, or your family is in financial difficulties then we can arrange an appointment for you at one of the hospitals, or at the Combined Hospitals CAB in Salford.

Even if you don't use Pendlebury or Booth Hall hospitals, if you are worried about debt or want your benefits checking please get in touch.

Ring Jo on 0161 743 0700 or email us at northwest.office@cafamily.org.uk

Contact a Family North West: 0161 743 0700



PANNONE
THE COMPLETE LAW FIRM

CONTACT **US**

123 Deansgate
Manchester
M3 2BU

Tel: 0161 909 3000
Fax: 0161 909 4444
www.pannone.com
law@pannone.co.uk

Pannone's Serious Injury and Disability Rights Team

Serious Injury Team

Manchester based law firm Pannone LLP recently launched its Serious Injury Team. This cross department unit has been formed to handle all legal aspects of serious personal injury caused by accident or medical negligence, from incident investigation through to compensation and financial advice and planning.

Carol Jackson, Head of the Personal Injury department, said, "The needs of seriously injured clients have to be looked at in totality. By allocating a team of experts, each a specialist in their field of law, the client receives both legal advice and wide-ranging support on every aspect of their case. In the same way a hospital Multi-Disciplinary Team might include, doctors, nurses, physiotherapists and psychologists, our Serious Injury Team deploys the expertise of solicitors and legal advisors from our Personal Injury, Clinical Negligence and Court of Protection and Receivership departments. Whilst these departments have always worked closely together, this more structured team format will see greater coordination and deliver a better and wider service for injured clients and their families."

Disability Rights Team

Community Care is an important, rapidly expanding area of law, concerned with ensuring that disabled adults and children and their carers, receive services from the Local Authority to meet their needs and to enable them to live in the community, either in their own homes or in residential care. Our Disability Rights Unit is headed by Richard Scorer and deals with these Community Care matters, all aspects of disability issues in relation to education, employment and all elements of disability discrimination.

Number One

We are recognised as the Number One firm for Personal Injury work and are leaders in our field in the North West by The Legal 500 and The Chambers guide to the Legal Profession directories, a position that we have held for over 10 years.

For further information please contact Carol Jackson or Richard Scorer on Freephone 08000 384 384 or e-mail law@pannone.co.uk.

Contact a Family North West: 0161 743 0700

Information and Events

Drop-in sessions for parents in South Lakeland

If you have a concern about your child's development come along & meet the professionals for an informal chat and advice. All sessions take place between 10 a.m. and 12 noon.

Ambleside Library, Ambleside – 26th April 2007

YWCA, Kendal – 3rd July 2007

For more information please contact Jaqueline Larner on 01537 732673.

The National Autistic Society - Cheshire Branch

Workshops for parents and professionals

Friday 2 March 2007

Woodford Lodge, Winsford 9.45am-3.00pm (Registration from 9am)

Geoff Evans will be speaking about developing social skills for independence. The event is free of charge.

If you would like more information or to book a place call 01244 315651.

ASBAH Family Weekend

ASBAH Family Weekend for the families of young children with spina bifida and / or hydrocephalus will take place in the Isle of Wight from 23-25 March 2007. You are eligible if your child is 6 years or younger on 1st February 2007. The cost is £75 for parents and however many children you have!! The last family weekend was in 2004 so this one is likely to be over-subscribed. For further details and booking forms, ring Angela Lansley on 0151 733 8392 or email her on angelal@asbah.org

Sheltered homes for caring families - The Care Bond

A new initiative has been set up to develop extra care communities for adults with learning disabilities. The scheme was launched on the 22nd November 2006, the 12th birthday of the founder's son. Max is physically fit and robust but has severe learning difficulties; he is happy to cycle 40 miles, swim across choppy harbours and climb cliffs, but also happy to walk across the road in front of a bus.

The vision is to provide privately owned purpose built housing within a safe gated community, where work opportunities and recreation facilities on site are tailored to the needs and abilities of the residents. The Care Bond is recruiting Trustees and volunteers to help set up and run the scheme. An inaugural meeting is planned for the end of January 2007, to report on progress and elect the officers of the charity. For more information call 01625 523673 or visit www.the-care-bond.org.uk

Contact a Family Directory

The 2007 paper edition is due to be published on 10th January. This year we have added a further 16 new entries bringing the total to 421. Once again, we have been able to hold the price at the 2004 level of GBP35 so it's now even better value than before. You can order a copy from our shop, Web:

<http://www.free2build.com/stores/cafamily/shophome.php> .

“Making a Difference” event

27th February 2007, Bolton Arena.

A free event is being held by the NW Family Forum to bring together family members and carers who are interested in making a difference to learning disability services at a local, regional & national level. For further information go to www.nwtdt.com or phone Phil Palmer on 01254 306850.

Contact a Family North West: 0161 743 0700

HAPPY FEET Half Term Cinema Event Monday 12 February 2007 10.15am registration Filmworks Manchester

We have booked two screens exclusively for us to use, one with subtitles. We have the lights slightly on and a break out room. If you and your family would like to come to this event please call the North West office on 0161 743 0700. Booking is essential. Please note that due to our funding we must give priority to bookings from families in Greater Manchester.

A generous donation helps North West families

To coincide with Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week parents that dropped by at the Contact a Family stand at Kidz up North in November were offered a free Carbon Monoxide Detector, donated through a scheme funded entirely by ScottishPower customers.

The North West office has been granted £30,000 funding from The ScottishPower Energy People Trust to help families with disabled children access the benefits they are entitled to. Contact a Family has used the Trust's £30,000 funding to set up a project called Pounds for Parents North West, and although only established since October, it has already assisted over 250 parents and children.



Jo and Anne Benson at Kidz Up North in November 2006

The ScottishPower Energy People Trust was created in November 2005 to fund not-for-profit organisations that help vulnerable people including families, young people, the disabled and the elderly who need to spend more than 10% of their income on energy bills and suffer from fuel poverty.

Pounds for Parents North West is a two-year long project which aims to help up to 5,000 families across the North West with jargon-free advice about the government benefits and other financial help they may be entitled to. The funding provided by the Trust will enable Jo Palmer, the North West's development officer to run workshops, meet with parent groups and answer telephone, face-to-face and email enquiries.

Jill Harrison, Director of External Affairs at Contact a Family said: "We're extremely grateful for the funding provided by The ScottishPower Energy People Trust and the Carbon Monoxide Detectors.

"Not only will families increase their income levels - and that's vital to families with disabled children as they often have to manage on only one wage - but they'll have great peace of mind, knowing that any potentially lethal gases will be detected immediately and they will be safe in their own home."

Contact a Family North West: 0161 743 0700

Contact Us

Freephone Helpline – 0808 808 3555
Freephone Textphone – 0808 808 3556

Helpline open Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm and Mondays 5.30pm to 7.30pm

If you would like information in another language or another format, please ask us.

যদি আপনি এই ডকুমেন্ট অন্য ভাষায় বা ফরমেটে চান, তাহলে দয়া করে আমাদেরকে বলুন।

Si vous souhaitez des informations dans une autre langue ou sous un autre format,

veuillez nous le demander.

જો તમને માહિતી અન્ય ભાષા અથવા અન્ય રીતે જાણવાની, કૃપા કરી અમને વિનવરી કરો.

यदि आपको सूचना किसी अन्य भाषा या अन्य रूप में चाहिये तो कृपया हमसे कहें

Si vous souhaitez des informations dans une autre langue ou sous un autre format,

veuillez nous le demander.

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If you would like to be on our mailing list and receive this newsletter as well as details of our workshops, free of charge, please complete the form below and send to:

Contact a Family North West, 6th Floor, St James House,
Pendleton Way, Salford, M6 5FW. Fax: 0161 743 0711

I am a parent

support group

voluntary organisation

statutory sector

Name:

Organisation:

Your post/title if you are a paid worker:

Address:

Post Code:

Telephone no:

Email:

Fax:



Contact a Family North West: 0161 743 0700