

# Grapevine

The paper for parents and carers of children with additional needs in Southwark

## Summer 2010

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### the budget and you

Check out our website for the latest news about how the budget may affect you and your family

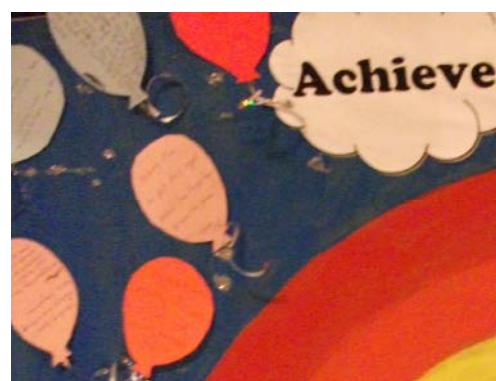
[www.contactfamily.org.uk](http://www.contactfamily.org.uk)

## Conference 2010



Contact a Family Southwark's Conference 2010 was a great success.

About 40 people came to be inspired at InSpire, hearing from our own Lisa Alexander about her journey, from the shock of diagnosis to regaining control of her life and the tools she found helpful.



Read all about it and see more photos inside on **page 12**.

# Contact a Family news

## all change please!



Becky Jones has moved from her role as Events Co-ordinator to that of Family Worker while Martha is on maternity leave. We will introduce our new Events person, Katie, in the next Grapevine. The enclosed summer programme is full of interesting things to do over the long holiday.

Meanwhile Abi Melotte has moved from the under fives Family Work team to supporting families with older children – that’s half our membership! Blagoje Vucinic (Mr B to most people) is going to be spending some time each week at Sunshine House, working with families with a new diagnosis of autism. And we welcome two new members of the under fives Family Work team...

## John



Hello, my name is John Williams and I am a new Family Worker at Contact a Family.

Prior to joining Contact a Family, I worked in a residential home for children and young

people with disabilities in Lewisham. I have an eight year old son with a disability, and he has opened up a whole new world to me, so

I am passionate about involving as many dads and male carers as possible!

I am new to Southwark and have spent the first couple of weeks travelling the borough and finding my way around. I hope to meet as many of you as possible over the next few months and I very much look forward to working together with you.

## Carys

Hi, my name is Carys Kennedy and I am one of the new Family Workers at Contact a Family.



Before joining Contact a Family, I worked in a secondary school, and enjoyed teaching children of all abilities and backgrounds, as well as supporting parents around their child’s education. I took particular pleasure in supporting families with children with additional needs, so am I am excited to be working alongside more parents in this context.

Family work will be a big change for me – not being interrupted by a school bell every fifty minutes, for starters! – but I am really pleased to join the team and look forward to meeting you all over the coming months.

## news from Martha



It’s a boy!...and it’s a girl!

Martha and her husband are delighted to announce the safe arrival of the twins.

Mother and babies are doing well. We will pass on your good wishes for the new family.

## Becky J

Many of you will have met me during some of the activities I have organised in my role as Events Coordinator. Having worked in this position for some time I am keen to try out a different role whilst continuing to work for Contact a Family. I am therefore very pleased to be joining the Family Work team covering Peckham and Nunhead.



I will be running a weekly drop in at Rye Oak Children's Centre every Wednesday morning from 10am until 12:30, so please feel free to pop in for a chat or to raise any issues you and your family may be experiencing.

During the summer period I will continue to run several of the events alongside Katie, our new Events Coordinator, and I really look forward to seeing some of you then. After the summer period I will be working solely as a Family Worker and all events enquiries will be directed to Katie or Yvonne.

## fond farewell to Prithvi

Prithvi came to move things on for families with older children in terms of mapping services, encouraging agencies who provide those services to come together to better support families, and to work on a bid to the Big Lottery.



He has done a great job and we are sad to lose him – the time went really quickly. He is off to University of East London where he will teach students about autism.



LINK Southwark is your Local Involvement Network. Consisting of local people, organisations and community groups, LINKs give you the opportunity to improve health and social care services in your area, such as GPs, dentists, care homes and hospitals.

Membership to LINK Southwark is free, and open to anyone who lives, works or is registered with a GP in Southwark.

As a member of LINK Southwark, you have a chance to:

- ◆ Say what you think about local care services
- ◆ Check how care services are planned and run
- ◆ Feedback comments to improve services
- ◆ Say what issues you think should be looked at

LINK Southwark also has certain powers. We can:

- ◆ Visit services to see how they work in practice
- ◆ Ask for information from the commissioners of services, and get a reply within 20 working days
- ◆ Make recommendations and get a response from commissioners
- ◆ Refer matters to the Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee in Southwark

We currently have Task Groups in the following areas:

1. Mental Health
2. Diabetes and Obesity – Children and Young People
3. Access to Services and Information
4. Maternity and Newborn Care

If you are interested in joining any of these Task Groups, have any queries or would simply like to find out more about LINK Southwark, please call **020 7358 7005**, email **LINK@ch1889.org**, or visit **www.LINKSouthwark.org**

# inside Southwark: local authority

## local elections

Southwark Council is made up of 21 wards, each electing three councillors, making 63 in total. Councillors must agree the council's policies, service levels and how its money is spent.

As a result of the elections in May, we have a very different-looking council. Labour now hold 35 seats, the Liberal Democrats hold 25 and the Conservatives hold three. The new leader of the council is Councillor Peter John (Labour) and there are eight cabinet members, each with a specific responsibility or portfolio.

## meet Catherine McDonald Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Naomi Gilbert went to meet Catherine and ask her a few questions on behalf of families with a disabled child.



## background

Catherine has lived in the borough for three years and in London for 13, so she has a good feel for the issues people face in the capital. She is a newly elected councillor, although she has been connected to the Labour Party and had an interest in politics since university. Her previous role was as a Special Advisor to central government where she worked on employment and welfare reform, education and young people's services as well as Early Years.

## interest in children...

Much of Catherine's previous work has been related to children and so she has a keen interest. She says she is motivated by Labour

values such as fairness, and greater access to opportunities. She asked for this position because of her interest in children's services.

## ...specifically children with disabilities

Catherine has worked on disability policy such as **Right to Control** which is about shifting the balance of power from the state to the individual and recognising that disabled people are the experts in their own lives. This will be a major step toward achieving equality by 2025. She also worked on the delivery of benefits including DLA at policy level. As a result, Catherine feels she has knowledge which she is keen to build upon.

Catherine has been pleased to learn about the variety of support already available in the borough including sources of information, short breaks, opportunities for families to link up and the choices in education. She thinks it is very important that more people are aware of what is out there and who can access it.

## links with the voluntary sector

Catherine thinks it is vital that the council builds a strong relationship with the voluntary and community sector in order to deliver the services children, young people and their families can benefit from.

## in a nutshell

The wellbeing of Southwark's children is 'of fundamental interest to those individual children and their families, communities and the society they are in now and because of the way they will flourish and contribute as they go into adulthood'.

**find out more at:**  
**[www.southwark.gov.uk](http://www.southwark.gov.uk)**

# inside Southwark: local authority

## Southwark launches transition guides

Moving from children's to adult services can be a complicated, challenging and difficult time for young people with a disability or special educational need, as well as for their families. Full and accurate information about the process and what is or could be available is essential if young people are to take full control over their own lives, and if their families are to help them do so. In line with the government's drive to improve transition via Aiming High for Disabled Children, and with the contribution of parents and young people, three new guides are now available.

**Time to Think! for young people** is addressed specifically to young people and takes them through the main choices on offer, asking key questions to help them decide what they would want for the future. A symbol version is also being produced.

**Time to Think! for parents** looks at young people's choices from the parent's viewpoint, including the opportunity to reflect on how to better support the young person.

**Moving On** is a more detailed reference document for young people and their parents to help them through this complex period, as well as the professionals who work with them. It has detailed information on the options after school, the transition process, adult services, information on transport, leisure and community services, as well as information on benefits and financial support. Young people with a statement of special educational need and their parents will be sent the guides in school Year 8.

All the publications can be downloaded from [www.southwark.gov.uk](http://www.southwark.gov.uk). Hard copies can be requested from the Children's Transition Manager, on **020 3049 8245**.

## childminding service

Finding the right kind of childcare can be a daunting task for any parent. For a parent of a child with a disability or additional need, this may feel overwhelming.

Registered childminders:

- ◆ work with small numbers of children, enabling them to meet individual needs
- ◆ can access training and/or equipment
- ◆ are likely to be local so children remain part of their local community
- ◆ work in partnership with other services such as speech and language therapists

Southwark council employs a number of childminding network co-ordinators to support parents and childminders. They:

- ◆ support parents to find the right childminder for them and their child
- ◆ assist with interviewing childminders and in settling children into the childminder's care.

If a parent has already identified a registered childminder who meets their requirements, the Southwark childminding SENCo can still offer further advice, information and guidance so that the individual needs of the child are met. Parents who have been unable to find a childminder to meet their or their child's needs can also contact the SENCo for further advice and support.

**more information is available from:**

Southwark family information service  
**0800 013 0639**

[family.info@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:family.info@southwark.gov.uk)

[www.southwarkfis.org.uk](http://www.southwarkfis.org.uk)

Southwark's childminding SENCo  
**07944 681 348** or **07985 551 964**

[childmindingdevelopmentteam@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:childmindingdevelopmentteam@southwark.gov.uk)

# inside Southwark: local policy

## Community Action Southwark (CAS)

CAS represents the whole of the community and voluntary sector in Southwark. This is a huge job as there are about 2200 groups serving the borough. CAS largely mirrors the way the council is divided; Contact a Family is part of the Children, Young People and Families subgroup, ultimately feeding into the Children's Trust.

At the moment, and purely as a temporary measure as new systems are worked out, Naomi Gilbert, manager at Contact a Family, is acting as the chair of this group. This is a fantastic opportunity for all groups supporting children with disabilities or additional needs to stand out. Work is just starting on reviewing the way all the groups who work with children, young people and families are represented and contribute to both CAS and the Children and Young People's Plan, and then the Children's Trust.

## Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP)

The new CYPP is now ready for action, thanks to the input from many parents and professionals working with children and young people in the borough, as well as the children and young people themselves.

The plan sets out how local services will work together to improve the lives of children, young people and their families. Ten priorities have been established, including redesigned services for children with disabilities, complex and continuing care needs, and more for children and young people to do.

Find out more from the website – details at the end of the next column.

## Aiming High for DC

Contracts have now been approved for the main programme of short breaks for the coming year. Services will include:

**Holiday and weekend playschemes**, run by:  
Charlie Chaplin Adventure Playground  
Orient Street  
Resources for Autism  
Salmon Youth Centre  
Whippersnappers

**Regular clubs and activities**, from:  
The Camden Society  
Phab  
Sickle Cell and Young Stroke Survivors

Disability sports clubs and physical activities will be provided by the Community Sports team and Bacon's College, and regular dramatherapy will be offered by the National Autistic Society. Southwark's Community Children's Occupational Therapy services will provide independence training and a Movin' On Up Group, to support young people with educational transitions. The Community Paediatric Team are also providing a new early intervention service, offering family and behavioural support.

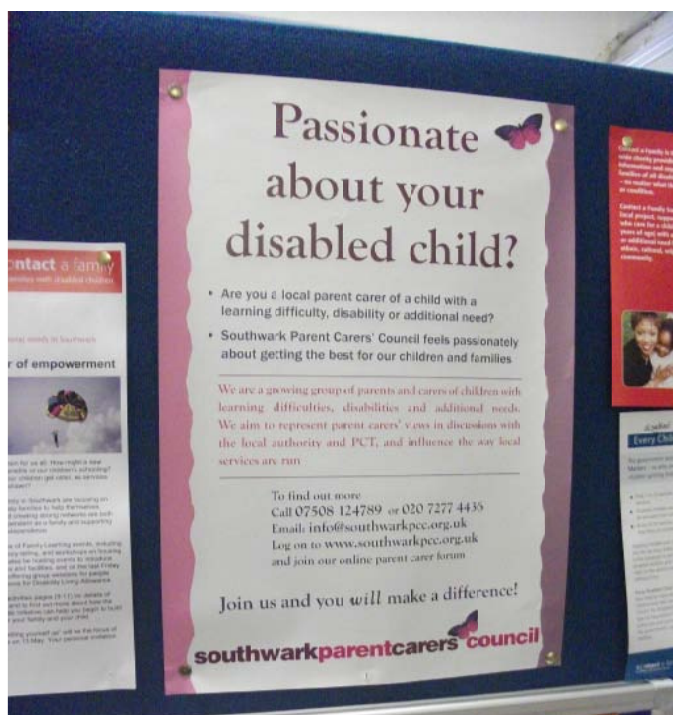
Other services, aimed specifically at parent carers, will be Fix Yourself a Break, offered by Southwark Carers and an emergency respite care service from Family Link.

Download the Children and Young People's Plan 2010–2013 from the Children and Families section of the main Southwark website: [www.southwark.gov.uk](http://www.southwark.gov.uk)  
Contact: **020 7525 3674**, or  
[childrenandfamilies@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:childrenandfamilies@southwark.gov.uk)

More information about Aiming High is in the Children and Families section (under Advice) on the Southwark website.

# Southwark Parent Carers' Council

## thinking long term



In June, Southwark Parent Carers' Council once again received the local Aiming High grant for developing parent participation. As this may be the last time this grant is offered, the PCC's eye is firmly on the future: on ways of remaining a strong group with the potential for growth, and with capacity and skills to be effectively involved in local decision-making.

With that in mind, this summer the PCC will be holding elections to establish a new core council, directly elected for the first time by the growing forum of parent carers it represents. This new PCC will look at ways of consolidating itself and its Forum as a viable long-term group: this may include constitution as a charitable company, offering services such as training to professionals and support to families, to draw in funds.

The PCC currently represents a Forum of 222 parent carers, ten of whom have joined in the last couple of months, as a result of some striking new publicity, awareness-raising

among other organisations, and the PCC's own presence at community events. The two most recent PCC meetings have been attended by five new Forum members. In terms of its members' enthusiasm and commitment, the PCC is looking stronger than ever.

With the likely loss of funding for paid workers by March 2011, this dedication is going to serve the PCC well, and any members who can offer skills, experience or plain old enthusiasm will be vital in keeping the group strong, motivated and representative.

Parent carers can get involved at all levels. All PCC meetings are open to parent carers from Southwark, whether or not they are members, and if you are unable to make the meetings, you are strongly encouraged to make use of the PCC website and e-forum, or to join the PCC mailing list so that we can keep in touch and make sure your views are heard.

As well as the forthcoming elections, the PCC will be allocating some of its planning and infrastructure, for example communications, training, and editing the newsletter, to new working groups. If you have the time and the energy, the PCC needs your help!

  
**southwarkparentcarers council**

To find out more about the PCC, the elections, or how you can get involved, contact **Alison Miles**, or **Becky Skipwith**, on: **020 7277 4436**

have a look at the website:  
**[www.southwarkpcc.org.uk](http://www.southwarkpcc.org.uk)**

or come along to one of our meetings – the next one is on:

**Wednesday 14 July**  
**10:30**  
**Rye Oak Children's Centre**

# working for older children and their families

## Preparing for the future

Moving towards adulthood is an exciting and scary time for most young people. This is no different for young people with disabilities or additional needs. It can also be a stressful time for parents and carers, as it involves letting go of your child.

At Contact a Family we recognise some of the pressures that you could be going through and are interested in knowing how we can help you in this process.

### our survey

In March, we sent questionnaires to parents and carers with a child over the age of 12. We asked out about their worries and expectations for their child as they become an adult. A big thanks to all the parents who took the time to fill in and return the survey. Your responses help us to fight for better services on your behalf and to plan how we can support you.

Most of the parents who responded had their children in a special school (56%), but a substantial percentage were also in mainstream schools (34%). There were a few whose children were attending local colleges (4%) and other settings (6%).

### what you told us about your plans

Only 41% of you have started thinking about the future housing options for your child. This seems to be an area where you would like to get more support so that you can make a decision. For now, most of you said you would like your child to live with you or with members of your family when they reach adulthood.

Even though most of you said that you were anxious about your child's future and their becoming an adult, it has not stopped you thinking about their education and housing options. Some of you felt a combination of learning options would be more suitable for your child after they finish their school as seen from the table below.

local college	university	specialist college	distance learning
43%	8%	30%	4%
getting a job	volunteering	specialist day centre	not sure/ don't know
4%	6%	2%	28%

### relevant skills for your child

When we asked about the skills your child has and where those skills are being taught, around 71% of you said that they are being taught both at school and home. This is good news as this means families and schools or colleges are working towards similar goals. The areas that you felt were relevant or most relevant for your child to develop were: managing their own behaviour (91%); personal safety (86%); money and budgeting (80%); personal care (78%); home skills (77%); travelling on their own (76%); and understanding about sex and relationships (66%).

### areas where you would like support

A number of you have expressed a desire to meet other parents whose children are moving towards adulthood. We have taken on board your requests and started thinking how we can help you.

# working for older children and their families

These were the areas that you said you would like help with.

80%	information about further education
69%	information about employment
69%	explaining about growing up, sex and relationships
67%	information about leisure options
63%	information about housing options
63%	information about the changes in benefits
60%	supporting your child to apply for benefits
58%	training your child to travel independently
58%	strategies to manage challenging behaviours
56%	teaching home skills to your child
56%	explaining to your child about their condition
54%	teaching your child money management skills
52%	teaching your child to look after their personal care needs

## What happens after secondary school?

On 11 June, we hosted an event to provide information about education options after secondary school for young people with disabilities and additional needs. Ruth Martin from Connexions gave an overview of some of these options and the support that the local Connexions can provide to parents and young people. Robyn Steward, who is a young woman with Asperger syndrome, spoke about her own experiences of going to colleges and university. This was an inspiring talk, and Robyn was a good example of what people with disabilities or additional needs are able to achieve. Khadie Turay who has a 19-year-old son who is a wheelchair user, shared how she and her son made the choice of selecting a

college. Khadie emphasised that it was important for parents to let go and give the young people the same opportunities that any other young person would have.

There were also information stalls from Southwark College, NASH college, Skill and Connexions, and leaflets from London South Bank University. They gave an idea of the kind of support that they are able to offer, and parents were able to gather some very useful information.

*"I've always thought about my son's education after Tuke, but now I am slightly uplifted that there is more hope."*

*"Robyn was very touching and it gives me more hope for my daughter. Ruth was very helpful about the future on education."*

*"All the presentations were well presented, appropriate, clear and useful. Having the stalls was a good idea and offered the opportunity for gathering handouts and asking questions... a good opportunity to talk with other parents and professionals."*

## Family support worker and support group meetings

Abigail Melotte has moved to her new role as family support worker for parents of children over the age of 5 years. She will be able to provide individual advice and find information out for families. Since so many of you have expressed a desire to meet other parent carers with children of similar age, Abi will also be starting a parent support group. See **page 14** for information and dates.

We look forward to seeing you. If you want to contact Abi, please ring the office or email her at **[southwark.office@cafamily.org.uk](mailto:southwark.office@cafamily.org.uk)**

# Southwark's steering committee

At our recent Conference, we voted on the new Contact a Family committee. We said goodbye to those standing down and welcomed an almost entirely new crew.

We say goodbye and many many thanks to: Tracy Julian, Charity Mauluka, Shoa Asfaha, Herty Oppong, Angela Momah.

We welcome: Sade Dawodu, Jacqui Moseley, Carole Haynes, Nik Hood, Lise Njanjo, Ella Baines, Jennifer Pitchell (co-opted)

The new committee will be meeting on 16 September for an Away Day to get to grips with their new roles. Contact Naomi if you are interested in joining them. In the meantime, meet three members of our new Steering Committee.

## Ella

My name is Ella Baines and I live with my partner James and our son George. George is two and a half and has a rare chromosomal abnormality called Cri Du Chat syndrome. This means that George has global developmental delay and learning disability. When George was a baby, we were put in touch with Contact a Family. The team have been extremely supportive with regards to practical advice with completing forms etc., and social activities which have given us a chance to meet other families facing similar difficulties.



I work as a GP in Lambeth. My special interests include Child Health and Learning Disabilities.

I am involved with the Learning Disabilities team at St George's Hospital Tooting and with the nursing staff of the neonatal unit at King's College Hospital where I informally give support to new mums who have just had news that their baby will have special needs. From my time on the unit with George, I felt there was initially very little support between being discharged home and being plugged into the developmental services at Sunshine House. Giving mums information about the work Contact a Family does forms an important part of my advice.

I am looking forward to being a member of the Steering Committee to help understand better the needs of local families with disabled children and improve the provision of services and resources. In particular, I would like to see improved 'joined up care', with better communication between professionals and between professionals and parents. I hope that some of my experiences as a mum and as a doctor negotiating 'the system' will be useful to the group.

## Carole



My name is Carole Haynes. I am a mother of two: Theodora who is 24 and a nursery teacher and Alexander who is 15 and is in his final year at secondary school.

Alexander has ASC and is supported with his learning in school. At present he is in his final year and is taking five GCSEs and we both are really trying hard for Alexander to do well and to get good grades. Last week we had some really, really good news. After struggling to gain access for Alexander to attend a college

## news from head office

part-time, he has been awarded a Diploma in Construction. If only you knew about our journey you would understand how exciting this news is.

Now about me: I am an active member within my community in Peckham. I have been involved with lots of projects which addressed issues that people in the community have had concerns about. Whilst working as a dental nurse within Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham, I assisted within the dental team in the clinics, mainstream schools and special schools in primary and secondary.

I have been involved with education in Southwark, standing as chair of governors, chair of permanent appeal panels, chair of school admissions. I have set up a PTA within a school. I am interested and passionate about dentistry and education, as I feel I know the importance of them.

### Jacqui

Hi, my name is Jacqui Moseley and I live in East Dulwich with my husband Charlie and my two sons Max (three) and Ben (one).



Max was diagnosed with classic autism in July 2009 and we have had quite a journey since. His speech has improved immensely and I think 2010–11 will be a busy period for us.

Max has just received a statement and will start mainstream school in January (can't wait to see him in his uniform!) so I am hoping that my time with Contact a Family will help me pass on all my new found knowledge to others.

### Muriel Gray's appeal



Scottish author and broadcaster, Muriel Gray, recently presented a Radio 4 Appeal on behalf of Contact a Family. Muriel's middle daughter, Rowan, has severe disabilities.

Muriel said: "My family is one of hundreds of thousands in the UK who care for a child with a disability. We have the same hopes and dreams as other families, but we also have enormous challenges. Finding out your child has a disability is always devastating and then isolating. Gone instantly are all the things other families take for granted."

Muriel described how Contact a Family has been a lifeline to many families over the last 30 years, and appealed for donations to ensure our work continues.

You can listen to Muriel's appeal at the Radio 4 website:  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00s54d0>

### Get Connected

Contact a Family are always looking for family stories for *Connected*, their quarterly magazine. The theme for the next issue is transition. If you are interested in your family's story appearing in *Connected*, please contact Karin Beeler, on: **020 7608 8726**, or [karin.beeler@cafamily.org.uk](mailto:karin.beeler@cafamily.org.uk)

# Contact a Family conference

## the Conference



Lisa Alexander was an inspiration as she spoke about the way she dealt with a very different life from the one she had been expecting. Lisa came to London aged 16 with plans to be a dancer. All that changed when she found herself a long way from home and pregnant.

Many in the audience recognised the feelings Lisa recalled from the day she got the diagnosis of autism and global delay for Junior – what she calls ‘D day’. There was laughter, too, at the stories Lisa shared to remind us that all children can get into mischief. But it was Lisa’s discovery that she could take her whole family on holiday by plane which was most striking. Lisa prepared herself and her family, including Junior, and had contingency plans as long as her arm. But before she could even get to that point, Lisa told us, she had to make a major change to the way she approached life. She changed her view from

‘Junior can’t do that’ to ‘What needs to happen so that Junior can do that?’

Lisa told us that she sat down and worked out who could help her with what in her life. From this first step, her confidence grew until she was able to take the leap of faith of going on a foreign holiday by plane, and later to fulfil her dream of going to university.

We were all encouraged to try out the tool Lisa had used to identify her networks of support, to think about the five things we would like to change in our lives, and to come up with a plan to make those changes.

Lisa made the point that change doesn’t have to be huge and that everyone’s successes will be different.

Following on from Lisa’s inspiring talk, everyone at the conference was invited to share a recent success or triumph on the Board of Achievement. Every participant received an award of some beautifully presented chocolates.



The Conference ended with a lovely lunch and plenty of time to catch up with friends old and new.

See **page 11** for news of the Steering Committee elections.

## but was it any good?

Rather than get you to fill in a long and tedious evaluation form, we asked you to tell us what you thought of our conference, by sticking your feelings onto a chart.

- ◆ for 19 of you, the conference was



- ◆ 9 of you rated it as



- ◆ for 7 of you the conference



### What you like about Contact a Family Southwark:

*“Approachability and friendliness – wide variety of resources – information they provide – amazing events”*

*“Organising day trips – always try to help with problems”*

*“Opportunities to link families – friendly staff who listen to parents”*

*“Being there! Listening and supporting – understanding what parents need – signposting”*

*“A place I can come to relax, bring my son without problems, and gain confidence”*

## Naomi answers your questions

Send us your questions, comments, top tips for other families or suggestions. We really love to hear from you – and making sure we know what you think is an important part of our work.

### comments from the Conference

Many of you said ‘thank you’ to us in some way. We say ‘You’re welcome!’ We had four comments on the ‘Things Contact a Family can do better’ board:

#### ***Transition from secondary school to adulthood. ASD children.***

We do the best we can with limited funding for older children. You will see in this edition of Grapevine how we have been working towards improving things with help from Prithvi Perepa both in terms of transition and children with ASC.

#### ***Literacy/language barriers stop parents coming to DLA workshops (from a professional)***

We offer DLA workshops because we believe this is a cost effective way of supporting parents to fill out the DLA forms and there are other benefits such as meeting other parents and these are all part of building family resilience. We also continue to offer a one to one service.

#### ***Can you be clearer in defining terms? Who is a carer? (from a professional)***

We use ‘carer’ to mean a parent or other family member. Childminders and Family Link workers are paid carers. The Carers UK website has lots more to say on this topic.

#### ***Diversify events. More workshops on various themes relevant to groups of parents***

We offer a wide range of events whilst keeping to our budget. We often remind you to tell us the workshops and events you want. The events team work really hard to deliver what you ask for or suggest in terms of activities and workshops. So, please, speak up – and turn up!

# Contact a Family events and drop-ins

## events summer programme

If you are a Contact a Family member and get your copy of Grapevine through the post, you will have also received the summer Events Programme. You can now sit down with your family and decide which places you would like to request.

Sadly, our funding is limited, so we have to limit the places we can offer on many of our activities. We do this as fairly as we can, and resort to taking names out of a hat if necessary. This is why we ask you to make several choices, as we try to give everyone something. It is also why we ask you to return your booking form in good time. We aim to tell you what places we have been able to allocate your family as soon as we can so that you can plan your summer.

Highlights for this summer are:

- ◆ a return trip to Diggerland
- ◆ a tour of the Arsenal Stadium
- ◆ biking in Dulwich Park
- ◆ horseriding
- ◆ animals and adventure playground at Godstone Farm
- ◆ sun, sea and seaweed at the beach
- ◆ Go Karting
- ◆ fruit picking

Each week we will also be in a park for a low-stress play and picnic frolic, and if it is all getting too much we have an evening meal out for parents only.

## what we ask from you:

- ◆ return all the forms promptly
- ◆ be clear about choices and numbers
- ◆ pay the small contribution or deposit on time
- ◆ let us know if you can't come
- ◆ give us honest feedback – we really want to know

## have you had problems getting our texts?

We've been finding text messaging a useful way of reminding members about upcoming events, and getting your views, but we've heard back from some of you that our texts are not getting through properly.

Some of you are getting garbled messages and some of you are receiving our texts late or not at all. If you've been missing out on our text alerts or getting strange or delayed messages from us, please let us know.

Contact Becky Jones, on: **020 7277 4436**  
or: **rebecca.jones@cafamily.org.uk**

## Coffee mornings for parents of older children with a disability or additional need

contact a family  
for families with disabled children

### Have you ever thought...

How could I meet other parents who have a child with additional needs?

What things a child the same age as mine may enjoy doing?

What support is there for me and my child in Southwark?

I wish I could talk to other people about things that interest me

... come and do all of the above in a friendly and safe environment



Many parents say they would like more chances to meet others in similar situations. Parent coffee mornings provide exactly this opportunity, and hopefully a chance to enjoy yourself.

If your child is aged between 5-11,  
come along on:  
**21st June from 10am-12pm**  
**19th July from 10am-12pm**

If your child is between 12-19,  
come along on:  
**22nd June from 10am-12pm**  
**20th July from 10am-12pm**

All coffee mornings will be held at 54, Camberwell Road, SE5 0EN in the Contact a Family offices at Walworth Road Methodist Church.  
Call Abi on 0207 277 4436 for more details.

Looking forward to seeing you!

## other local events and activities

### NAS support groups

A new support group for parents of children of all ages with autistic spectrum conditions replaces the Roebuck pub group.

The group will be meeting **10am–12pm** at:

**Alfred Salter Primary School**  
Quebec Way, Rotherhithe, SE16

**Friday 16 July**

**Friday 24 September**

**Friday 22 October**

A second support group takes place **7.30–9.30pm** on the last Wednesday of each month at:

**the Magnolia pub (the Mag)**

211 Lordship Lane, East Dulwich SE22

**Wednesday 28 July**

**Wednesday 25 August**

**Wednesday 29 September**

Both groups are run by volunteer parents of children with ASC, and all are warmly welcomed.

### Scoop it up – free theatre and films

The Scoop at More London is an outdoor sunken amphitheatre with seating for 800. Throughout the summer months it regularly hosts a variety of free events – from free films, free music and free theatre to local community events and activities. The Scoop is right by City Hall. Seats can't be reserved.

This summer they have free theatre, including 'Toad Hall' and later on free films, including 'Up' on 30 September. Take a blanket, a cushion and a picnic. Limited food is available on site.

Check out [www.morelondon.com/scoop](http://www.morelondon.com/scoop)

### disability sports taster day at Peckham Pulse

On **Saturday 10 July**, Southwark are holding a day of free sports activities for disabled children and adults.

<b>New Age Kurling &amp; Boccia</b> 1-3pm (8yrs plus) Peckham Square	<b>Football</b> 1-3pm (8yrs plus) Peckham Square
<b>Gym session</b> 1-2pm (Over 16yrs) Peckham Pulse Gym	<b>Yoga</b> 2-3pm (Over 16yrs) Peckham Pulse Studio 2
<b>Swimming</b> 3-4pm (Over 16yrs) Peckham Pulse Hydro Pool	<b>Cricket</b> 3-4pm (8yrs plus) Peckham Square

To find out more, or to book, contact **Amala Onuora**, on: **020 7525 5736**, or [amala.onuora@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:amala.onuora@southwark.gov.uk)

### Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities

Skill are running a new programme to raise aspirations of disabled young people when they make choices about leaving school. Disabled young people with an experience of college and university are trained and supported to talk to young people and their families about what it is like to go to college or university with a disability. They can talk about what they have done, what support they had and the processes involved. They aim to show that their disability has not held them back!

Sessions can be tailored to meet the ages and needs of your family and are provided completely free of charge. They can also offer information via email and over the phone.

If you would like disabled young people from Skill to deliver a session, please contact **Megan Luck**, Youth Participation Worker, on: **0207 450 0637** or [megan@skill.org.uk](mailto:megan@skill.org.uk)

# what we've been up to

## Chessington



During the Easter break, we took a trip to Chessington, which turned out to be one of the most popular trips. Not even the cold weather could wipe the smiles off the faces of the daring group that ventured onto the scary rides. From the feedback, it is evident that it is a trip many would like to have again.

## kids' cookery



The cookery session was a great learning experience for both parents and children. There was a lesson for all in nutrition and the children's knowledge was evident. Everyday home ingredients were used and the children looked right at home in the kitchen, whisking, mixing and kneading. The results were exciting to see.

Look out for this event next year.

Grapevine Summer 2010. The views expressed are not necessarily those of Contact a Family. Grapevine is published 4 times a year by Contact a Family, Walworth Methodist Church, 54 Camberwell Road, London SE5 0EN. It is printed by SGHMS.

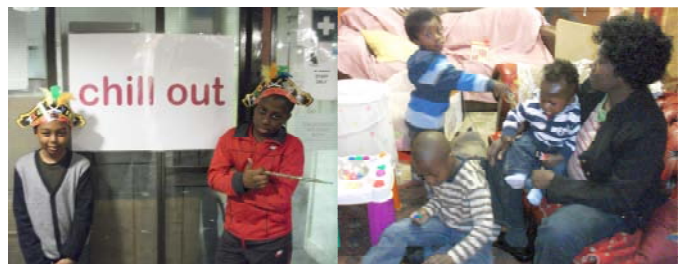
Please send contributions for the autumn issue to the above address, or by email to: [southwark.office@cafamily.org.uk](mailto:southwark.office@cafamily.org.uk), by 3 Sept 2010.

## Go Karting



What a fun trip for the youngsters and adults who dared to have a go! Some were slow starters who built up their speed; others raced off straight away. Towards the end, they were all racing and competing like pros and the setting felt like Silverstone racecourse.

## MBG Funhouse and Squidz



MBG Funhouse provided a warm relaxed atmosphere for children and parents. There was snooker, use of a computer room, table football that brought out the competitive streak in the girls, and basketball for the mums. Families keep going back because they like the open welcoming atmosphere. Go any Saturday to 1 Kenbury Street (off Coldharbour Lane).

**contact a family**  
for families with disabled children

209–211 City Road  
London EC1V 1JN  
helpline: 0808 808 3555

Registered charity number: 284912