



Summer 2010. Issue 26

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Family Day Out in Birmingham's Botanical Gardens

Families with disabled children flocked to the Botanical Gardens in Birmingham from all parts of the West Midlands on a cold day in April.

We had free run of the Study Centre where there were craft activities for families to share together and a chill out room with a constant supply of tea, coffee and biscuits. Outside, families took part in a nature trail led by Botanical Garden staff. They appreciated being able to explore and enjoy the gardens in their own time.

Bernard, the balloon man was kept busy throughout the day and produced some fantastic creations. Birmingham Library came along with a variety of useful resources and Peter from the Red Cross talked to families about first aid training. Our Contact a Family re-launch cake was cut by Shauna Benton, and enjoyed by all!

These were some of your comments

"Children really enjoyed all the activities, adults really enjoyed chilling out in a safe environment"

"Everyone was very friendly and helpful"

"We enjoyed being able to meet other people with disabled children"



Winners of the 2 complimentary family tickets to the Botanical Gardens were Tracey Hope and Angela Pope – Well Done!!



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How we can help you

Contact a Family can offer advice and support to families of children and young people with any disability (with or without diagnosis), up to the age of 19. Our information is available in a variety of ways, including our website, facebook, twitter, literature, publications and of course our newsletters. We have trained and experienced helpline staff who can offer support and advice on many issues, including benefits, education, rare disorders and immigration and nationality enquiries. Our freephone helpline is available from 10.00am-4.00pm, and we also have an evening helpline service on Mondays from 5.30pm-7.30pm. Language line can provide support if English is not the first language.

Interested in Volunteering?

Would you like to come and help us occasionally in our friendly Selly Oak office?

Tasks range from

- Helping with mail outs
- Suggestions for the newsletter
- Amending the database
- Administrative tasks

If you have a couple hours to spare occasionally we'd love to meet you for an informal chat. Please ring Jan or Liz on 0121 415 4624



Connected Magazine

Connected is our magazine for families with disabled children and professionals who work with families. It covers up-to-date issues that affect families with disabled children and the help you may be entitled to. It also includes stories from other parents, as well as news from across the organisation.

There is an annual subscription of £5, although Parent Support Groups can receive Connected for free. Please call 020 7608 8700 if you wish to subscribe.



E-Newsletters

We produce 4 newsletters each year, however, there is so much more to tell you about! We will therefore be sending out an 'email newsletter' on a more regular basis, to keep you as up to date as possible with what's happening in and around the West Midlands. If you wish to receive the e-newsletter, please let Liz know by emailing elizabeth.reynolds@cafamily.org.uk

CONTACT A FAMILY: FUTURE EVENTS

PICNIC IN THE PARK

Tuesday 24th August, 11am onwards, Cannon Hill Park, 2 Russell Road, Birmingham, B13 8RD

Contact a Family and Link Up invite you to a family day out with activities and information stands. Don't forget to bring a picnic!

Ring Jan or Liz to book a place on 0121 415 4624



FIRST AID COURSE

2nd & 9th October, 10am-2pm, Camp Hill, Birmingham.

A specially designed course for parent/carer and their disabled young person (aged from 13yrs to 16yrs) enabling them to learn about First Aid together. You must be able to attend both dates.

Certified and led by the Red Cross.

Ring Jan or Liz to book a place on 0121 415 4624. We hope to run this course in other areas so please let us know if you would like it held near you.



WORKING WITH OUR CHILDREN TO IMPROVE BEHAVIOUR

Contact a Family and Marches Family Network are organising two workshops for families with disabled children. The venue will be in Hereford.

Tuesday 2nd November 10.00am - 2.00pm Children up to & including 10 years

Tuesday 16th November 10.00am - 2.00pm Children over 11 years and over

If you would like more information or want to book a place please ring Marches Family network on 01568 614908 from September onwards.

TRANSITION WORKSHOPS We are planning a series of transition workshops. We would like to prioritise members of support groups who will be able to take the information and toolkit back to share with others in their group. However, whether you are a member of a group or an individual please ring us if you would like further information when available.

PARENT PARTICIPATION UPDATE

It's been a busy time for everyone involved in parent participation around the region. There have been conferences, training days, events and meetings, newsletters, twittering and much more going on.

Some areas are producing news about the outcome of parent participation either in newsletters, on websites or via "You said, we did sheets" – a simple way of showing what parents said and what the authorities did as a result. For some areas parents views are still being discussed in focus groups or sub groups of strategic planning groups such as Children's Trusts – so keep a look out for what's happening in your area.

Participation website's in the West Midlands

Walsall -	www.familyvoice.co.uk
Worcestershire -	www.parentsandcarers.org.uk
Shropshire -	www.paccshropshire.org.uk
Birmingham -	www.parentviewscount.org
Herefordshire -	www.herefordshirecarersupport.org
Staffordshire -	www.staffordshire.gov.uk/health/childrenandfamilycare

Spotlight on...

Support Groups

We have a database of many support groups throughout the West Midlands, and endeavour to keep it as up to date as possible. If you know of any groups please let us know so that we can make sure our information is up to date. Also if you know of a new group please tell us – then we can spread the word!

Hansel and Gretel Support Group

Offering support and friendship to disabled children and their families in the **Wyre Forest** area. Saturday club, coffee mornings, social evenings and holiday activities.

Please call Jane Nott on 07525 668608 for more details.

Platelet Function Disorders helping families live with blood disorders.

Call Ruby on 01684 592171 or email: ruby@funnyblood.co.uk (www.funnyblood.co.uk).

They are having a BBQ on 17th July and raising funds for Contact a Family. Please call Ruby for details!

Little Oaks Special Needs Children's Club

Offering a variety of activities for children and siblings. Saturday mornings 11am – 1pm.

In **Bromsgrove** area, please call Margaret Burton on 01527 877014 for further details.

Stay

Advice and support for parents of children with a disability or additional needs. Fun days out and weekly meetings.

Tuesdays 9.30-11.30 (£1.50)

St Richards Church

Kitts Green, B33 9QY

Call Angela on 07842 599700.

The Ups of Downs

Support group for families with children with Down Syndrome in **Leamington Spa**.

Please call Alex on 01926 632709 (preschool children)

or

Nicola on 01926 314403 (children in Key stage 1).

Birmingham Phab Club (North & East B'ham)

Social and sporting activities for children and young people with disabilities. (Aged 4-16yrs).

Mondays 6.05-8pm

The Sanctuary, **Castle Vale**.

Please call Chris or Elaine for details on 0121 747 7076.

SUPPORTING YOUR SUPPORT GROUP

Contact a Family can provide help with setting up new and supporting existing support groups. We can meet with you to discuss all the varied issues involved in setting up and running support groups. We can make suggestions, provide information and help with the aspects that you are finding difficult.

Some examples of ways we have helped in the past:

- discussion of factors to take into account when starting a new group
- finding a venue
- making suggestions for speakers
- helping to find funding sources

We also give talks about Contact a Family and our services to groups. Please give Jan or Liz a ring on 0121 415 4624 for more information.



I.T and Computer/Laptops

There are a number of organisations in and around the West Midlands who may be able to provide a child or young person with a computer/laptop. Often they are reconditioned computers which have had their memory cleaned. Some of the organisations may make a small charge.

www.abilitynet.org.uk (Freephone 0800 269545)

www.aidis.org (0845 120 3719)

www.itforcharities.co.uk

www.homeaccess.org.uk (0333 200 1004)

www.recom.org.uk (0121 765 5282)



There are also some organisations that may fund IT equipment for a child or young person (subject to their terms and criteria).

www.aco.uk.net – A list of over 200 charities providing financial help. The helpline can also signpost to charities most likely to help 01707 651 777.

www.familyfund.org.uk – provides financial support to families with a disabled child up to the age of 18 years old.

www.childrentoday.org.uk – Grants for life-changing specialist equipment.
Call 01244 335 622.

www.lifeline4kids.org – Will purchase specific items for children and young people up to aged 19 years. 020 7794 1661.

We hold an extensive list of many organisations that make grants to families of disabled children, in many areas other than I.T. Please call us or our helpline to ask for further details.

Stop press...

You may remember completing our parent feedback questionnaire recently. Well we are pleased to tell you that the winner of the £25 gift voucher is Karen Bacciochi. Well done Karen!!

Spotlight on...



Brainwave is a Children's Charity which has over twenty eight years of experience in providing therapy for children with a brain injury such as cerebral palsy, or genetic conditions such as Down's Syndrome, or developmental delay. Brainwave therapists also design programmes for children who are either on the autistic spectrum or who have autistic tendencies as part of their diagnosis.

Brainwave works with families to deliver home based therapy and exercise programmes that help children with disabilities and developmental delay to achieve their potential. That potential could be anything from a child walking or feeding themselves to counting or forming sentences. Brainwaves' attitude is 'let's see what can be done' rather than what cannot. The Charity employs a range of therapists including Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists and Educationalists, enabling them to take a holistic approach. Each child's individual programme can then be carried out at home with the ongoing support of the Brainwave team. Brainwave complements rather than replaces the services offered by statutory authorities and all exercises are based on current mainstream practice.

The aim of the Charity is to help children from all over the country to become as independent as possible whilst improving their lives on a daily basis. Many children achieve results which can often far exceed their parent's dreams.

Brainwave is an independent charity that receives no government funding, relying solely on donations. Brainwave is able to fund 80% of the cost of therapy for all children. We ask families to contribute 20% for each assessment they attend with their child. This currently stands at £500 for an Initial Assessment and £250 for the subsequent one day reassessments. Families can request assistance with fundraising from Brainwave to attend assessments.

Anyone who would like to know more about Brainwave can contact Joanna Sladden (Family Coordinator for the West Midlands) on:

0121 308 1943 or 07725 956012
email joannasladden@brainwave.org.uk
or visit website: www.brainwave.org.uk



Playday-4th August 2010

On Playday and throughout the summer, get out and play at one of hundreds of locally organised Playday events across the UK – or join in the fun by planning your own!

In the West Midlands there are a number of activities and events throughout the region, including Birmingham, Stoke on Trent, Tamworth, Walsall, Wolverhampton, Stafford, Shrewsbury, Droitwich, Dudley, Kidderminster, Lichfield and many more!!



See www.playday.org.uk for more details or call 020 7843 6300



Spotlight on...

Useful websites and contacts

The following organisations have lots of useful advice, as well as training and events during the coming months. Check their websites or give them a call for further details.

www.autism.org.uk	0845 070 4004
www.downs-syndrome.org.uk	0845 230 0372
www.cerebra.org.uk	0800 328 1159
www.kids.org.uk	0121 355 2707
www.autismwestmidlands.org.uk	0121 450 7582

TRANSITION



Connexions Service

Connexions is for young people in England between the ages of 13 -19 and up to 25 for young people with a disability. The service is there to support and advise young people about their present and future plans and give information about the different options available. Personal Advisers are attached to every school and those attached to Special Schools will have expertise in disability. Ask at school for contact details of the Personal Adviser.

Connexions Direct is a helpline service available daily from 8am-2pm, 7 days a week. It offers information on a wide range of topics as well as confidential advice and practical help. Calls are free from a landline and an adviser will ring back the young person on his/her mobile.

Call 0808 800 13219. If both agree that more personal support is needed a referral can be made to a Personal Adviser.

Disability Employment Advisers (DEAs)

The DEA is a very important person to be aware of when exploring work and training options with your young person. DEAs are based in each JobcentrePlus and can help in a number of ways

- They can carry out an employment assessment to see what type of work or training will be best
- They can make a referral to a work psychologist who will be able to give an in depth assessment of the strengths and disabilities of the young person
- They can refer to a number of programmes which will provide preparation for and support in work
- One programme called Access to Work gives advice, support and equipment to disabled people and their employers to help overcome obstacles
- The DEA can let the young person know of jobs that match their skills and experience

To find your local DEA ring JobcentrePlus and ask for his/her name and telephone number to ring and make an appointment. Give us a ring if you want any help with this.

Spotlight on...

Would you like to save some money?

There are many places throughout the West Midlands and beyond who will often give reduced entry costs to disabled visitors and their carers. Wherever you go, it's always good to ask if they offer any concessions. Below is just a small selection of web sites for you to look at. If you don't have access to the web, please either call us, or visit your local library where they will be able to help you.

www.familyfundextra.org.uk
www.daytrippers.org.uk
www.discountvouchers.co.uk
www.special-needs-kids.co.uk
www.ceacard.co.uk

Let us know if you are aware of any other money saving ideas that you've come across!

Contact details

Rizwana Pathan is our **local parent representative** and is a parent of disabled children. For local information in her area of Warwickshire or a listening ear, please give her a call - she will be only too happy to help. Rizwana's contact details are **024 7634 9612**.

Our helpline

The Contact a Family National Freephone Helpline **0808 808 3555**, is open Monday - Friday, 10am-4pm and every Monday evening 5.30pm-7.30pm.

The textphone number is **0808 808 3556** and Language Line is available for parents whose first language is not English.

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.

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Tel: 0121 329 2061

Rizwana Pathan – Volunteer Parent Representative (Warwickshire)
Tel: 024 7634 9612

Sarah Lee – Parent Participation Advisor
Tel: 07905 722005

National Freephone Helpline
0808 808 3555

