



South Manchester Down's Syndrome Support Group (SMDSSG) June 2010



Website: www.dsmanchester.org.uk

Telephone: 07593 542 107

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Group news

Half term event We have booked **Run of the Mill indoor play centre** (Pear Mill Ind Est Stockport Rd West, Bredbury, Stockport SK6 2BP) for exclusive use of our group on **Friday June 4 from 4.30-6.30 pm**. Cost £5 per family, including food. This cost is heavily subsidised so extra donations always welcome! To make organising easier, please let us know ASAP if you would like to book a place: 07593 542 107, contact@dsmanchester.org.uk. If you haven't booked but would like to come, just turn up on the evening.

Funding News

Donations in memory of Bernard Corrigan

Many thanks to friends and family of Bernard Corrigan who donated £85 in lieu of flowers at his funeral. Bernard's sister Maureen visited Chatterbox club and wrote the following piece about him.

Bernard was born in July 1958 in Oldham, Lancashire. He lived at home until he was about 7 years old, when he went into full time care which was quiet common practice in the 1960s. He was visited every Sunday by his mum, dad and 2 younger sisters. He moved to Ashton-u-Lyne when he was 16 and would go home every Sunday, Christmas Day and Boxing Day for the day. When Care in The Community was rolled out he moved into a house with Philip, his friend who was also Down's Syndrome, with whom he lived for many years. Bernard needed 24 hour care which was provided by fantastic 'care' people. In later years he enjoyed going to the pub, dancing and walking. Bernard was always a happy person and very mischievous. Sadly Bernard died suddenly in February this year aged 51. He touched many hearts and it is fitting, that in his memory, donations have been given to SMDSSG.

Many thanks and deepest sympathy to Maureen and family from us.



Chatterbox Club

Heaton Moor Evangelical church, Green Lane, Heaton Moor SK4 3LH.

Our Chatterbox Club is a chance for children to get together with others of a similar age for group speech therapy. The sessions are delivered by qualified speech and language therapists who have specialist training in the specific communication needs of people who have Down's syndrome. Parents and carers attend the sessions too, picking up useful ideas and information from the therapists about how best to support their children's communication.

During the morning parents also have the opportunity to have a coffee and socialise, sharing information, ideas and tips while their children play or take part in activities organised by an experienced arts and crafts teacher. More than thirty families have enrolled their children for speech therapy at the club, and several more families drop in each month for coffee and a chat. Brothers and sisters are also welcome and in addition to the speech therapy and crafts, popular "sing and sign" classes are led by an experienced signer, offering the whole family a chance to learn some signs - a valuable support for children who have Down's syndrome.

Teachers and TAs are very welcome - the activities modelled in these sessions are suitable to be used in educational settings. **Even if your child is not enrolled for SALT sessions, your family is very welcome to come along for coffee, chat and sing and sign—just pop a donation in the box at the kitchen counter.**

Our last Chatterbox of this season is on **June 26** and the theme is holidays. Please let Bernadette know if you would like to attend our next set of sessions starting in September

We'd like to say a huge 'thank you' to all our wonderful volunteers—we couldn't run Chatterbox without you.

Our support group funded a place for one of our Chatterbox speech therapists, Helen Adkins, to attend the recent specialist training by Symbol UK in Manchester. Helen writes:

"I am particularly grateful for the SMDSSG for giving me the fantastic opportunity to attend the Specialist Speech and Language Therapy Course in Down's Syndrome in Manchester held last week.

It was reassuring that many of the groups that I run are already along the right lines in terms of what is recommended for children and young people with Down's Syndrome, but I was also able to gain a huge amount of new ideas for working on both speech and language. I was particularly interested by the use of "pacers" and "shape-coding" which both provide visual support for expressive language - so watch out for them in future sessions!

Bernadette and myself are going to have a think about and discuss how I can share the ideas with the group and take things forward in the future, so if you have any ideas or questions, then please get in touch!"

Events

June 18 10am - 3pm - Saturday club at the donkeys

EST Donkey sanctuary Manchester, Green Fold Abbey Hey Manchester M18 8RJ. Tel 0161 301 4051 for more details.

CADS Saturday Club*

Inclusive group offering dance & drama at the Common Room at the Seashell Trust, Cheadle, **every Saturday during term time**. Current sessions are as follows: 9:30-10:45am 4-7 year olds; 10:45-12:00pm 8-12 year olds; 12:00-1:00pm 13+ years old. Contact Gemma Castle at 0161 610-0124 or email cads@seashelltrust.org.uk to book.

Seashell Swimming

Family Fun Session Saturdays 2pm. £1 per child, £5 per family. Please contact Gemma (0161 610 0159) in advance if you would like to attend.

Friendship club* and Friendship Club extra* events

please see attached leaflet.

* Please note: not run by the South Manchester Down Syndrome Support Group. For information only—we are not responsible for changes to date, time or venue. Please use the contact information supplied to confirm details and to ask any questions.

Other support groups around Greater Manchester

Tameside and Glossop Down's syndrome support group

Contact: Vicky on 07792827899 or email victoriamassey@hotmail.com.

West Pennine Down's syndrome support group

Website: ww.dswestpennine.co.uk New Parent Support: 07842534819

Email: dswestpennine@hotmail.co.uk General Enquiries: 07842555725

North Manchester Coffee Mornings

Contact Sheila on email she.swarb@tesco.net mobile: 07729179201 for details.

Bolton Smiley Faces Contact Judith Smethhurst 01204 382954

Cheshire Down's syndrome support group www.cheshiredownssyndrome.com

Down's Syndrome Family & Carer's Group, Lancaster

contact: Liz Fawcett e-mail: lizfawcett@hotmail.co.uk

Training / Information

DDA for parents Confirmations will be sent out during the first week of June

Free PowerPoint Resources from DS OK Support Group's Education and information Days

Vision in children and adults with Down's syndrome -helping them make the most of it
by Margaret Woodhouse

Nutrition and Down's syndrome by Amanda Perry at:

<http://www.downsyndromeok.org.uk/index.php/downloads/category/10-information-day-2010>

Also excellent resources on **the learning profile, inclusion and accessing the curriculum:**

<http://www.downsyndromeok.org.uk/index.php/downloads/category/8-education-day-2009>

Dates for your diary

CADS Saturday club	Saturdays
Seashell Swimming	Saturdays
Saturday club at the donkeys	June 18
Chatterbox Club	June 26

The views and items on this newsletter are not necessarily those of the South Manchester Down's Syndrome Support Group. Mention does not necessarily mean recommendation or support.

***South Manchester Down's
Syndrome Support Group June 2010***

Inclusion Message

Our Inclusion message this month comes from an article written by Karen Goodman on her daughter, Rebecca's inclusion at All Saints C of E Primary School in Ilkley. The article was originally written for the Bradford SENCO newsletter.

Rebecca started school in September 2007.

Karen writes:

We feel welcome! When I first visited All Saints with my daughter I met the head teacher, had a chat, went for a tour of the school, spoke to a few members of staff, then re-met the head again. Growing in me was this nagging doubt that possibly no one had noticed that Rebecca had Down syndrome! In the end I took the bull by the horns and broached statements. Still he continued listening and nodding but notably didn't look surprised! He concluded the conversation by saying to keep him informed.

That first meeting has set the tone for most of our experience at All Saints - you live in our catchment area, you are welcome and let us work out together what is needed. It has never felt as if Rebecca's needs are problems to the school. It is a subtle difference but the impression we get is "What are Rebecca's needs and how can we meet them?"

Everyone is on board. The lead for an inclusive school given by the head teacher is shared by all staff, including office and lunch-time staff. They all seem to have the same attitude towards inclusion. It doesn't feel as if my only relationship is with her support assistants but rather with a team who communicate well with each other and are all singing from the same hymn sheet.

Both reception teachers and the support assistants religiously meet together once a week to discuss progress and any issues that have arisen over the week. This time is used to plan the next week to ensure work is appropriate, approaches are consistent and all feel supported. It never feels to us as if the support assistants are working in isolation and this regular, committed time slot is an essential part of working together.

Communication with us is good. The staff involve us and we feel as if our wishes are taken on board as the people who know her best. All staff seem so undefensive! They are approachable and communication feels easy, particularly if we want to make suggestions. We also felt included in the recruitment process, not directly, but consulted as if our opinions mattered.

Inclusion and differentiation are put into practice. Whenever possible Rebecca is taught alongside the rest of the class, albeit with extra whole class stimulus when needed, e.g. signing, use of large font, sitting her close to the front, reducing distractions. If this is not possible then her assistant gives extra help within the group and the class teacher differentiates work to her level. If this is still not possible alternatives such as small group teaching or individual work are used.

There are high expectations of Rebecca. Work is differentiated for her by her class teacher and by her committed support assistants. They regularly seem to be thinking of new ways to alter work to be at her level but within the whole class, enabling her at all times to take part as fully as possible with the rest of the class.

These expectations also relate to age appropriate behaviour with advice sought for ways of dealing with inappropriate behaviour.

Other pupils and parents are supportive. The school culture of acceptance seems to extend to the other pupils and their parents. I have been told of the benefits parents feel their children get from being in an inclusive environment. They mention the benefits of reflecting normal society, of having extra staff in the classroom and of wider teaching techniques that have helped their own children. All involved do not seem to see disability as a child's defining feature. In Rebecca's reception class a buddying system was set up to provide good role models in class and the playground. Each day Rebecca can choose a pupil to work with and we are told that the other pupils feel a sense of pride when she chooses them.

They go the extra mile. The staff are approachable and open to ideas from us and other professionals. Communication is good not only with us but with external professionals visiting the school for Rebecca. Staff have implemented a home/school diary, a conversation diary, Portage suggestions, speech and language objectives and ideas, attended the Early Education Group with the Down Syndrome Training & Support Service and have used relevant ideas in the classroom.

Support staff attended essential courses run by the Down Syndrome Training & Support Service, amongst others, and her reception teacher learned signing to use with the whole class prior to Rebecca starting school.

There is a willingness to do extra activities such as swimming if necessary and resources are arranged to make sure they happen. Rebecca's reviews are an informative, constructive experience, with much effort put in by all staff, including a video edited from various clips over the year to demonstrate her progress.

I'm sure a lot of schools are embracing inclusion and its benefits not only for those children with disabilities but also for the group of children without statements that struggle in all schools. There are many examples of good practice but clearly from talking to other parents there are also schools with less positive attitudes. The aspects that I feel make the most difference to our experience are a whole school professional attitude towards inclusion, a welcoming atmosphere and education geared to Rebecca reaching her potential.

Rebecca is now in year 2 and making good progress in a school that should be proud of its achievements