

newsletter

issue No 13 spring 2007

Launch of Essex Autism Alert Card

The Essex Autistic Society is proud to launch the new Essex Autism Alert Card. The cards have been produced in conjunction with Essex Police and are available free of charge to anyone who has an autism spectrum condition.



The card will help the Emergency Services quickly identify that they are dealing with someone who has autism. It will have the card holder's name, offer some simple advice and will have the contact details for further help.

If you would like a card or know of someone who would benefit please contact

Jo Keys on 01206 577678

Autism Awareness Week

We are pleased to announce that the week beginning 1st October 2007 has been declared Autism Awareness Week by Autism Alliance UK.

The Essex Autistic Society is a founder member of Autism Alliance UK which now consists of 10 regional autism organisations across the United Kingdom.

We hope to hold a number of events during the week to raise awareness of autism locally and to highlight the services that we provide.

1st - 7th October 2007

Doucecroft School's 30th Birthday Party

Saturday 14th July 2007

It was the 2nd May 1977 that The Essex Autistic Society (then known as The Essex Society for Autistic Children) accepted its first intake of pupils at Doucecroft School.

To mark this very special anniversary, and the changes that Doucecroft has seen over the past 30 years, we will be hosting a reunion event at the new Doucecroft School in Eight Ash Green.

The event will be a wonderful occasion for pupils and staff, past and present to catch up with old friends, see the fantastic new school campus and celebrate just how much we have achieved over the years. We would also like to welcome the many people who have been involved in the school's development, our members and supporters and the Society's extended friends and family.



Autism, Open Art Exhibition

As part of the event we are organising an Open Art Competition and are inviting the public to submit original pieces of art to be exhibited at the event. The artwork should demonstrate the artist's understanding of autism and must fall into one of the following categories relating to autism: 'Sensory Sensitivity', 'Perseveration' and 'Interaction Adrift.' The pieces will then be judged and have the opportunity of being sold. More details on the competition can be found on our website or by calling

Anna on 01206 577678.

The school will be open from 10am until 3pm on Saturday 14th July and as well as the art exhibition will feature photographic displays, a sensory 'experience', refreshments and other activities.

A 'Book of Memories' is also being produced for the occasion – if you have a happy memory of Doucecroft School that you would like to include please do let us know.



We look forward to seeing you there.

FE Dept News

Big Lottery Grant

Our FE Dept was delighted to learn recently that a funding bid to expand the community activities that they offer to young adults with autism was approved by the Big Lottery Fund.

A grant of £36,363 has been awarded to the centre in Kelvedon for them to purchase a new seven-seater vehicle and pay its running costs and activities for the students over the next three years.

The FE Dept already has one minibus but due to the number of students at the centre and their differing needs, the addition of a smaller vehicle will mean that they will now be able to enjoy varied activities and access the community in a more appropriate means of transport.

The picture below was taken by the Colchester Evening Gazette when they covered the success story for the local paper and shows some of the students and staff of the FE department celebrating the Lottery grant.



Residential Visit planned for June

The students and staff at the FE Dept have been busy organising their educational residential visit for the summer. Following last year's successful few days at Bruisyard Hall Manor House in Suffolk they are planning something a little more rural with a stay at Kelling Heath Activity Centre in North Norfolk.

The students have been exploring the theme of Responsibility for the Environment at the FE Dept this year and the visit will be a 'Countryside and Environmental Awareness Week' theme offering the students the opportunity to put their learning into context. Read how they got on in the next issue.

2007 Leavers Do

This year's end of term party will be a BBQ with a line dancing display. The students have been working towards various qualifications throughout the year and certificates will be handed out at the party. Three students will be leaving the FE Dept by July.

Family Support Corner

We would like to say hello and also goodbye to **Katie Philp** our Family Support Worker who joined us on the 1st February. Katie will only be with us until June as she is expecting her first child in August and will be on maternity leave for a year. Good luck Katie and please keep us informed of your progress.

The support group in Clacton is going from strength to strength and we would like to help set up a group in Colchester, but need some volunteers to run it. Unfortunately the running of groups takes up a lot of time and with over 500 families on our database at the moment it is time we just do not have.

A Will Information session was held in March and was attended by parents of children with autism. Representatives from GoodyBurrett LLP solicitors in Colchester gave advice on making provision for children with special needs in Wills. If this is something that is of concern for you please call for a free advice pack.

We have produced a new information leaflet for Teachers and School Workers on how to support a child with autism. If you would like some to give to your child's school please let us know and we will gladly send some to you.

Our drop in sessions at Head Office will be starting in the very near future. They will be an opportunity for parents to come to the office for a chat, obtain information or ask questions. As filling in of Disability Living Allowance forms takes a long time we would ask that you please make an appointment for this.

Please feel free to contact us if you require any help or advice.

Jo Keys - Family Support Officer
Katie Philp - Family Support Worker
jk@essexautistic.org.uk / kap@essexautistic.org.uk
01206 577678

Information Leaflets

The following leaflets have all been produced by The Essex Autistic Society and are available from our Head Office.

General Information Leaflet
Information for Teachers and School Workers
Guidelines for Health Professionals
Guidelines for the Police
Remembering the Essex Autistic Society in your Will
Annual Report & Financial Statements (31/8/2006)

All leaflets are free of charge and are also available on our website, just visit the download page at www.essexautistic.org.uk

Events

Hydro-Active Women's Challenge

We are pleased to report that we have recruited a team of seven ladies to enter this years Hydro-Active 5km race. The event will take place in Hyde Park on Sunday 16th September and all sponsorship money raised will come to the Essex Autistic Society. If you would like to join us (either running or walking!) please contact Anna.

Colchester Charity Jailbreak

The EAS has teamed up with three other Colchester Charities to organise a Charity Jailbreak on the weekend of 27th - 28th October.

Teams of two or more people will be 'released' from Colchester Castle and have 24 hours in which to travel as far as possible without spending any money. The event is very popular with University students and it has been known for teams to get as far as Finland! Whilst we aren't expecting anything as far fetched as that, we will be offering teams the opportunity to enter under the following categories:



- Furthest overall distance travelled*
- Most unusual destination*
- Furthest distance using non-powered transportation*
- Most varied forms of transportation used*
- Most amount of sponsorship raised*

The event costs £10 per person to enter. If you are interested in entering a team please contact Anna for more information.

First4Essex Black Tie Ball

If you would like to support four Essex-based charities and have a fun evening at the same time, why not join us at the First4Essex Black Tie Ball on Friday 28th September at The Essex Golf & Country Club. Proceeds from the event will be divided between us, the Essex Air Ambulance, The Essex Wildlife Trust and the Essex Community Foundation.

For more information on any of the above events please call Anna on 01206 577678 or email fundraising@essexautistic.org.uk

Recycling

You will find enclosed in this newsletter a freepost envelope in which you can recycle any used printer cartridges or unwanted mobile phones.

The scheme, organised by Reclaim-IT, is a quick and convenient way to donate these items for recycling and the special bar code means that all the proceeds will come back to The Essex Autistic Society.

We also have a large collection box at Head Office and at Doucecroft School if you would like to bring bigger quantities of these items.

Thank you...

To Chris Andrews and all the members of the Thorpe Hall Golf Club. Chris nominated us as his Charity of the Year during his Captaincy at the club and raised a wonderful £3,318. Chris has allocated the funds to Peldon Rectory for improvements to the communal lounge and games room.

To the Rotary Club of South Woodham Ferrers for their fantastic donation of £5,000. The money was raised following their annual fireworks display and was presented on behalf of the Rotary Club by the Mayor of Chelmsford at the start of the Rotary Club's annual swimathon.



To Paul Frost and the members of Stoke by Nayland Golf Club for raising a brilliant £5,264 for Doucecroft School during Paul's year as Captain.

To our collection volunteers for giving up their time to shake tins outside local stores. £310 has been raised so far this year.

... and last but by no means least – a **HUGE** thank you to the ladies of the Colchester Fundraising Branch who have tirelessly raised funds for the Society since it formed in 1973. Unfortunately the group has recently disbanded but we would like to give our sincere thanks for all the time and support they have given us over the years.

Supermarket Collections

We have been allocated the following collection dates outside supermarkets this year. If you are able to spare an hour or two to help we would love to hear from you. We are desperately short of volunteers to help with the collections and unfortunately they have to be cancelled if we cannot drum up enough support.



Clacton on Sea
Witham

Southend on Sea
Braintree

Colchester
Colchester

25th & 26th July
17th & 18th August
7th & 8th September
28th & 29th September
20th October
24th & 25th October

Tesco, Brook Retail Park
Morrisons, Braintree Road
Morrisons, Western Approaches
Sainsburys, Toft's Walk
Fiveways, Abbotts Road
Tesco, Highwoods

If you think you could help please do contact Anna on 01206 577678

Useful Contacts:

The National Autistic Society

Information, Advice and Support

0845 070 4004
www.nas.org.uk

Families inFocus (Essex)

Supporting families of children and young people with disabilities and special needs

01245 353575
www.familiesinfocusessex.org

Colchester Cares Centre (For Children)

Provides a range of services to families, carers of children with disabilities

01206 560997
www.cccfrc@aol.com

SNAP (Special Needs and Parents)

Essex wide support group for parents and carers

01277 211300
www.snapcharity.org

SAFE (Supporting Asperger Families in Essex)

Support groups in Colchester, Chelmsford, Basildon & Southend

01206 240931
www.aspergers.org.uk

Speech & Language

Bethan Franklin has joined the Essex Autistic Society as a Speech and Language Therapist and is working with both the children and adults within the Society.



Since starting in March, Bethan has been developing Speech and Language Therapy resources, getting to know staff, pupils and adult service users, and has started assessment of the children and adults.

The Speech and Language Therapy service will provide assessments of communication skills, communication strategies and training for staff. If you would like any information on the Speech and Language Therapy service, or to discuss any individual's communication needs, please contact **Bethan at Head Office on 01206 577678**.

Mersea Youth Camp

Throughout May students from Jigsaw will be attending the Youth Camp on Mersea Island. They will be participating in aerial runways, the assault course, archery and paintball targets.



Society News

We were sad to hear the news that Edmund Higgs, a student at the Jigsaw Study Centre, has passed away at the age of 26. Edmund had been participating in art & textile sessions at Jigsaw since 2005 and over the years produced some cheerful and interesting pieces of work which are still displayed at Jigsaw with fond memories for all to see. Edmund's family have very kindly requested that any donations be sent to the Jigsaw Study Centre.

We would like to welcome **Diane Grove** who has recently started at Head Office as bookkeeper and will be assisting the Finance Dept.

Note from the Editor: As from the 16th June I shall no longer be Anna Trovell as I'm off to get married. See you in the September issue as **Mrs Anna Rogers!!**

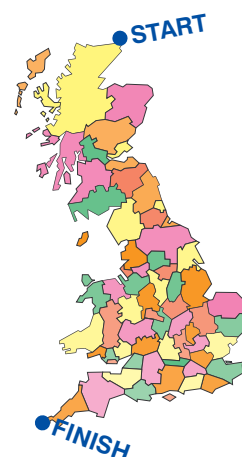
Peldon Campus Pool

We would like to express our gratitude to Rob and Carol from Alresford for giving our swimming pool at the Peldon Campus a new lease of life. Rob & Carol very generously donated the cover from their own outdoor pool which was a perfect fit for the one at Peldon. The cover will keep in the warmth from the pool heater and allow the service users from the Rectory, Seymour House and Ashton House to swim underneath it all year round. As you can see from the picture Island Landscapes are in the process of reassembling the frame and extending the patio area surrounding the pool. We would also like to thank Peter Tickner for putting us in touch with Carol & Rob and organising 'the move'.



John O'Groats to Land's End Bike Ride

We would like to wish all the best to Tom Ward, Tim Barbrook and Matt Hills who will be cycling the 900 miles from John O'Groats to Land's End this summer to raise money for charity. The boys will be departing on 23rd June 2007 and hope to arrive in Land's End twelve days later. The journey will be completely unsupported and the team will carry everything they need with them on their bikes. Tom Ward will be donating his third of the sponsorship money to Coldwell Villa where his girlfriend Laura is a Team Leader.



If you would like to sponsor Tom please visit www.bmycharity.com/JOtoLE