

Edition 1 - March 2009

Welcome to our first ever newsletter. Where we hope to keep you up to date on things that affect our children and young people's lives in West Sussex. The services they receive and the changes being made.

We will be doing profiles on Forum members and how their caring roles effect their lives, and how this empowered us to form West Sussex Parents Forum to help the professionals in power to see really what looking after a child with a disability is really like.

Transport Improvement Project

But first things first we would like to say a big thank you to everybody who has taken part in contributing towards our Transport Improvement Project Report (or T.I.P for short) either by attending our consultation day held in October 2008, E-mail or by taking the time to fill in our questionnaire. How ever you helped THANK YOU.

We will be presenting our report in April if you would like a copy please contact us. We will give you an update in edition 2 of this Newsletter.

Remember this is also your Newsletter so if there is anything you would like to tell other parents / carers please contact us. This could be anything like an event you are organising to a joke or word search. In the next issue of West Sussex Parents Forum Newsletter. We will be giving you information on Aiming High for Disabled Children (AHDC) what this could mean to you as a parent / carer of a child with a learning difficulty or disability in West Sussex.

In this newsletter we hope to put in events and meetings that are happening in West Sussex. If you would like to attend a meeting as a representative of West Sussex Parents Forum. Please can you let us know in what area your expertise lies. A committee member will attend at least the first meeting with you until you feel comfortable doing this yourself. We understand that you may all have your own problems you will want to sort out but as a representative of the forum we ask you not to air these at the meeting but may be wait till it is over to talk to some one about your issues or bring them to me and I will endeavour to get answers for you.

My name is Kelly and I am currently the chair of West Sussex Parents Forum.

I am a single parent of two children. My eldest daughter had a behaviour problem when she lived at home with me, she now lives with her dad. She was very violent to my youngest daughter and myself. We had various appointments with CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) as well as children centre appointments with numerous paediatricians who agreed we had a problem but could not help. I felt very let

down by services. This got me thinking that rather than sit and do nothing for my daughter and the others like her that I should use my experiences and work with professionals to improve services. Some times I feel very frustrated as a parent as I would like things to change quickly but rationally I know things take time and I can see changes happening and feel very privileged that I have been involved with this change and you could too.



There is a parents carers group for children with Autism in the Worthing area there next meeting is on Tuesday 28th April. For more information contact Lindsey on **01903 882666**.

There is also a FREE Parent Workshop for parents / carers of young people with Autism & Asperger Syndrome. With lunch included.

Called Practical Strategies for parents for more information and to book a place for 16th June in London contact www.cambianeducation.com. If you do not have access to a computer contact me and I will book a place for you.

I have also been asked to find three parents to attend an event on 27th April in Arundel. This is to look at services for the under 5's.

For more information or to book a place please contact WSPF details on reverse.

The Springboard Project

The Springboard Project is a community based Children's Centre based in Horsham. Providing a range of inclusive play and recreational opportunities for a whole range of children and Youngsters, including those with additional needs and disabilities. The Charity's roots were established in 1989 with "Grasshoppers" which started as a self-help group set up by some parents in Horsham because their disabled children had nowhere to go and enjoy the kind of play and leisure amenities that able-bodied youngsters could take for granted. Now some 18 years later, it is one of Springboard Projects 5 disabled children and young peoples groups providing a range of activities and opportunities as well as toddlers and children up to age 5, **Grasshoppers** - for children mainly between ages of 5 and 12, **Outburst** for youngsters who are in their teenage years and can be either new to the group or have moved up from "Grasshoppers", **Step-by-step** - a Dance Group which has been running for several years and has been a great success, welcoming any youngsters age 8 and over who enjoy dance activities and **Buddies** - a friendship group for youngsters aged 11-18 to share leisure time out of school time with volunteers their own age. They have recently started a new service - **Parent Plus** - that offers volunteer based monitoring support across the county for parents whose children have recently been diagnosed with a disability.

The organisation caters for over 200 disabled children from Horsham District, Crawley Borough, Mid-Sussex and the West Sussex coastal area. Although it is not always possible to meet the demand of these children, they offer a wide choice of sessions from various planned activities and outings that are available.

For more information :

Website : www.springboardproject.com

Activities Team phone : 01403 257699

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