

JUNE 2016

On yer bike!

Just Holidays! Cycle around Center Parcs



Moloy, Simon and Michal on a Just Holidays! trip to Center Parcs

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From the Editor

One of the things we hear all the time from families is the importance of really good support in the early years of their child's life. And we hear too how difficult it is when things go wrong. The consequences of not getting the right support can last a long time for the whole family. On this page you can read more about a new model our staff have been using, working with Royal Mencap.

One year on from the new Children and Families Act, Barnet Mencap's staff have been engaged with the council, parent carers and other voluntary organisations in looking at the Local Offer, early intervention and other support for disabled children and their families.

Getting it right for children, and young adults up to 25, is a huge challenge and it is so important that we succeed in this.

Employment is a central part of adult life and, along with the council, Barnet Mencap would like to see more people with learning disabilities and autism get paid jobs. We are supporting this through Bright Futures, which has helped 16 people find work in the last 6 months.

As the days get longer, but so far not much warmer, it is a good time to think about the great outdoors. There are stories in this edition on volunteering and allotments, summed up with the great picture on the back page.

The television will be packed with sport this summer but I hope you also have opportunities to enjoy the fresh air and to be active.

Ray Booth

New support for families with a young child with additional needs

Barnet Mencap was very fortunate to have been asked to pilot a new parenting support programme for parents with a child aged under five years old who has a diagnosed or suspected additional need.

The "Early Positive Approaches to Support" or EPATS programme is a short parenting programme specifically designed to support parents who have a young child with additional needs. It was developed by the Tizard Centre at the University of Kent, along with Royal Mencap and the Challenging Behaviour Foundation.

Royal Mencap first approached us in the autumn of 2015 and spoke to a focus group of Open Door families about what their experiences were and this was followed up with a request for Barnet Mencap to deliver the EPATS programme in spring 2016.

We ran three EPATS programmes, one each in the west, east and centre of the borough, and 28 parent/carers attended the six week programme. All our workshops had crèches, which were inclusive for children with additional needs, to make it as easy as possible for parents to attend. Across the six weeks we looked at:

- what support is available in the local area
- looking after yourself to help you to look after your child
- supporting sleep
- supporting communication
- active development of life skills
- tackling behaviour that challenges

The families who attended the sessions all appreciated being able to share ideas and gain confidence from other families facing similar challenges in a safe and non-judgemental space.

Some families had already attended parenting courses for parents in mainstream settings but felt that these did not relate to the particular situations of parents raising a child with additional needs, whereas EPATS looked at exactly those issues which impact most and offered practical ideas to support the parents and children and help them to get the most from the professionals who will be supporting them.

We are optimistic that Royal Mencap will be able to secure funding for us to run more of these workshops later in the year so watch this space for more details.



Our Fixation Theatre Dance and Drama group who raised an amazing £1,177 for their show, 'Wounded Hearts'

Focus on... Hear My Voice

Hear My Voice was a groundbreaking campaign. Across the country thousands of people with learning disabilities took part in meetings and hustings with candidates prior to the General Election. Barnet Mencap, with Royal Mencap's staff, organised two successful events and at the end of last year, Royal Mencap won a prestigious award for its effective campaigning work.

The challenge this year has been to build upon the achievements of Hear My Voice. The campaign was about encouraging people with learning disabilities to vote, reminding them they had the right, and showing how they can hold politicians to account. This year people from Barnet have protested at Westminster against welfare benefit cuts that will have a huge impact on their lives. Changes to Personal Independence Payments (PIP) have now been shelved.

Politics is vitally important to all of us, even if people don't always like politicians. Taking part in the political process – especially the vote – is a

hard-won right and allows us to be active citizens.

In May, Londoners had the chance to vote for a Mayor to replace Boris Johnson and for Assembly members. This was another chance for people with learning disabilities to decide on issues that are so important to them, like housing, transport and policing. Barnet Mencap encouraged people with learning disabilities to make up their mind and use their vote.

The EU Referendum will be held on June 23rd, when the choice will be to leave the European Union or remain in it. It is a complex matter and a huge decision for the country. Royal Mencap have published Easyread information on how to vote, which we have linked to on our website.

The Referendum falls in Learning Disability Week. The timing is a great opportunity to publicise people with learning disabilities at the polling station, with their fellow citizens, having their say.

LEARNING DISABILITY WEEK

Friendship and Relationships

Learning Disability Week is an annual event and takes place this year between 20th and 26th June. It is a chance to raise awareness of the issues faced by people with learning disabilities and their families. In particular, it is a chance for all of us who are so familiar with the issues to communicate with the wider public.

This summer, the theme for Learning Disability Week is Relationships and Friendships. National surveys show that people with a learning disability are often socially isolated. Friendships are a vital form of support and happiness that is often taken for granted. We need to get better at understanding and tackling the barriers that beset people with learning disabilities.

Barnet Mencap has recognised for a long time that friendship and relationships, including sexual relationships, are key to people with learning disabilities having a good quality of life. COPs, Equality Housing and Sherrick

House staff teams work hard to ensure that people with learning disabilities can form and sustain relationships. They create the opportunities for people to go out, make choices and enjoy time with friends. The Gateway Award allows us to offer this to a new younger age group and employment is a great way for people with learning disabilities to develop positive and valued relationships.

Barnet Mencap will be pushing this message during Learning Disability Week. On June 22nd we will be hosting an Open Day for people to find out more about our organisation and our work. We want people from local schools, libraries, religious groups, the police and shops to meet us and to hear from people with learning disabilities about their lives, and see what steps they can take to build more inclusive communities (see below for more details).

The details for Learning Disability Week will also be included on our website and Facebook page, and on Royal Mencap's site at:

www.mencap.org.uk/get-involved/learning-disability-week.



Barnet Mencap Open Day

Barnet Mencap is opening its doors to our service users and their families, professionals and local businesses.

This will be a chance to meet people with learning disabilities, our staff and trustees. There will be a chance to watch films about what we do, see artwork and hear from some of our service users.

Refreshments will be provided.



When?

Wednesday 22nd June 2016 - drop in between 11am - 5pm

Where?

Barnet Mencap's office, 35 Hendon Lane, Finchley N3 1RT

For more information, please contact **Project Support** on **020 8349 3842** or email projectsupport@barnetmencap.org.uk



Sophie teaching an elderly lady to sew as part of Timebank. She's building up hours to use on something she wants to do.

TIMEBANK

Banking on Volunteers

The Barnet Timebank has been working with Barnet Mencap for nearly two years and we hope to for many more years to come.

Timebanking allows people to offer an hour of their time and receive an hour of someone else's, for example someone can offer to help someone with IT and receive CV help in return.

It is a great way of offering your time in any way that you like and then getting help in with something you need help with.

The Timebank has worked with several Barnet Mencap clients who have got loads out of the scheme, for example the client pictured above teaches sewing to an elderly lady and is saving up her hours to use them when she really wants to. She loves doing this as it allows her to use her amazing embroidery skills as well as meet a new friend!

Likewise another Barnet Mencap client offers his time teaching an art class and in return gets personal fitness training using the free leisure passes through the Timebank. It is really easy to get involved - just call Lex from the Timebank on 07887 249 910, or ask Barnet Mencap for more information.

Happy Timebanking!

CONSULTATION

The Future of Adult Social Care

Barnet Council is currently consulting on proposals for the future delivery of adult social care in the borough. They are asking for your views on two things:

- 1) a new way of **delivering** adult social care in Barnet; and
- 2) a new way of **organising** their adult social care services, of which there are 3 options:
 - Option A - keep the adult social care service within the council
 - Option B - create a shared service with one or more local NHS organisations
 - Option C - establishing a public service mutual

The detail of these proposals can be found at <https://engage.barnet.gov.uk/commissioning-group/changing-the-way-we-deliver-adult-social-care>. Hard copy version and easy read versions of the consultation and questionnaire are available on request.

The consultation is now live and will run until Monday 8 August 2016.



A refurbished hallway, and Jenny relaxing in one of our shared houses

EQUALITY HOUSING REFURBISHMENTS

Decorating the houses

Hurray! Finally our programme of refurbishments at the shared houses has been completed.

As the houses are owned by different housing associations, we are limited as to what improvements we can make but we made the most of what we were able to do.

We have redecorated all the communal areas (one of which is shown above) and many of the bedrooms, provided new furniture and flooring and had some carpentry work done.

We used our regular house meetings for the tenants to debate colour schemes and decide on the new furniture for the communal areas. Many had fun doing up their rooms and creating a brand new look.

The resulting changes are great. Although the tenants were very patient dealing with the upheaval, they all agree it was worth it and are enjoying their new surroundings.

50th ANNIVERSARY

History Book still available

To mark Barnet Mencap's 50th Anniversary, we published a book that looks back not only at our own history, but also at how things have changed for people with learning disabilities over the past fifty years.

The book, written by our Treasurer Mike Wiffen, has a foreword from both our Chairman, Peter Carter, and Royal Mencap's Chief Executive, Jan Tregelles.

Thanks to hours of research and interviewing many of those who have been involved throughout the years, the book is not only a comprehensive guide to our first fifty years, but it also looks at the history of learning disabilities and features lots of photographs from our history.

If you would like a copy of the book, please contact Project Support via projectsupport@barnetmencap.org.uk or telephone **020 8349 3842**

The book is priced £6 (plus £2 P&P)

Being... Popular Two Cafe Savas Soyler



Savas with brother Simon at Popular Two Cafe, North Finchley

When I left school I decided to go to college. I enrolled on a course called Vehicle Motor Studies. Once I finished my course I started working for a garage. My main duties were to panel-beat vehicles - beating out dents and making good for re-spraying. I enjoyed my job but due to all the dust and paint fumes my asthma became worse. I realised I would have to rethink my employment situation!

My Dad ran a Wimpy franchise for many years and decided he would like to run a more independent café and have more say. When the Popular Two Café came up for sale in North Finchley, my dad decided this was a great opportunity to branch out on his own.

The Popular Two Café was up and running by 1988 - I can't believe this was 28 years ago. The premises were previously run as a café after 1940 and prior to that, were a bakery.

I was still at the garage and due to my health concerns it made sense to help my dad run the café and we have remained a family business ever since.

The café is now run by my brother Simon, Chef Byron, Ishan and of course Sarah and myself, and we have all worked at the café between 7 and 28 yrs. We were the first café in Barnet to receive the 5 star rating for food hygiene and this award is proudly displayed in our window.

Peri Peri chicken and our roast dinners are our most popular dish. We offer value for money and try and keep up with the latest food trends. If a dish is not on the menu we endeavour to cook it for our customers.

Running the café is a lot of hard work, long hours and commitment. This is made much easier by working alongside family members and staff who are very loyal. We are able to take holidays and time off to spend with our families because of this.

I have two daughters and two sons (coincidentally I come from a family of two brothers and two sisters) and when I have free time I regularly take my family horse riding to the stables in Mays Lane in High Barnet. These stables are frequented by children and adults with learning disabilities, some of whom are our regular customers. When time permits I enjoy keeping fit by going to the gym and swimming. My favourite football team is Tottenham Hotspur.

Our customers come from all walks of life. Our most loyal customers are our old age pensioners, who enjoy the free tea or coffee, and our customers who have learning disabilities. Many adults with learning disabilities use our café to meet up with their friends, family and support staff from Barnet Mencap.

Our customers who have learning disabilities have become like family members, sending us postcards when they go on holiday, bringing in their children, holiday photographs and talking to us about everyday life. We recognise that some have specific needs and may need help with reading the menu and giving the correct money, and we give them extra time to choose and help them to make healthy choices.

We always remember our regular customers' names, and customers with learning disabilities have never been barred from our café if they have presented challenging behaviour. We do our utmost to help the individual calm down, and listen to their concerns. We have a very good relationship with the Equality Housing staff from Barnet Mencap and when a more difficult situation has arisen we do speak to a member of staff as soon as possible.

The Popular Two Cafe team and I would like to say a big thank you for allowing us the great privilege of being included in the Barnet Mencap Newsletter - also a huge thank you to all of our customers: they know who they are!!!

Photo Finish



Gary and Elizabeth have a quick sit down on the COPs Walking Group



General Information

You can also view this newsletter on your computer! It's on our website in the 'Newsletters' section, or please email james.wheatley@barnetmencap.org.uk to be added to the emailing list, so you'll save paper and never miss an issue!



How to find us

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Tel: 020 8349 3842 Fax: 020 8349 2192

Email:

projectsupport@barnetmencap.org.uk

Website: www.barnetmencap.org.uk



Like Barnet Mencap on Facebook!



@barnetmencap

Diary Dates

Wednesday 22nd June 2016

Barnet Mencap Open Day

As part of Learning Disability Week we will be having an Open Day at our office - come along to speak to us and find out more about what we do

Saturday 25th June 2016

Sherrick House Weekend Activity Scheme

A new weekend activity scheme for adults with learning disabilities and/or autism in June - running every weekend going to theme parks, stadiums, museums, bowling, the seaside and much more - contact Billie on 020 8203 4860 or

billie-jean.lockhart@barnetmencap.org.uk for more information

Monday 11th July 2016

Wounded Hearts performance at the ArtsDepot

Our devised dance, drama and singing performance based on World War II - for tickets contact projectsupport@barnetmencap.org.uk or call 020 8349 3842

Late July - Early August 2016

Open Door Summer Fun Sessions

Our usual programme of Summer Fun Sessions for the under 5s (and their siblings) will return in late July - for more information please contact projectsupport@barnetmencap.org.uk



The next newsletter, with all the latest news and features, will appear in September

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