

MARCH 2018

Bright Futures to tackle 3 more years!

Barnet Mencap's Bright Futures project will continue for 3 more years!

Story on page 2



Ben at the Disability Festival hosted by London Irish Rugby Football Club. Photo courtesy of Saracens Sport Foundation (@SaracensSportFo on Twitter). Our rugby sessions are part of the Community Opportunities Project which is part of Bright Futures.

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From the Editor

We are delighted to welcome Andrew Waite to Barnet Mencap (see page 7). Andrew is the new Chair and joins the Board at an exciting time. In the spring we will be promoting the Business Plan for 2018-21, which will detail what Barnet Mencap wants to achieve over the next three years. We have been given a real boost by the news that we can continue to provide the Bright Futures service.

Since the autumn, Barnet Mencap has been running an Autism pilot and we are pleased that this has been extended for another twelve months.

When we consulted with people with learning disabilities and carers about the Business Plan, one of the things they said strongly was how important friendships are to them. People want opportunities and support to make friends. On page 4 you can read about a new Barnet Mencap initiative that aims to do just that.

In this edition, we welcome Reshma Hirani, our new Hate Crime Reporting Coordinator; the Barnet Learning Disability Service has launched a new Health Action Plan and on page 6 you can read how it should help to improve peoples' health. We will be supporting the new Royal Mencap campaign, Treat Me Well, which will push for better care in hospitals. There will be more about the campaign next time.

Ray Booth

Bright Futures to Continue!

We are very pleased and excited that Barnet Mencap has won the tender to provide early intervention and prevention services for people with learning disabilities and autism. We have been providing these services since 2014 through Bright Futures and because our bid was successful, we will be able to do this again for another three years.

This means that a lot of the support will continue. COPs will be putting on a wide range of activities that help people to make friends, learn skills and have fun. Anybody in Barnet with a learning disability and/or autism can get advice and information and Working for You will help people to deal with housing problems, benefits and the other issues that affect them. Royal Mencap will again be helping people to find paid jobs.

Bright Futures will also continue to support mainstream organisations to have a better understanding of learning disability and autism. This will help sports centres, shops, housing offices, libraries and others to provide a better service for their customers with learning disabilities and autism.

But Bright Futures also plans some new developments. It is keen to improve its support for young people as they prepare for adulthood.

We also want to ensure that the criminal justice system works better for people with learning disabilities and autism, where they are witnesses or victims of crime and where they commit crimes.

Family carers need more support and we will work with the Carers' Centre to make sure they can get a Carers' Assessment and get the advice and information they need.

It is great that Bright Futures can continue. But we don't want to stand still. Bright Futures is committed to provide the advice and information people need and the support that helps them to thrive as active citizens in Barnet.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)



You may be aware that new data protection requirements are going to be introduced for all of us from May 2018 onwards.

One of the things we are going to have to tighten up is renewing your consent about how we handle the personal information you give us. For example under the new system you would have to actively opt in to our services and mailings rather than simply never opting out.

Please expect to hear more about this in the coming months so that we can ensure that we are only holding essential information and that we are communicating with you as you want us to. If you have any questions about GDPR please do contact Hilary Chamberlain at the office.



Some of our fundraising activities! Top: Showdown Dance and Drama group, who had a sponsored fancy dress session; Simon giving Barnet Mencap his token as part of Tesco Bags of Help. Bottom: Nicola, Eddie and Amanda packing bags at Tesco; Giulia and Ben in training for their 5k run which is coming up soon!

Focus on... Fundraising

It was a busy end of 2017 for Barnet Mencap with the launch of our '12 Days of Christmas' Fundraising Campaign. Staff, volunteers and members of Barnet Mencap carried out a range of fundraising activities within the community in order to raise money for our Family Support project. Throughout the campaign we held an online auction, packed bags at a supermarket, went caroling, held a 'Swimathon', took part in a bake-off and much much more.

Thank you to all of those that took part in activities and supported Barnet Mencap. We made over £3200, a fantastic amount, which will be used to support local children with a learning disability and their parents and carers.

We would like to thank all of the organisations/ individuals who supported us

during the campaign: Ben Whishaw; the cast of BBC's Casualty; Phoenix Outdoor Centre; Jagadamba Yoga; Sweettree Farming For All; Pole School; RoxyLulaRose Jewellery; The Shires London; The Beauty Holder; Saracens Sports Foundation; Mill Hill Rugby Club; Tesco - Ballards Lane; Waitrose - Finchley Central; Majestic Wine – Finchley.

2017 was a fantastic year for fundraising and 2018 is shaping up to be even better! Look out for further information regarding fundraising activities on our website and Facebook page.

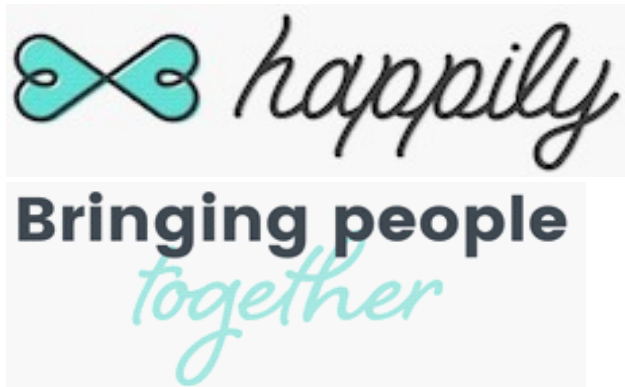
We are always looking for volunteers to support our fundraising activities. For further information please contact Holly on holly.wilson@barnetmencap.org.uk or call 020 8349 3842.

HAPPILY

happily Ever After?

Barnet Mencap would like to inform you of a new and exciting partnership that we hope will make a difference to some of our members and non-members throughout the borough of Barnet who feel isolated.

happily is a family meeting agency designed for people with learning disabilities and/or autism. Helena is the founder of *happily*, "The idea of *happily* was born from my first-hand experience of helping my younger sister who has learning disabilities to find love and friendship. I felt there was a real need for a secure place in London where she could meet genuine people so I launched *happily*."



Barnet Mencap's COPs project is working together with *happily* to bring regular friendship meeting events around the borough designed for different groups of people who may be looking for friendships that might lead to romance. The events will be open to anybody who has a learning disability of some sort and autism in any form.

Meeting people can be difficult for anyone, which is why COPs and *happily* have designed a range of events that are aimed at friendships rather than just dating. Workshops on relationships and consultation to ensure that people's support needs are met for friendships and a profile would be created.

All of this will be wrapped up in a fun event held regularly. This means the focus is on having fun and meeting people rather than on finding a date. Finding the right match for anyone takes time and the partnership will create a safe place where this can happen.

Like any meeting place we need people. *happily* has just started out and are doing very well around London, however we need to build the database of people looking for friendship from this borough and others. If you know someone with a learning disability of some sort or with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder who might benefit from an event like this, please contact us at Barnet Mencap or at *happily* themselves via hello@happilydating.co.uk with the subject line 'Happily Event with Barnet Mencap'

HATE CRIME

Welcoming Reshma

Barnet Mencap has been leading on a project funded by Mayor's office for crime and policing which aims to increase reporting of hate crime in Barnet; to increase support for those experiencing hate crime and to work towards raising awareness in order to prevent hate crime. As you may be aware, the first hate crime reporting coordinator had to leave for personal reasons. We then recruited a temporary member of staff to fill the post and we are happy to announce that we have now recruited Reshma who will take up the post for the remainder of the project.

Despite the bumpy start we have begun work to raise the profile of the reporting centres in Barnet. Barnet Mencap is one of nine hate crime reporting centres in Barnet:

- Do you feel confident in being able to talk to your service users if you suspect they might be experiencing hate crime?
- Do you understand the difference between hate crime and hate incidents?

- Do you know how to take a report and where to get support afterwards?

If the answer is “not sure” please let your manager know and training will be provided. The project will be working with all nine reporting centres to make sure that all their staff are trained to take reports and know how to support people who have experienced hate crime. Reporting centres will also be supported to increase understanding of what hate crime is amongst the people who use their services and the public. If you have any questions or ideas about how we could best increase awareness and support, please get in touch with Reshma via reshma.hirani@barnetmencap.org.uk or via the office at 020 8349 3842

MIND THE GAP THEATRE COMPANY

‘An enjoyable and eye-opening journey’ - Mia theatre review



Hamid O'Toole

One of our service users, Hamid O'Toole, went to see Mia: Daughters of Fortune from the Mind the Gap theatre company. Here's what he had to say about it:

Mia is the second major production in Mind the Gap Theatre company's Daughters of Fortune project which explores learning disability and parenthood. Created and directed by Joyce Nga Yu Lee, Mia tackles the sensitive topic of what happens when people with learning disabilities get pregnant, with humour while also delivering hard truths.

The play is delivered with confidence and raw emotion by four actors with learning disabilities, each bringing their own unique talent to the production including a

spectacular contemporary dance performance delivered by Joanna and Anna; a music composition created on stage by Alan and an enlightening science monologue by Alison.

One of my favourite things about the performance was the simple but effective use of setting, props and lighting with videos and audio from real life experiences woven into the scenes. A particularly memorable scene used darkness and light to make an interview with a social worker feel like an interrogation; with the staging bringing to life the fear and confusion the character in the scene felt.

It is said great theatre should challenge the audience and Mia does just that; the depiction of these real life issues made me sad and makes me want to see things change. With fast paced transitions and several surprises along the way, Mia keeps the audience on their toes. An enjoyable and eye-opening journey that I would recommend everybody to go and watch.



Mind the Gap theatre company work in partnership with people with learning disabilities to create 'exciting, surprising and challenging experiences' - to find out more, or to book tickets for future Mia performances, visit www.mind-the-gap.org.uk.



Hamid with some of our other service users and some of the cast of Mia

AUTISM SERVICE

Barnet Mencap's Autism Service

Barnet CCG commissioned Barnet Mencap to conduct a 6-month project to provide diagnostic autism screenings and advice to adult residents of the borough from November last year. The project has been commissioned to test the demand and effectiveness of a local screening and advice service. Historically, many adult patients seeking a diagnosis for autism have been referred to the South London & Maudsley, where the waiting list is now approximately 14 months long!

Patients are offered an appointment within a week of a referral to the Autism Service from Barnet Mencap and the results of the screening and subsequent support is reported back to the initial referrer. The project also includes free Autism Awareness training and Barnet Mencap is ready to support all GPs and service providers in the borough with free Autism Awareness training for staff.



David and John at an Autism Service social

In addition to the screening, the autism advisors can help people with autism to complete life action planning, take part in workshops and, in partnership with our Working for You information and advice project, provide practical support with to deal with issues they may be experiencing from benefits, housing, and correspondence to name a few.

The pilot has been successful so far and will be extended for another 12 months.

If you or somebody you know might be interested in the Autism Service, contact us via projectsupport@barnetmencap.org.uk or 020 8349 3842.

HEALTH ACTION PLANS

Taking Action on Health

Everyone with a learning disability should have a health action plan. A health action plan is a document which says:

- What your health needs are
- What to do to keep you healthy

Everyone with a learning disability should take their health action plan to every health appointment. This will help health care professionals work together to improve health outcomes.

Barnet Learning Disability Service will be launching a new health action plan called 'My Health Matters'. We would like everyone in Barnet to have a My Health Matters folder. Folders will be available very soon from the Barnet Learning Disability Service.

The My Health Matters folder contains information such as:

- Information for health care professionals about working with people with a learning disability
- Communication aids
- Health action plans
- Information about health appointments
- Details about reasonable adjustments needed
- Important personal details

Barnet Learning Disability Service will be providing training for people with learning disabilities, parents and care providers about how to use the My Health Matters folder. The training will be run by the nursing team and will be advertised very soon.

If you or a person you know would like a My Health Matters folder, then you can contact the duty desk on: 020 8359 6161 or BLDSintegratedduty@barnet.gov.uk.



Make your voice heard! Barnet's local elections are coming up on 3rd May 2018.

Are you registered to vote? If you aren't you must apply by 17th April 2018. You can do this at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

Being... Andrew Waite



I live in Hertfordshire with my three cats and partner. My partner is Brazilian so there are often overseas visits to family and ecological islands. I like to travel and I've been to many other countries as well as exploring the countryside, cities and the coastline of the United Kingdom.

I once had a house in the French countryside and have a small vocabulary of French, just enough to get by and order from the menu (most important!).

I first was involved in charity work as a young child, collecting raffle ticket money for a village charity. There was a strong community involvement and people looked after the elderly, particularly at harvest time when foods were shared. I continue this tradition today through my allotment and vegetable growing. There is often a glut of food in the same weeks so it is nice to visit the neighbours and share in the fruits of the hard

"It is nice to visit the neighbours and share in the fruits of the hard work."

work. I also set up a youth club to provide activities and events.

I love culture and historical architecture. This is shown in my recent visit to the Yucatan, Mexico for the celebration of life through the Mayan cultures. I have also enjoyed exploring pyramids and temples in Egypt as well as water features such as those at Siem Reap, Cambodia or the waterfalls at Iguazu that spans Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay.

"I am a busy person and like variety in the workplace too."

I am a theatre and occasional opera goer, I prefer to be visually entertained although I have an eclectic music taste from classical guitar to George Michael and Ed Sheeran to Maria Callas.

I am a busy person and like variety in the workplace too. I have operated a small jewellery business alongside other roles, delivering lectures and presenting public speaking engagements to groups and members from public, private and voluntary organisations as well as working with individuals, to inspire and motivate them towards goals.

I also run a Community Interest Company that supports other community and business groups with good governance through mentoring, away days and consultancy.

I have spent the last 18+ years in education and charity. This has been working as a manager, chief executive (of two small to medium sized charities), trustee & chair of trustees. I have also been a governor of an NHS Foundation Trust representing learning disability and a school governor for three years.

Barnet Mencap is an amazing organisation as I am sure, you are all fully aware and I one which I am only just beginning to appreciate. To everyone, including those I have yet to meet, I look forward to getting to know you all in the coming months and years.

Andrew is the new Chair of the Board of Directors for Barnet Mencap.

Photo Finish



Nicola, Tom and Pauline with a trophy their allotment plot won! The allotment sessions are a part of the COPs project, and they met weekly at Whetstone Stray Allotments to transform their plot into a successful allotment - and eat and drink the products of their harvest!



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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Website: www.barnetmencap.org.uk



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Follow @barnetmencap on Twitter

Diary Dates

7th April 2018

Family Fun Day

In partnership with Mill Hill Rugby Club, we're putting on a fun day for all of the family! Featuring rugby, a bouncy castle, barbecue, face paint, fairground games and much more!

12 noon onwards at Mill Hill Rugby Club, 75 Page Street, NW7 2EE

Free Entry

No booking necessary, but if you'd like some more information, please contact 020 8349 3842 or projectsupport@barnetmencap.org.uk

2018 Holidays

The Sherrick House holiday timetable is now available!

From pamper breaks and trips to the seaside to Center Parcs and Spain, we provide unforgettable holidays for adults with learning disabilities whatever they're into! To find out more, contact Sherrick House on 020 8203 4860 or email billie-jean.lockhart@barnetmencap.org.uk



The next newsletter, with all the latest news and features, will appear in June 2018

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