

MAY 2017

A 'swinging' good time for all



Hooman, Rupert, Gary, Tom and Janette at the COPs 60s Valentine's Night. The evening was a great success and featured live band 'The Swinging Retros'

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From the Editor

When the Learning Disability Partnership Board ended a year ago, it left a big gap. We were anxious how people with learning disabilities would have a say and get their views across to the council and others. To find out how we are beginning to fill this gap, see the article on page 5, as the group seeks to involve more people in its work.

The newsletter regularly covers health matters. Sadly many people with learning disabilities are still not getting the health care they need and a new campaign, Don't Miss Out, should help more people to register with their GP as having a learning disability and to get a high quality health check each year. We had a good event last week to help raise awareness of what people should do to get these things and you will find more details on page 6.

Barnet Mencap is always keen to find new trustees to be directors on the Board. If you have wondered what kind of people become directors, our Being... feature shows what motivates our latest member and how one of the long-standing directors uses her skills and interests to support Barnet Mencap.

As well as the new service which will provide advice and information for parent carers, Barnet Mencap is really pleased to have a new contract for Equality Housing to continue support in the shared houses.

A number of new staff have joined Barnet Mencap in the last few weeks including a Volunteer and Fundraising Coordinator, and we will highlight their work in a future newsletter.

Ray Booth



You can now choose Barnet Mencap as your local cause if you are a member of Co-op. For everybody that does this, we get 1% of what is spent on selected Co-op products and services (including their stores and funeral care).

To join Co-op, which costs just £1 and gives you other benefits too, please ask somebody in store or visit www.coop.co.uk/membership

Barnet Mencap's Children's Services into the future!

Barnet Mencap is delighted that it is providing a new service from April for the parent carers of disabled children. The Children's Team will make sure that parent carers have the advice, information and guidance they need and will also be delivering Parenting Programmes.

For many years, staff at Barnet Mencap have supported families, working with parent carers and organising activities for disabled children. Staff work with a lot of families and get very positive feedback from parent carers to say how much difference the support has made to them. We hope to build on this with the new service.

Staff will work with parent carers of disabled children aged 0-25, and will include children with learning disabilities/difficulties, autism and ADHD. The support will help parent carers make decisions about the needs of their child and support families to solve problems and deal with the setbacks that affect family life.

Advice, information and guidance will be available via the phone, email or in person. There will be workshops on topics that are important to parent carers, where they can meet other people. The parenting programmes will be held at different times of the year. They are more intensive and usually run for eight weeks and give parent carers the skills and information they need to tackle the issues they face.

Barnet Mencap is also working more closely with Royal Mencap and groups around the country to share good practice about early years services, so that young children get the best start in life and parent carers get the support they need to have a good family life.

Keep an eye on Barnet Mencap's website and social media pages for details on upcoming courses, workshops, and any other updates on the project.

**THE BIG
PICTURE**



Johann at one of our Open Door under-5s Soft Play sessions at Go Kids N20 in February.

Focus on... Holidays at Sherrick House

Our Short Breaks service provides support for adults with a learning or physical disability and/or autism. We offer families short breaks in the form of daytime or overnight stays at our Sherrick House respite service, and also as holidays through our 'Just Holidays' service.

These offer respite both for families and the individual using the service. The support we provide at Sherrick House encourages and empowers people to gain necessary skills to be as independent as possible. It's also a place to meet new people, as well as build new friendships with other people staying at the service. We try to make your stay at Sherrick like visiting a home away from home.

The Just Holidays service was established in 2015 and has since supported people on unforgettable holidays to various locations in the UK and abroad. We offer a choice of holidays, from exciting and adventurous trips to the chance

to lounge by a pool or have a spa retreat - it's all up to our service users. The feedback from those who have attended so far has been very positive and people have formed friendships as a result of our holidays. The service has continued to grow, with a high demand for participation in 2017.

The timetable for holidays this year has been released, and we have holidays scheduled for Italy, Spain and Ireland, as well as trips to Center Parcs, Butlins and other places in the UK.

If you would like to find out more about 'Just Holidays' or about a respite stay at Sherrick House, please head to the Barnet Mencap website or contact Short Breaks Manager Billie-Jean Lockhart on 020 8203 4860 or billie-jean.lockhart@barnetmencap.org.uk

NORTH WEST LONDON MENCAP CONSORTIUM

Developing the Consortium

Regular readers of the Barnet Mencap Newsletter will already know all the exciting things we do within the borough of Barnet; however, you may not be aware of the work we do as part of the **North West London Mencap Consortium**. This is a group of 7 local Mencaps who work together to improve the lives of people with learning disabilities and/or autism and their families across a much larger area of North West London.

The Consortium is made up of local Mencaps from the boroughs of Barnet, Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, Kensington and Chelsea, and Richmond. In addition to these 7 local Mencaps, the Consortium also work very closely with Royal Mencap. Working together as a Consortium means that we can share best practice, ideas and resources - helping all the Mencaps to offer an even better service in their areas.

Over the last 7 months the Consortium has embarked on an exciting project which aims to develop the Consortium further and to help make all 7 Mencaps even more efficient and effective. In order to achieve this, Matt Gamble, the Expect the Best Manager, has been working with the 7 Consortium CEOs to write and deliver a Consortium Development Business Plan.

We have completed an audit of the 7 Mencaps and found many areas of best practice, as well as several areas where we can support each other to improve.

Collaboration is a key area we will be focusing on. We all run very different projects across the Consortium; however, some areas of need are the same for people with learning disabilities wherever you live. By working together to set up collaborative projects, we hope to deliver more effective and efficient services which can help a far greater number of people than a project in a single borough could. The Consortium are currently working with Royal Mencap to deliver a health project based in Brent, and sports project based initially in Richmond. The Consortium are also looking into

possible future collaborative projects around supporting parents with learning disabilities, and in Early Years support.

Joint training, joint procurement and sharing information are other key areas. At the moment the 7 Mencaps all use different trainers for our staff training and different suppliers for the energy, phones, printing and everything else we buy. By working together to run joint training sessions for staff, and agreeing joint contracts and sharing information on the best deals, the Consortium will be able to save money, deliver better training and make finding and changing contracts far easier and more efficient.

Overall, the aim of all this development is very simple: if we can work together to create a more efficient and cost effective Consortium, this will help us to deliver even better services for people with learning disabilities and autism, both in Barnet and across all the Consortium areas.



North West London Mencap Consortium Chief Executives
Nic Walsh (Equal People Mencap), Ray Booth (Barnet Mencap), Lesley Dodd (Ealing Mencap), Teresa McGinn (Hammersmith & Fulham Mencap), Ann O'Neill (Brent Mencap), Deven Pillay (Harrow Mencap)

CHILDS HILL LIBRARY

Much more than just books

From April this year, Barnet Mencap will be part of an exciting new initiative. We will be working with Kisharon to provide the library service at Childs Hill Library.

Libraries are an important part of the community, where people of all ages borrow books but also do so much more. We see this

as a great opportunity to show what people with learning disabilities can do. They will be able to volunteer and gain work experience, learn customer care skills and, with other volunteers, provide a public service.

The library will be open for 15 hours each week initially but this will increase.

We are looking for volunteers to help at the library. Volunteers will help with the issuing and return of books but also with the other library activities. These include events for children, providing IT resources for the community and the Summer Reading Challenge.

All volunteers will be offered training and regular support, along with the opportunity to learn new skills and meet people.

We will be working with local people to make the library attractive and welcoming and to provide them with a great community resource. For more information or to ask about volunteering, email

projectsupport@barnetmencap.org.uk

Childs Hill Library is at 320 Cricklewood Lane, London NW2 2QE and is open from 5th April 2017.



Ray with Rob Blackstone, Kisharon's Head of Operations.
Photo courtesy of The Jewish News

ENGAGEMENT

Encouraging people to have their say

Barnet Mencap have been working with the council to improve engagement and make sure that people with learning disabilities have a say on council plans.

As part of this initiative, the council have set up the Involvement Board which consists of local resident representatives with a variety of needs and abilities, including two representatives who have a learning disability. Nicola Saunders and Hamid O'Toole will be our learning disability reps and Barnet Mencap will be supporting them in their roles. The job of the Involvement Board is to ensure the council are using the feedback from working groups on any decisions they make.

The working groups are made up of residents who are registered with the council's People Bank. People Bank members will receive a monthly newsletter and be invited to get involved in working groups on subjects that may interest them.

We are also setting up our own working group called 'Have Your Say' and this group will be invited to meetings here at Barnet Mencap to give their opinions and feedback.

So far we have involved service users in the council's 'Guide to Good Engagement' for professionals wishing to engage with the community, the NHS Accessible Information Standard Review, Barnet Council's website pages for carers and the working group testing the new library services.

There has never been a more important time for people with learning disabilities to be involved in shaping future plans and services, so we feel these council initiatives to involve the residents is a very positive step. However, its success for people with learning disabilities is reliant on as many service users as possible taking up this opportunity. Please encourage clients to get involved by joining our working group and registering with People Bank. They can do this through the Engagement Coordinator, Carole Dukes, by email at carole.dukes@barnetmencap.org.uk

DON'T MISS OUT

Get Better Healthcare

Did you know that people with learning disabilities can get extra support when going to the doctor?

It can be difficult to make appointments, understand what the doctor is telling you, and to explain how you are feeling. All these things could be made easier if you tell the doctor that you have a learning disability and get your name added to the learning disability register.

Barnet Mencap are working with Royal Mencap to promote their new **Don't Miss Out** guides which explain how you could do this and get extra support and healthcare that meets your individual needs.

If you tell your doctor that you have a learning disability and get your name added to the learning disability register you could get:

- more time for your appointment
- information in easy read
- appointments at times to suit you
- an Annual Health Check

Annual Health Checks are a free checkup with your doctor that people with learning disabilities can have. They are a great way of helping you stay healthy, however, not everyone who can have one is asking for one. Royal Mencap have worked with NHS England to produce videos and guides called **Don't Miss Out**. These show the benefits of being on the learning disability register and having an Annual Health Check. You can find these guides on the Barnet Mencap website.

So tell your doctor that you have a learning disability and make sure you are getting the extra support that you need!

Be Happy. Be Healthy. Don't miss out.



Royal Mencap's Don't Miss Out promotional material

PROJECT SEARCH

Searching for Employment

In recent years Bright Futures has had a lot of success in supporting people with learning disabilities and autism to find paid work. Employment is, of course, a great way for people to earn a living, feel valued for what they do and contribute to society. But it is still hard for people with learning disabilities and autism to get jobs and keep them, especially young people.

So Barnet Mencap have been very pleased this year to be involved with Project Search which supports young people aged 18-24 who have an Education, Health and Care Plan.

Project Search is an American model that has worked across the world to help people into employment.

In Barnet, Project Search is working with the West London Alliance, Barnet & Southgate College, Tottenham Hotspur Foundation and the council to support 10 young people who are taking part in the programme at Public Health England.

Public Health England, located in Colindale, is part of the civil service and the young people try a variety of jobs, working with lab equipment, in catering, front of house, in the warehouse and in other roles, over the course of a year. The students learn skills, such as communication and how to dress and behave in the workplace, which all help to build their confidence for the workplace. At the end of the year, students will be offered an interview with Public Health England.

Barnet Mencap have been happy to advise the project where it can, and have provided a session helping staff at Public Health England to work better with people with learning disabilities.

The programme has been a huge success so far. Students also learn the route to work so that they are confident to commute, and as the year comes to an end, will begin looking for a paid job.

Being... Our Directors

Meg Kirk

We - my husband, son and daughter - moved to Barnet in 1976 to be nearer my husband's work. I had previously worked as a Medical Social Worker, firstly at Great Ormond Street and later at Northwick Park Hospital where I set up the first Social Work Department. My interests lay in the relationship between disability and society and how society sometimes conspires to make the effects of disability more difficult than they need be.

Now, however, was the time to bring up our children and we bought a Victorian house which was in such bad shape that no-one else wanted it! We had no alternative but to become DIY experts, but this still left time for volunteering at the children's school where I reorganised the school library. I loved meeting the children, helping them to find the information they needed – there were no computers then – and reading them stories.

It was when I realised that I was volunteering full-time every day that I decided the time had come when I could return to paid work and I got a job in the library at Middlesex University. A few years later I returned to university to qualify as a professional librarian and worked as one until my retirement.

I have been lucky in that, apart from my love of music and singing, my interests and my jobs have coincided and these are now reflected in the three charities on whose boards I sit – Barnet Mencap, Barnet Choral Society and Dr Williams' Library. Volunteering is both fun and rewarding, so why not try it?



Callum Moore

I'm very local. I grew up in Hendon and, like another member of the Board, went to Christ's College which is up the road from the main offices. Other than three years at the University of Surrey, I have always lived in the area. It's definitely my home and I'm sure it always will be. For that reason, when opportunities arise to help out, I gladly get involved!

I became involved in Barnet Mencap when, in 2016, as my career as a primary school teacher moved from a class-based role to working with children with a range of needs, the chance to join as a trustee appeared. It seemed the ideal opportunity to learn more about those with learning disabilities and especially where their journeys lead them after school.

Additionally, it gave me an opportunity to share some of the things I've learnt as a teacher in a primary school. I'm very interested in seeing how children with learning disabilities get support early in life and how this continues as they grow older. It has a huge impact on how I teach and I think it's important to have that insight as a teacher.

When I'm not at school, I'm studying. Having just finished my Masters in Education, I decided to embark on a PhD as the next step in my postgraduate experience. Though it's the start of a long journey, I'm thoroughly enjoying it and learning a lot, as you would expect. More importantly, it's providing me with all sorts of skills to complement what I do at Barnet Mencap.

Though it's still early days for me at Barnet Mencap, the experience has been hugely rewarding so far and I'm sure that it'll only continue!



Photo Finish



A team deep in thought during our Charity Quiz Night, which raised over £400 towards the upcoming drama productions



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



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Diary Dates

Saturday 17th June 2017

Navjyot Gala Event

Everybody is invited to come along to our Gala event, where there will be live Indian music, dancing and a 7-course buffet dinner.

Tickets £12.50, 6:30pm at Shree Aden Depala Mitrimandal Centre, 67a Church Lane, East Finchley N2 8DR

For tickets, contact Billie-Jean Lockhart on 020 8349 3842 or billie-jean.lockhart@barnetmencap.org.uk or Shobha Parmar on 07906 183 723 or shobhaparmar27@gmail.com



Thursday 22nd June 2017

Mencap's Big Day Out

Royal Mencap's Big Day Out is the annual event for the 400+ organisations affiliated to Royal Mencap. The event is for members, staff, and people supported by local Mencap groups. There will be workshops, project taster sessions and much more!

From 10am-3:45pm at The Drum at Wembley, Engineers Way, Wembley HA9 0FJ

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

The next newsletter, with all the latest news and features, will appear in July 2017

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