

February 2019

Get the Barnet Mencap Look!



Some of our service users modelling our new merchandise - get yours now! See back page for details

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

2 From the Editor

2 The Autism Service

3 Focus on ... Employment

4-6 News & Events
Hate Crime Reporting

Hindleap Warren
Member's Reviews
Barnet Parent Carer Forum

7 Being ... Joseph Healy

8 Photo Finish

8 Diary Dates

8 How to find us



From the Editor

Barnet Mencap has been promising a new look and it is now here. On the front page you will see some of the merchandise that is for sale. We are now using the logo, and people with learning disabilities have designed the stylish bags, t-shirts and hats.

The website was launched at the AGM and, if you haven't had a chance so far, do visit it at www.barnetmencap.org.uk. Have a look at the Facebook page too and follow us on Twitter to keep up with Barnet Mencap's news and activities.

Barnet Mencap is keen to get more members. A membership form is enclosed with the newsletter. Joining Barnet Mencap is a great way to show that you support the organisation and its goals to provide services and support; and to campaign for a more equal society, where children and adults with learning disabilities and autism are fully valued. Barnet Mencap is rooted in the community. The more members we have, drawn from Barnet's diverse population, the more it helps to strengthen these roots and raises the profile of people with learning disabilities and autism. New members will get a membership card, a token gift, and a voice in setting the direction for Barnet Mencap at the AGM and other events. So, if you are still looking for a New Year resolution, now is the time to complete the membership form. The newsletter shows you some of the things we have been doing; a new experience at the Adventure Camp, providing employment, and tackling hate crime.

Best wishes for 2019.

Ray Booth

Autism Service

Hello! The Autism Service has seen several changes in the last couple of months. First we said goodbye to Russell, the autism adviser, who left us at the end of Summer. Now the team is formed of Emma Cooper, Autism Adviser, and Christine Lesmes, Senior Autism Adviser.

This service was originally commissioned by Barnet Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to provide adults living in the borough of Barnet that suspect they might be autistic with a screening test before being referred to the Maudsley for an official diagnosis, should they wish to pursue it. The aim of this service is to maximise the accuracy of referrals made to the Maudsley. This will save the NHS precious financial resources. It also aims to help limit the time clients have to wait for their diagnosis appointment, currently between 12-14 months. This service was commissioned as a pilot and will run until March 2019. We trust that the benefits for the NHS, the CCG, the local community and especially our service users will help seeing the service extended beyond March.

On top of this, we offer many other services to our clients: we run social events; workshops; autism awareness sessions for professionals; one to one support, advocacy, mentoring and signposting. We also work closely with other service providers in the borough of Barnet supporting adults, including the local mental health services, due to the high co-morbidity between autism and mental health difficulties. We are also looking into engaging more with the local community by running drop-ins at different locations to help raise awareness about autism and the project.

Our aim is to create a very flexible and diversity-friendly service, able to cater for the diverse needs of our clients and support them appropriately.

If you work with adults and you have a client who lives in Barnet whom you suspect might have autism, please feel free to refer them to our service. You can do this even if they do not want to pursue a formal diagnosis; many people explain that having this "informal diagnosis" very often is enough to give them peace of mind and helps them make sense of past and present experiences. And they could still benefit from the additional support and activities that we offer.

THE BIG
PICTURE



Shaan toasting marshmallows on our 11-18 adventure holiday to Hindleap Warren - more about this on page 4

Focus on... Employment

We know that most people with a learning disability can work and want to work, as long as they are given the right support. Just 6% of people with learning disabilities are actually in work compared with 74% of the general population in England. We support the Government's aim to halve the disability employment gap and think they now need to put together a plan to remove the barriers facing people with a learning disability in getting employment.

97% of employers said they were likely to hire people with a learning disability again and 92% of customers said they felt favourably towards companies that employed people with disabilities, so it can clearly be very beneficial to the company.

There is a service called 'Access to Work' who will be able to arrange any reasonable adjustments needed for somebody with a

learning disability. £75 is the average cost of these adjustments.

Mencap works with employers to create a range of employment opportunities. These include work tasters and work trials as pathways into long term paid employment; vocational learning programmes such as traineeships, supported internships and apprenticeships; and short term work placements and work experience.

We ask our employers to adapt processes for recruitment. This can include a more informal style interview or a work trial instead; help identifying any reasonable adjustments for the role; advice on in-work support; expert support to managers and HR and any continued support and monitoring as required.

For more information on Mencap's Employment project, head to <https://www.barnetmencap.org.uk/advice-and-support/adults/employment/>

HATE CRIME

Hate Crime Awareness Week

As part of National Hate Crime Awareness Week, Barnet Mencap held a number of events across the borough. We teamed up with Barnet Council, the Metropolitan Police, Victim Support and other community organisations including Community Barnet, Inclusion Barnet, Hft and Community Security Trust to raise awareness around the reporting of hate crime.

Staff and volunteers talked to members of the public about identifying hate crime and the ways in which it can be reported to the Police. There was information about Barnet's Hate Crime Reporting Centres, where vulnerable adults can get support if they



Ray Booth at a stall at Middlesex University during Hate Crime Awareness Week

need assistance to speak up about hate crime.

The week's events included a disability hate crime workshop on a London Transport Bus at Edgware Bus Depot and an awareness raising stand at Middlesex University where media students presented their films on hate crime and its effects on society.

Over 250 people signed up to become Hate Crime Reporting Champions, pledging to report hate crime if they witness it. This will help the Police and Community Safety Teams target their resources and prevent hate crime from happening.

We want everyone to know that there is no place for hate crime in our borough and we need your help to drive the message home. All you have to do is report what you have seen online through the True Vision website at www.report-it.org.uk or call the Police by phoning 101, or 999 in the case of an emergency. However, for your own safety, please don't confront those who commit hate crime yourself.

If you have any questions about how to report hate crime or support your service users to report hate crime, please contact Reshma Hirani, our Hate Crime Reporting Co-ordinator by email on reshma.hirani@barnetmencap.org.uk or by telephone at 020 8349 3842.

Stop Hate Crime - Speak Up, Get Support, Report It

HINDLEAP WARREN

Adventure Camp

Barnet Mencap held its first young people's camp for people aged 16-25 with learning disabilities and/or autism. The 3-day camp held at Hindleap Warren Outdoor Centre was a huge success and everyone who attended had a great time. Funding for the camp was provided by the Groundworks Tesco's Bags of Help Scheme which Barnet

Mencap are using to fund activities for the 11-25 age range.

The motto of Hindleap is 'If you think you can, you can' and our camp members certainly proved the motto right, throwing themselves into all activities. The camp started off with canoeing on the local reservoir, however, this wasn't adventurous enough for our group with most of the group leaping off the jetty into the water at first opportunity.

Over the following 2 days, the group scaled the High Rope adventure, perfected their archery technique and took on the assault course, not worrying about how muddy they got in the process. We also showed our survival skills by collecting wood and building our own camp fire - toasted marshmallows were included of course!

All of the activities were tailored to ensure they were accessible and inclusive and the Hindleap staff went above and beyond to make sure the group had everything they needed and could always take part. Everyone had the opportunity to try something new, push themselves out of their comfort zone and more importantly have fun.

Here's what some of our camp attendees had to say about it:

Michel: "I jumped off into the water and I fell into the mud - I loved getting muddy! I have had loads of fun with my friends and would love to come back to do it again."

Caroline: "I enjoyed jumping into the lake, that was the most fun of the experience. I also love canoeing - it was awesome. The food was really tasty. The staff were very lovely and nice. I hope to come back next year."

We will be holding more camps with Hindleap Warren in the coming year so watch out for future dates.

BACK TO THE FUTURE: THE MUSICAL

Where we're going, we don't need roads!



Showdown is a dance and drama group run by Fixation Theatre Company in partnership with Barnet Mencap. Each year, our members work with the drama/dance teachers and musicians to produce an original show. This year,

it was *Back to the Future: The Musical*. One of our service users, **Simon Turner**, went to see the show:

"This is the third Showdown production I have been to and I think it's their best one yet! Choosing an '80s classic as a basis for the show was a fantastic choice and adapting it into a musical really worked; mixing sci-fi, action, romance, and comedy with singing and dancing is a winning combination. I really enjoyed seeing everyone singing including the audience when a couple of well-known hits were thrown in!

The cast portrayed the characters well with Denise Webb doing an incredible job as Marty McFly. You could see the time and effort that had clearly gone into the performance with fantastic props such as the full-size DeLorean time machine. The result was an exciting and funny show that really came to life on stage. I was also extremely impressed by the original script and songs, particularly enjoying a funny and dramatic solo from Darth Vader.

My favourite part was near the end where the whole cast took to the stage for the famous 'Johnny B. Goode' school dance scene as Marty rocked an inflatable guitar.

News&Events

The stage was a sea of brightly coloured '50s costumes as the cast sang and danced with an electric energy that spilled out into the audience. I would highly recommend this show and the other work that the Showdown group produce. I will definitely go along to the show next year!"

To find out more about Showdown, email projectsupport@barnetmencap.org.uk or call 020 8349 3842.



Eddie as Dr Emmett Brown in Back to the Future: The Musical

BARNET PARENT CARER FORUM

Helping parents and carers

Over the past year, Barnet Parent Carer Forum (BPCF) has made good progress with its objectives to ensure that services are being developed to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND in Barnet. There have been a number of events which have been co-produced with BPCF and the Local Authority including the SEND conference in June, Barnet's first physical disability conference in October, and workshops on health transitions and preparing for adulthood. BPCF has had representation at a number of working

groups which have resulted in the launch of the new Local Offer website, the continued development of Barnet's new integrated therapies offer, short breaks recommissioning, the CAMHS transformation plan, early support, health transitions and more. We had a presence at the SENDIASS conference and have run coffee mornings at schools to introduce ourselves to new parents. BPCF has been instrumental in ensuring that equivalent training has been offered to parents and SENCOs in areas such as High Expectations for Children with SEND and writing Person Centred Profiles for primary school children. This has been against a backdrop of major changes in the Local Authority, with a new Assistant Director for SEND, a new Designated Clinical Officer (both of whom spoke at BPCF's AGM) and other changes in key staff. Two new members have been welcomed to our steering group, one of whom wrote an article for the latest Local Offer newsletter, and we are always keen to hear from parent carers who would like to get involved. The new GDPR legislation in May resulted in a drop in our membership, so if you were formerly a member and want to join us again, please get in touch by emailing info@barnetpcf.org.uk or by visiting the website at www.barnetpcf.org.uk.

As you can see, BPCF has had a busy and productive year but we are always aware of how much more we could accomplish with more members – the stronger our voice, the more effective we can be! We held our AGM in November at St Paul's Church Hall where we gave people the chance to meet the new Assistant Director for SEND, Helen Phelan, and the new Designated Clinical Officer, Mav Ghalley – they spoke about children's mental health and best practice for children with SEND. Please visit our website to join us and help make a difference!

Being... Joseph Healy



My name is Joseph Healy, lover of all things rugby, proud father of seven children and Head Coach of Project Rugby at Mill Hill Rugby

Club and Mill Hill RFC's first team manager.

I started playing rugby for Mill Hill 11 years ago. It's fair to say I was an 18 year old boy. I had nothing to do and felt that I didn't belong anywhere. I found myself getting in trouble trying to please friends that, looking back, were never friends. Within a year of playing for Mill Hill I realised what was important in life; I had my first child, started a career with London Underground and got my first mortgage.

Some of you maybe thinking 'how did Mill Hill RFC help me do that?'

Let me explain. I met a great bunch of lads that to this day are a big part of my life; I realised what the term 'friend' meant and made real friends. I knuckled down and started to push for my career with help from some of the senior members of Mill Hill. I was no longer involved in any mischief and my main focus outside of my family and my career was rugby. Playing on a Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday – alongside that, I was socialising with respectable men that looked out for me. Rugby has taught me discipline and respect not just for others but also myself.

For the past 2 years I have been running Project Rugby along with Ed Wade and Jason Watson and have proudly watched it go from strength to strength. We started small. With only a couple of players and a small amount

of support. With the help of Barnet Mencap we kept a steady flow of consistent numbers and most of those founding players are still with us today. They attend every week and wear the Mill Hill shirt proudly on the field. We couldn't have done it without them, so a big thank you to all those individuals who stuck with us and believed in us!

As time went by, the numbers slowly began to increase and so did recognition. Saracens, who asked us to help start Project Rugby, asked us along to our first Tournament. From there we were asked along to play in two more tournaments at Allianz Park (Saracens' home ground) and we even went along to compete at the Aviva Premiership final at Twickenham, the home of English Rugby!

We're also very proud of the Project Rugby Kit. Whilst watching on in the first tournament, I knew something was missing. Every team has their own uniform that they wore with pride and to me this side was no different. I decided that I needed to raise enough money to get a full kit for our team. How? By doing a Tough Mudder with fellow Mill Hill RFC player, John Gilbert! We managed to raise enough funds to purchase the kit and I am proud to say that all funds came from within the Mill Hill Rugby family.

I like to think that we've developed a community at Mill Hill with the belief that Rugby is for all. The friendships between Project Rugby and Mill Hill players is one that has grown into one family and one that continues to grow consistently.

But at its core is Barnet Mencap. We would like to thank them immensely for supporting us and allowing us to help those who've attended. Every session is filled with so much fun and laughter. Project Rugby has not only improved the players' lives but our own as well.

Photo Finish



Mill Hill RFC Project Rugby Captain Tarran, and Vice-Captain Giulia. See page 7 for Being... Joseph Healy, the Head Coach of Project Rugby. Photo courtesy of @MillRFC on twitter.

**Barnet
mencap**

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



Sunday 10th March 2019

Vitality Half-Marathon

Sophie Simpson, our former staff member, is taking part in the Vitality Half-Marathon from Tower Bridge to Cutty Sark. Come along and show your support, and whether you can make it or not, you can support her by donating online - contact us for details!



Want to get the Barnet Mencap look?

We have a brand new range of merchandise available now! All designs were produced by our members, and all money raised will go towards our projects to support people with learning disabilities and/or autism.

We have t-shirts (£12), hoodies (£20), tote bags (£7.50), drawstring bags (£10) and hats (£10).

If you'd like to order something, call our office or email Project Support for an order form

The next newsletter, with all the latest news and features, will appear in May 2019

Barnet Mencap Registered Charity No.1089388 Company Registration No.4274621

