

August 2019

## Time for a break?



A client on a trip to Aldenham Country Park as part of our Take a Break short breaks service. Find out more on page 3

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## *From the Editor*

During the early summer, Barnet Mencap's staff were involved in many events and activities to meet people with learning disabilities and their families. Learning Disability Week, Carer's Week and the SEND Conferences were a chance to tell people more about our work and to listen to their concerns. The Building Bridges exhibition at Middlesex University was a moving look at students' work addressing the rise of hate crime. We are really pleased that our Hate Crime Reporting project will continue now beyond September.

Barnet Mencap is recruiting more trustees and on page 6 Cristina Sarb describes her experiences since joining the Board and encourages more people to get involved.

Volunteers play a vital part in supporting the organisation, whether fundraising (see page 5) or helping in the office. I have known Rona since 1996, when I first started working in Barnet, and her article fills in the gaps in her life story I hadn't heard before. It makes a rich tale.

Barnet Mencap is very keen to increase its membership. If you support the aims of Barnet Mencap, want it to develop and have a say in shaping its future, then please consider joining. There is a membership form enclosed.

I hope you get the chance of a holiday or even just a rest at home this summer. As our cover says: "Time for a Break"?

*Ray Booth*

## My Health Matters

In Barnet, the Learning Disability Team's aim is to improve health outcomes for people with a learning disability. We know from the Confidential Inquiry (CIPOLD) that people with a learning disability are dying prematurely, which should not be happening. There are many reasons for this, some of which include:

- Lack of healthcare co-ordination
- Diagnostic overshadowing- where someone's learning disability overshadows their other health needs
- Communication barriers
- Lack of implementation of the Mental Capacity Act (2005)
- Lack of reasonable adjustments being made by mainstream healthcare services

One major recommendation of the CIPOLD was for people with a learning disability to have a Health Action Plan as a way of improving health outcomes. A Health Action Plan is a document kept by the individual that contains important information about their health needs. They can take this plan to all of their health appointments to make sure vital information is shared, but also to help health care staff understand how best to work with that individual. The My Health Matters book is Barnet's approach to health action planning and was launched in 2018. So far they have supported over 500 people to have a My Health Matters book.

There are two ways to get a My Health Matters Book.

1. You can get your My Health Matters Book (free of charge) from the team by coming to My Health Matters Training. This training is accessible to all (families, health care professionals, care providers and people with a learning disability) and lasts for 2 hours. To book on to the training, email [BLDSIntegratedDuty@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:BLDSIntegratedDuty@barnet.gov.uk) with your request, name, role and contact details or telephone 020 8359 6161.
2. If you are unable to attend the training or feel you may need more help to complete the book then please make a referral to the learning disability nursing team via a referral form available from <https://www.barnet.gov.uk/adult-social-care/barnet-learning-disabilities-service>



THE BIG  
PICTURE



Some of Barnet Mencap's staff team, in a photo taken at an Away Day in February

## Focus on... Short Breaks for children

Take a Break is a service for families with a child with learning difficulties. Breaks can be taken during the day, in the evenings or at weekends and can be from a couple of hours to a whole day. Referrals come through Children's Services in Barnet, but you can also self-refer. We visit you and help decide what sort of breaks you may want and when you want to take them. We will provide a qualified support worker who will do the breaks with you. Breaks include different activities which suit your age, your needs and your choices.

During the recent half term holiday, the Barnet Mencap Take a Break Team took a young gentleman to Aldenham Country Park in Hertfordshire, and you can see a photo from the day on the cover. At the park, we visited the alpacas, fed the animals and played a few rounds of 'animal bingo!'

Later on in the day, we visited the Playground and Education Centre. The centre is an inclusive facility that welcomes people with special needs. It was a brilliant place for picnics, story telling and photographs. There are two specialist sensory rooms as well as a wonderful two-acre adventure playground, with specialist sensory play facilities.

The break gave the parent some precious time to themselves and a great day was had by all.

The parent was 'eternally grateful' for the break received and that their child was left feeling 'happy and contented'

For more information with regards to Take a Break, please contact Thomas Williams on 020 8203 4860 or via email to [thomas.williams@barnetmencap.org.uk](mailto:thomas.williams@barnetmencap.org.uk).

## UNITAS

### Unitas Youth Zone

Unitas Youth Zone is pleased to confirm that we opened our doors in June to thousands of young people across Barnet and North London.

Based in Montrose Park, Burnt Oak, Unitas Youth Zone is a brand new £6.5 million dedicated youth facility providing 7 days per week universal youth provision for all children aged 8 – 19, or 8-25 for children and young people with SEND. People just pay 50p per visit and £5 annual membership and in return they will get access to an incredible range of activities including: a music studio, a sports hall, art room, dance studio, café, wellbeing room, learner kitchen, gym, rooftop pitch and a recreation area kitted out with games and



other activities!

We are excited to confirm that we will provide dedicated Inclusion sessions for young people with SEND and their families on a Sunday between 10am and 2pm – fully supported by a dedicated team of Unitas Youth Zone staff and volunteers. We hope that children and young people who have additional needs will see Unitas Youth Zone as safe and nurturing environment where they can relax, have fun and learn new skills. Of course, we wish for all young people to access our facility 7 days per week and we are keen to promote this opportunity too.

Membership of Unitas Youth Zone is now open and young people can register their membership for just £5 for a whole year at <https://www.unitasyouthzone.org/young-people/membership/become-a-member/> Please note that children aged 15 and under will require parental/guardian consent.

In addition, we are seeking to recruit volunteers to help us to help thousands of young people – if you are able to spare a few hours each week or whatever you can, then do register interest at <https://www.unitasyouthzone.org/get-involved/> where you will also find out about all our latest paid work opportunities.

We look forward to welcoming you and your children to Unitas Youth Zone where we hope to unite all young people to fulfil their full potential. For further information please follow our social media channels at @UnitasYZ, find us on Insta or search for us on Facebook.

## BOY2MAN

### Who I Am - A poetry series

Boy2Man was an 8-week arts psychotherapy group, run specifically for black men with a learning disability. It offered a safe space to explore issues of identity and stigma creatively, using art and drama therapy. This was jointly facilitated by the psychology team at BLDS and Barnet Mencap.

In the group, participants produced poems as a form of reflection at the end of each session, giving voice to their individual and group experience. They are happy to share these with you.

What follows is the poem from the final group session, but you can find all of the poems on the Barnet Mencap website via [www.barnetmencap.org.uk/blog](http://www.barnetmencap.org.uk/blog)



## Saying Goodbye

I'm very keen on the course  
Because I'm interested in what people  
say  
The group is more than a group  
It's a family

My people don't understand me  
I feel that loss  
I am a man  
I bring greatness to the group

Richness. Rewarding.  
Full of light and shadow

## FUNDRAISING

### Marathons of fundraising

If you saw the posts we made on social media, or the information in the previous issue of the Barnet Mencap newsletter, you'll know that Sophie Simpson, one of our former Community Link Workers, was planning to run the Vitality Big Half Marathon to raise money for Barnet Mencap. We're pleased to say that on a windy day in March she did run this, and raised a whopping £725 for Barnet Mencap in the process! We'd like to say a massive thank you to Sophie for taking part in this run, as well as to everybody who donated to help her get over the line.

Barnet Mencap relies on money coming in from fundraising and donations to help keep us being able to provide the projects that benefit our service users. When budgets and funding for projects are often being reduced, fundraising plays an even more important part for charities like Barnet Mencap.

But you don't need to run a marathon to help Barnet Mencap. There are endless ways you can show your support, from physically going along to cheer people on, to volunteering your time to help at our activities or tin collecting, to just about anything!



Sophie keeping her cool as she crosses the line in the Vitality Big Half

Zoe Rose Smith, known on twitter as @zobowwithashotgun, writes for movie and entertainment website Jumpcut Online, and she recently set about raising money for Barnet Mencap by subjecting herself to a different kind of marathon - a 24-hour marathon of horror movies! She raised £341 (plus GiftAid), so a massive thank you to Zoe and to everyone who has donated.

Activities like these by Sophie and Zoe make such a huge difference to Barnet Mencap.

To find out more about Sophie's Vitality Big Half marathon or to donate, head to [uk.virginmoneygiving.com/soph\\_simpson](https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/soph_simpson)

To find out more about Zoe's horror movie marathon or to donate, head to <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/zobowwithashotgun>

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

### Get on Board!

Barnet Mencap has provided advice and support for people with learning disabilities and autism as well as their families and carers for more than fifty years.

It is our role as the Board of Trustees, working together with the Chief Executive and the rest of the staff team, to ensure the charity is run efficiently and effectively and in accordance with the law, so that it can continue to meet the needs of the people it supports long into the future.



**Barnet Mencap's Board of Trustees L-R: Mike Wiffen, Meg Kirk, Faib Riley, Sheila Oliver, Tom Glenister, Cristina Sarb, Andrew Waite**

There are currently seven trustees on the Board and we meet as a full Board four times a year, as well as more frequently as part of different sub-committees. We all bring different skills and experiences to the Board - for me, it's been a great way of building upon my previous experience of working for a disability charity and campaigning to improve the lives of disabled people across society.

My experience of serving as a trustee has been worthwhile and hugely rewarding

in many ways. You could say I'm still learning the ropes, having been a trustee for just over a year and a half - yet I have already learnt so much.

As well as being responsible for the strategic direction and governance of the charity and acting as ambassadors for the charity, highlights from recent Board meetings include: reviewing progress against the charity's business plan; going through the latest annual report; getting an update on fundraising efforts aimed at making sure the charity has the resources it needs to reach and support as many people and families as possible; or reviewing some of our policies and procedures; to name but a few things!

But overall the best thing about being a Barnet Mencap trustee for me is whenever we have a chance to see first-hand all the valuable services it provides and the positive impact it has on the lives of so many across the borough.

It is really important that we have a diverse Board of Trustees to be able to have good discussions around the table and to better inform the decisions we make.

Joining as a trustee is definitely one of the best decisions I've made and a great opportunity to contribute to the success of Barnet Mencap - if you are enthusiastic and motivated to help shape and deliver our vision for a more equal society, where people with learning disabilities and autism are fully valued, we would love to hear from you!

If you are interested in becoming a trustee or want to find out more, email [projectsupport@barnetmencap.org.uk](mailto:projectsupport@barnetmencap.org.uk)

Cristina Sarb

# Being... Rona Merkel



**S**ometimes I go shopping for myself. I tidy my flat, I do errands for the staff at home if they need anything. I do my own recycling. I go to Waitrose for Linda, and I go to the Post

Office. Linda is a worker at Barnet House and CommUNITY Barnet. She has worked all over the borough, and used to work at First Rung, opposite Woodcroft Avenue, where I worked several years ago.

I used to go to Garden Suburb Primary School. Aunty Rita used to walk me there with my brothers, and give us pocket money. We got 9 pence between us. I used to love school. We used to go on outings, and have choir practice, do PE in the gym. We went on a trip to Lucerne in Switzerland, where we did lots of walking, climbing, staying in a hotel and eating Swiss food.

When I was at school I used to work for the public library in Golders Green. I used to do the stamping and knock on the office door when they were finished. I used to work in a charity shop for Jami and in the Barnet Mencap charity shop at weekends.

I used to live in Brighton from 1970-1979. I worked with old people. I used to go away with them too in the summer. We'd have lots of trips to the theatre, cheese and wine parties, and we would walk on the beach if it was sunny. It was only down the road. I've not been back to Brighton since I moved back. When I went there we slept in dormitories but they were turned into proper bedrooms. When I was 23 I had an injection

for epilepsy which stopped my seizures – I haven't had one since 1976!

When mum was alive, she used to work near Baker Street, and I'd meet her there. I used to meet my dad at the eye hospital.

***"I'm going away in August ... I'll send you a postcard!"***

I like going to France with Alan, my brother, and he'd like to come and see me when I'm volunteering at Barnet Mencap. My other brother, Charles, has already come. I've been to France lots of times. I'm going away in August, just before Alan's birthday, to Norfolk. We might go to the Norfolk Lavender place. I'll send you a postcard!

I used to work at Broadfields doing gardening and a paper round, and working in the workshop with Ray and David. At 11:30am every day we would wash the tables. This was about ten years ago. My birthday is coming up and I'm having a buffet and a party. I like where I live. I live with Miles, Donna and Rupert, and I've lived there about 7-10 years.

We have a bank holiday coming up so I might go somewhere with my brother. I like going to Kenwood House. I went there a couple of weeks ago – it's very nice and you don't have to pay to go in.

I went to East Finchley Festival and there were so many people there! I walked around and talked to people I know. I said good morning to the police, and sometimes when you talk to them you get free pens and pencils. If I got in trouble, I'd always tell the police.

I like puzzle books and sitting in the garden if it's a nice day. I like watching Emmerdale, Coronation Street and other soap operas. I read a newspaper every day and do the crosswords. I walk to the station to get my paper, it doesn't take me long.

That's what I wanted to tell you.



# Photo Finish



Cocktail time! Dimi and Chris at a Sherrick House holiday to Center Parcs



## 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](mailto: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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## Diary Dates

**Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> August 2019**

**Barnet Mencap Picnic and Games**

Victoria Park, Finchley, 12 noon - 4pm

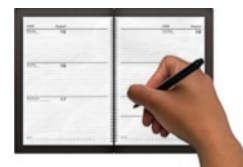
Everybody is welcome to come along to Victoria Park for a picnic, rain or shine! We'll have plenty of food and fun, as well as rounders and other games you can get involved with!

**Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2019**

**Barnet Mencap Annual General Meeting (AGM)**

Everybody is welcome to come along to our AGM!

St Paul's Centre, Dukes Avenue (off Long Lane) N3 2PU, 10:30am-12 noon



The council have moved the **Barnet Learning Disability Service** to their new Colindale office in June and can be contacted on **020 8359 6161**

Their new address is:

**1 Bristol Avenue, Colindale NW9 4EW**

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

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