

May 2023

Coronation Celebration!



Dimi, Giulia and Michael celebrating the Coronation of King Charles III at a Springboard social event

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From the Editor

As we're in the middle of May - and the three Bank Holidays it brings with it - and with the sun trying to show its face, it does feel like we're actually approaching summer!

We've got a few tips for staying cool in the hot weather, should it come, on page 5. Speaking of the Summer, we are excited to announce that we have a Summer Fun Celebration fundraising event coming up in June. This will be a chance for people of all ages to come along, have some fun, meet other people and raise some money for Barnet Mencap! You can see a bit more about this on page 4, as well as updates on further fundraising work and a very generous donation from BKL chartered accountants and tax advisers.

Also in this issue, on this page we have a piece on the new project that we've been involved with around dementia; we also have a really positive success story of somebody who has successfully moved into employment, with the help of Royal Mencap, based next door to us (p3).

We've also got some nice updates on our short breaks offering for children with additional needs (p5); the work we've recently done with Seeability, who support people with sight loss (p6) and our Being... this time is Les, who has recently moved into our supported accommodation! (p7)

Thank you for reading, and, as always, please do let us know what you think.

I hope you all get/got to enjoy the bank holidays, whether it was watching the Coronation, spending time with family or friends; or just taking a break.

James Wheatley

Dementia Project

In November's issue, we talked about Barnet's new Dementia Strategy and how we wanted to ensure that it was inclusive of the whole community. This is especially relevant today because research has shown that those with learning disabilities can develop Dementia at an earlier age and we wanted to make sure that the borough of Barnet was made aware of this so all those affected by the issue are supported in the best way possible.

To achieve this, we have been working hard on a project alongside the Barnet Learning Disability Service, Barnet Carers Centre and Age UK Barnet. It has involved exploring the care and support in place at the moment for those with learning disabilities and their carers and if/how we can tailor this to ensure that the Voluntary and Community Sector and the NHS and wider Care System provide the best and timely care and support.

We have made a lot of progress with the project, including having identified the areas that need to be addressed. This includes having established the information, training and community support and prevention activities that need to be made available to all those involved in the project, including yourselves. We have gathered information on the processes involved in the diagnosis of Dementia within the NHS and at Barnet's Learning Disability Service and what changes need to be made to accommodate individual needs. We have also been reaching out to other community organisations and learning disability providers to discuss how we can come together to ensure that we raise awareness of Dementia within the community and across the Health and Care System, so you feel supported, heard and seen. Further to this, we have reached out to the Commissioning Officer for Barnet Mental Health and Dementia Service and the Commissioning Lead for Barnet Learning Disability and Health and Social Care Service to get them involved in the project and make sure they are aware of what we are doing and the impact and changes we want to see. We are now in the process of finalising the project, so keep an eye out for updates and how we plan to move forward with the project and put it into action. If you have any stories about Dementia that you would like to share with us, then please contact the Project Co-Ordinator, Laaibah Ahmed via projectsupport@barnetmencap.org.uk

THE BIG
PICTURE



Here we go again! Some of our Equality Housing clients enjoying a trip to see Mamma Mia!

Focus on... Employment

As part of our Bright Futures project, Royal Mencap run an Employment Project for adults with learning disabilities and autistic adults. They have been really successful in finding jobs recently, and here is one example.

Afsana identifies as non-binary and their pronouns are they/them.

Afsana has autism, as well as Agoraphobia with ADHD. Agoraphobia is a type of anxiety disorder that makes it difficult for individuals to leave their homes or venture into unfamiliar places due to the fear of experiencing a panic attack.

Afsana had been battling agoraphobia for years, which had greatly impacted their ability to travel and complete local journeys. However, the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns worsened their condition to the point where they were unable to leave their home for local journeys. This led to severe bouts of

depression, frustration, and self-harming as a coping mechanism. Additionally, they had recently lost their father, who had been their primary chaperone for job interviews and employment opportunities. This loss left them feeling hopeless and isolated as they struggled to find employment without the support of their father.

Afsana's agoraphobia greatly impacted their ability to hold down a job. They were unable to commute to work or fulfil the travel requirements for many job opportunities. They resigned from two previous job roles due to their disability, which left them feeling desperate and lost.

They were referred to Barnet Mencap's Working For You team and then Employ Me Royal Mencap. Through Employ Me, they were given support, encouragement, and comfort for seeking work. The program helped Afsana gain a role as an accountancy clerk at the Royal Institute of Architects.

Continued->

News & Events

Thanks to the support provided by Barnet and Royal Mencap, they were able to hold down a job despite their disability. They received the necessary support to navigate their agoraphobia and fulfil the travel requirements of their job. They no longer felt hopeless and lost, instead filled with a sense of purpose and accomplishment.

Agoraphobia can be a debilitating condition that greatly impacts an individual's ability to function in society. However, with the right support and assistance, individuals with agoraphobia can overcome their disability and hold down a job. This case study highlights the importance of seeking help and support from public services and specialized programs to overcome disabilities and find employment.

For more information on the Employment Project, head to <https://www.barnetmencap.org.uk/what-we-offer/adults/employment/>

FUNDRAISING

Updates and Summer Fun

We've kick started our grants and fundraising for the year with a bang! The Barnet Community Fund awarded us with an incredible £10,000! This money will support our service users with the cost of living crisis. We will be providing hot suppers, energy vouchers and food supplies to support service users most in need. Food vouchers will support those with dietary or religious requirements.

Our Festive Pamper day was a super success! Service users, trustees, volunteers and staff treated themselves to manicures, glitter tattoos, Christmas card making, karaoke, lucky dips, gorgeous jewellery, books, gifts and much more!

We received 17 laptops for our service users thanks to the Good Things Foundation Device Bank.

We also received a very generous donation of £5,000 from BKL Chartered

Accountants and Tax Advisers, who have also supported us in the past. This money will go towards holidays for service users.

We recently held our first ever cinema fundraiser in partnership with the Phoenix Cinema in Finchley. Service users got to dress up and enjoy a day at the movies along with a raffle and fun quiz in March.

We are in the process of organising a big Summer Fun Day which will take place on 19th June - This will include a bouncy castle, fire engine, food and drink, games and much more - check out the flyer below!

We are looking for people who are keen to take part in challenges such as Swim Serpentine and the Royal Half Parks Marathon. Please do get in touch with us at projectsupport@barnetmencap.org.uk or 020 8349 3842 if you are interested in joining us on our fundraising journey. Watch this space for information on our summer celebration event which will be incredible fun for all ages!

Barnet mencap BARNET MENCAP IS 58 YEARS OLD!

FUNDRAISER
SATURDAY 17 JUNE
12-3:30PM

SUMMER FUN CELEBRATION

KIDS' BOUNCY CASTLE, FIRE ENGINE, ART, GAMES, SOFT PLAY, FOOD AND MORE! CHILDREN, ADULTS AND CARERS WELCOME

CHILDREN MUST BE ACCOMPANIED

BOOKINGS RECOMMENDED (BUT NOT ESSENTIAL)
PROJECTSUPPORT@BARNETMENCAP.ORG.UK
020 8349 3842

£2 ENTRY FOR ADULTS
BRING CASH / CONTACTLESS CARDS ON THE DAY FOR ACTIVITIES (INCLUDING KIDS BOUNCY CASTLE)

VENUE: 154 Station Road, Hendon, London NW4 3SP

The flyer for our Summer Fun Celebration fundraiser

STAYING COOL

Coping in hot weather

We all know the weather in this country can be cold one day and hot the next. When the weather is really hot it's very important to recognise risks to your health such as not drinking enough water (dehydration); overheating, which can make symptoms worse for people who already have problems with their heart or breathing; and heat exhaustion and heatstroke.

Tips for keeping cool and safe in very hot weather:

- stay out of the sun when it is really hot
- Wear loose clothes and if you go out, wear sun cream, sunglasses and a hat or a scarf
- Cool your skin with cold water, and drink plenty of water
- Don't do lots of exercise
- Use fans or bowls of water to keep rooms cool, close curtains during the day and turn off lights you do not need.
- Open windows at night when it is safe to do so
- Check on people who are old or on their own
- Do not leave people alone in a parked car as it can get very hot very quickly
- Keep medicines cool
- Go to the doctor if you feel dizzy, have pains in your legs or stomach or feel unwell
- If you are fasting for Ramadan be careful and stop fasting and drink water if you do not feel well

Look out for signs of dehydration such as increased thirst, a dry mouth, dark urine, and

urinating infrequently or small amounts. Serious dehydration needs urgent medical attention.

For more information head to <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/heatwave-plan-for-england/beat-the-heat-staying-safe-in-hot-weather>

TAKE A BREAK

Short Breaks for Children with Additional Needs

Take a Break have continued to support young children living in Barnet with learning disabilities to have fun during their half term breaks in 2022/23. The breaks have given their parents some respite time, for which they are very grateful.



Children playing at a Take a Break session

During the last year we have provided a variety of activities to suit everyone, we took some of our clients on day trips to the

Aldenham farm, and The SweetTree Farm in Mill Hill, they especially enjoyed being around the animals and the outdoor space. More recently we visited Golder's Hill Park, the weather was perfect, they especially enjoyed having a picnic in the playground area and seeing some animals.

I have been working well with The Fixation Academy team, of Performing Arts, to bring Drama, Music, Melody, and Sensory play to our activity days, this has given the children the opportunity to express themselves and get more physically active! We also brought in the Bubble lady on a few occasions. The children have also enjoyed days Swimming at the Copthall leisure Centre, with time spent in the sports hall doing sports activities, over the last year. Swimming seems to be a popular choice during the warmer breaks. I have planned a few more Swimming activity days for this Summer 2023.

SEEABILITY

Supporting people with sight loss

Seeability, is a charity that specializes in supporting people with Learning disabilities/autism who may also have sight loss. They are registered as the Royal School for the Blind, and are one of the oldest charities in England, where they have been specialising in this kind of support for over 200 years.

Seeability, first contacted Barnet Mencap (COPs) late last year to see if they could deliver a presentation, mainly because of our client base and also, trying to educate them on the importance of eye care. Their first session was at our second office in Station Road, Hendon, where they delivered the presentation to roughly 15 people.

The session lasted 90 minutes (and could have gone on far longer, due to clients

enjoying it) and the clients were very captivated and wanted the session to go on for longer than agreed. A staff member was on sight to see and to hear what Seeability could do for our clients and the feedback was immense, both from the staff member and also the clients.

Due to the interest and demand from our clients, we have arranged another 90 min presentation from Seeability for Tuesday 11th April, 2-3.30pm.

Our aim at Barnet Mencap (COPs) is not only to deliver a sporting and social program that everybody knows us for, but to also educate our clients to be more self-sufficient, if possible, in health, finance, travel etc. Seeability is one of a few charities that we have worked alongside and will continue to work with them until the knowledge is spread far and wide within the community.

We Want You!



If you support Barnet Mencap, why not become a member? Join us for £15 per year (or £5 if you are unwaged)! As well as supporting our work, members get a small welcome gift, a membership card, the chance to vote at our AGM and much more!

Contact 020 8349 3842 or projectsupport@barnetmencap.org.uk if you're interested

Being...

Les Humphrey



My name is Leslie Alfred Humphrey. I was named after my dad Alfred but everyone calls me Les!

I was born in Barnet General Hospital 63 years ago. My mum's name was Elder.

I lived with my parents in New Barnet until they died and I was moved to a home in Cromer, Norfolk.

I wasn't happy living where I was and my social worker suggested that I speak to Lucy from Barnet Mencap's Equality Housing team.

I had a zoom meeting with Lucy and all the tenants at the East Finchley house. We chatted and they showed me around the house and told me about themselves.

Everyone was lovely and I went for a week's stay to meet them all - I was very excited!

I travelled from Cromer to London in a taxi by myself, I wasn't nervous but looking forward to meeting everyone.

When I met them, they were all lovely and made me feel very welcome.

During my week's stay, it was my birthday and we all went out for a meal to celebrate and I was given a card and chocolates...I loved it, it was special.

I was very sad when I had to leave and go back to Cromer because I just wanted to stay.

I moved down for good in October 2022, 4 weeks later, and am very happy. It really feels like home.

I live with Janette Tom and Chris. Tom and I are good friends and we go for walks together. He showed me where the shops were and introduced me to COPs and Station Road and I'm now a member.

I go to the swimming lessons on Fridays with Tom and Janette and went to some of the parties. I'm going to be starting a course at St Joseph's soon.

I'm looking forward to getting my new DVD player soon that I ordered for Christmas as I love watching Disney films.

I'd like to go on holiday in the future with my new friends and to learn to cook by myself. I've already learnt how to use the microwave which is great as now I can choose when I want to eat.

The staff are lovely and they help me with my money, learning new bus routes, cooking and shopping and anything else I need. I know I can talk to staff here.

I had my first Christmas at the house. It was nice and I enjoyed it. We went for a big meal with lots of the Equality Housing tenants and staff it was good fun.

I'm looking forward to the rest of 2023!!

Photo Finish



Our staff team at a recent Away Day



General Information

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



How to find us

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Tel: 0208 349 3842 Fax: 020 8349 2192

Email:

projectsupport@barnetmencap.org.uk

Website: www.barnetmencap.org.uk



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Diary Dates

Summer Fun Celebration

12 noon - 3:30pm on Saturday 19th June 2023

Station Road, Hendon NW4 3SP

All ages are welcome at this fundraising Summer Fun Celebration - with food and refreshments, a bouncy castle for children, a fire engine, games and lots more! Booking preferred but not essential -

projectsupport@barnetmencap.org.uk

Habs Mencap Funday

10am - 4pm on Sunday 25th June 2023

Haberdasher's Boys School, Elstree

Habs' Mencap Funday is a day where children with special educational needs, ages 4-18, are invited to Haberdashers' Boys' School to take part in a range of exciting activities, planned by a student committee from Habs girls and boys schools. For more information and to register, head to

<https://www.barnetmencap.org.uk/habs-mencap-funday-2023/>

The next newsletter, with all the latest news and features, will appear in June 2023

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