

**? What is on the back page ?**

# **Autism London**

*providing support for those affected by  
autism and Asperger's syndrome*

## **Bulletin**

**May – June 2007**

**autism London**  
**Bi-Monthly Bulletin**

1<sup>st</sup> Floor, 602 Chigwell Road  
Woodford Bridge Essex, IG8 8AA

Please note we are unable to accept personal callers to the offices without an appointment.

HelpLine:	0845 6037954
Fax:	020 8504 5205
Email:	<a href="mailto:info@autismlondon.org.uk">info@autismlondon.org.uk</a>
Website:	<a href="http://www.autismlondon.org.uk">www.autismlondon.org.uk</a>

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Rhiannon Walters, Richard Tucker, Desmond Meldrum

We would welcome any feedback related to information printed in this publication.

The views and opinions expressed in Autism London's 'The Bulletin' are not necessarily those of the organisation.

*Your donation and subscription as a Supporter enables Autism London to continue to provide its support services free of charge to those personally affected by Autism and Aspergers Syndrome*

[www.autismlondon.org.uk](http://www.autismlondon.org.uk)

*All of our fact sheets have been recently updated and are now available for free download from our website.*

*If you know of a good service, event or opportunity for children or adults or those affected by Autism or Asperger's Syndrome why not let us know about it.*

*Email the information to us :-*

[info@autismlondon.org.uk](mailto:info@autismlondon.org.uk)

Dear Supporter

I have recently taken over as the Area Director for London and Essex MCCH services. I am extremely pleased to also be responsible for the Autism London services. MCCH took over the support for Autism London a few years ago and the partnership has flourished ever since. For those of you who don't know much about MCCH, please visit our website [www.mcch.co.uk](http://www.mcch.co.uk) or contact us at the office.

I have really enjoyed getting to know people involved with Autism London which is such a fantastic charity offering tremendous support to so many people.

Since coming into post I am acutely aware that Autism London is short of a sustainable income, therefore working with others within MCCH, I am hoping to secure funding so the excellent work can continue as well as expand to reach out to more people. MCCH fundraiser, Karen Mitchell, has also been writing to several trusts to boost our income but with no positive response to date. As soon as we do have good news we will of course let you know.

From all the staff I want to say a big thank you to our supporters for continuing to support us,

*Jacky Hammond*

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#### MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF AUTISM LONDON

I've been chair of the board since 2003, and I love reading the bulletin, but I've never taken the chance to introduce myself through it.

I got involved with Autism London because of my brother David, who is 53, and has autism and a learning disability. When we were children in the 1950s, autism was a novel diagnosis, and it took a long time for my parents to get anyone to listen to them, even though he didn't talk, rejected all affection, and was extremely destructive and violent. In our house, breakable things, including everyday items such as crockery and books, were under lock and key for a part of my childhood. My parents were told things such as "All babies cry" and "all toddlers have tantrums". Finally an enlightened paediatrician called Mildred Creek gave them a diagnosis of autism. They still had a long hard slog to get any proper support, but it was the beginning of things falling into place. With other parents they formed the National Autistic Society, and David received good residential education, with weekends at home.

Now David lives in a registered care home in Leicestershire. It's hard to believe what a disturbed and unhappy little boy he was when you see him now, because he's full of humour and charm. He's still clearly autistic, and that's evident in the way he has to visit every branch of WH Smith he passes (not good when you're late for a train and

there are three branches of Smiths on Waterloo station). He worries about the details of every arrangement. It doesn't help that he still has difficulties with literacy - if he could read a calendar and tell the time, he would be able to put his own mind at rest about some of the things that worry him. Our parents are dead now, and he spends a lot of time with me - a week at Christmas and at Easter, and a holiday each September, with our other brother, plus a few weekends each year.

On the board we are responsible for making sure that Autism London does what it was set up to do ("to help and support children and adults suffering from autism and other related communication and behavioural disorders, and to aid the families and carers of such people"), and that it's run prudently, and to form clear aims for the future. We're not there for the day to day things that the staff should be doing, but it's our job to make sure that the books balance and that nothing the staff do is likely to lead us into any trouble.

We're not paid, but we're proud to be giving our time to an organisation that does such important and useful work, and does it so well.

In future issues, I'll ask my colleagues on the board to tell you a bit about themselves, and we'll let you know about some of the things that we've been discussing.



Rhiannon Walters  
Chair Person

#### ASPI TALK

*By Desmond Meldrum, an adult who was diagnosed with the condition in 1996*

Desmond Meldrum is available to give talks on his personal experiences as well as general advice in coping with Asperger's syndrome to organisations and support groups at a reasonable price. Desmond has over seven years experience in communicating to groups and organisations on this subject and has also written a book published through Autism London which shares his observations and experiences of the condition.

*Excerpt from book - 'The Alternative Personality'*

'I started developing strange habits such as standing in the playground with my head cocked sideways and my mouth wide open staring into space, thus attracting even more attention. I also used to jump about in a peculiar manner while indulging in a fantasy world of my own'  
Since 1993, Desmond also has been an active volunteer in the field, providing much valued support to the work of Autism London and on 2001 became a supporter of Autism London's management committee.

For more information please contact Desmond Meldrum at  
Autism London on: 0845 6037954 or email [info@autismlondon.org.uk](mailto:info@autismlondon.org.uk)

## Support Service Update

*The ALAG meetings will continue on the first Tuesday of each month between 6.30pm and 8.30pm at :-*

**Highbury Baptist Church  
40a Highbury Place  
London N5 1QL**

*Let us know how we can make these gatherings more useful – ideas or suggestions for guest speakers can be emailed to us or call us on the HelpLine...*

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Dear Readers

Hello and welcome again to the Support Services section of our bulletin! Firstly, I would like to thank all of you who have renewed your annual supportership for 2007 and for your kind and generous donations for the work of Autism London.

I am delighted to report back from our latest ALAG meeting in June. John Harrison, one of our long-standing supporters, invited us to go on a walk in Epping Forest and then on to his home for some refreshments and social time. We had a fantastic time, walking through some very interestingly quaint areas of Epping/Loughton (mostly uphill) and then finally arriving at John's house to a very warm welcome from Mrs Harrison. We had a great time in relaxing in the garden, the sun was shining and the food was lovely! A big "thank you" to John and Barbara from all of us at Autism London.

The next ALAG meeting will be on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> July in Islington. We have invited a speaker from Wembley DLA to come along to give advice on benefits for disabled people. We look forward to seeing you then.

In the meantime, enjoy the lovely weather and keep well.

Ethney Anderson  
Support Officer

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Hello once again to our supporters. June seems to be a particularly busy month and many of you may be thinking about summer holidays, if the weather improves.

I have been contacted by a therapist who is working in partnership with DANDA his name is Amrit Singh. He is offering free holistic therapy for supporters of DANDA

and other neuro-diverse adults (between the ages of 16-35). Sessions last for 1 hour and each client can be seen for up to 12 weeks. Each session is tailored to the needs of the client and their presenting issues and includes the use of Acupuncture, Shiatsu massage, herbal medicine, supplements, yoga and meditation and counselling. All treatment including any herbal medicine and supplements are free. There are vacancies for seven individuals every 12 weeks, so if you are interested in receiving this treatment please contact Amrit on 07961104036 for further information.

Dee King  
Support Officer

Parents and carers will be happy to know that Dee and Ethney will be resuming support groups at the Limes in Walthamstow, 6 Somers Rd, Walthamstow, E17 6RX. This will be taking place on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2007 at 11am-12.30pm. We look forward to seeing you and thank you for your continued support.

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## News from Autism London's Residential Home at Salisbury Road

Greetings again from us all here at Salisbury Road. We have had an eventful couple of weeks where we had three service users celebrating their birthdays. We also had a night out with service users at the Beautiful Octopus Club and attended a BBQ. Jacky Hammond our new Area Director visited the service to meet staff and service users. Shortly we will be resuming our parents meeting where Jacky will be in attendance. As mentioned in our previous article we continue to have students on placement.

As summer is around the corner (hopefully) we have started to make arrangements for our service user's summer holidays during which we hope to start redecorating some of the communal areas and service user's rooms.

In the next couple of days Autism London will be recruiting three vacant posts for support workers for Salisbury Road. In the next couple of weeks we hope to have the activity room be more of a sensory room to enable the service users to have a place where they can experience a sense of calmness and tranquillity. We hope that you all out there are well and send you best wishes.

Monica  
Deputy Manager

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## Person Centred Plan on the move at Salisbury Road

Staff at the residential service has been working with Ethney and Dee from the area office and Joe McDaniel the person centred training coordinator at MCCH head office to develop a person centred plan (PCP) for all our service users by the end of June 2008.

We decided to hit the ground running by starting with three of the service users. I am pleased to announce that the PCP for the three service users are far advanced.

We have had meetings with families and other key people and have taken the opportunity to go through information that we have in the service and observation and dialogue that we have had with the service users to do this.

These have proved to be very fruitful as we concentrated on the positive side of the individuals and this has helped the staff team understand how we could help the service users achieve their dreams and aspirations.

We are now looking at developing the PCP for the remaining four service users that live here at Salisbury Road.

We have used the "My life book" that MCCH use to collate important information that is being used to develop the person centred plans.

We would like to acknowledge the invaluable support that we have received from Ethney, Dee and Joe throughout the process and I would personally like to acknowledge the effort that the staff have put into developing the PCP and taking the time that goes with supporting the service users with their care.

I am confident that the service users and staff will gain from the information that we have put together in developing the plans so the dreams and aspirations will happen.

Richard Tucker  
Service Manager

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### Inclusion means:



Everyone has the right to live in and be part of the community of their choosing.



Everyone has the right to have friends and relationships.



Everyone has the right to the same opportunities.



Everyone has the right to be listened to.



Everyone should have power and control to determine their own life.



Everyone has dreams and aspirations.

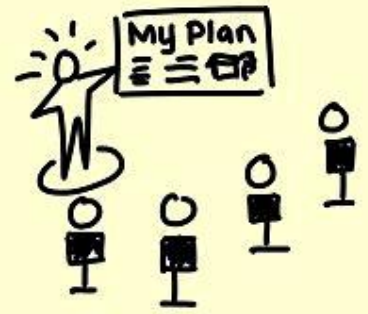


Everyone has something to contribute and together we are better.

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When we do person centred planning with people it means:

- Really listening to what people want. This might mean spending quite a lot of time with someone so that we are really sure that we understand what they are telling us.
- Helping people to think about what their dreams for the future are.
- Helping people to be in control of what is happening. This means that the person chooses what they want us to help them to plan for and who else they want to involve. If they have meetings to help them make plans, they decide where and when these meetings are.
- Recognising the importance of friends and relationships in everybody's life, and therefore encouraging more people to be involved in planning for positive things to happen, not just staff.
- Focusing on peoples' gifts and strengths :- what they are good at, what people like about them and what they can contribute to society.
- Not waiting until people are 'ready' for certain resources or services but looking to create opportunities and find the right support to help people do the things they really want.



If you want to know more about person centred planning, Joe McDaniel is MCCH guru in this work, he trains our staff and ensures that MCCH provides a person centred approach in all the work they do.

Joe's office is at MCCH head office in Maidstone, he can be contacted on telephone number 01622 769100

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## Supporters Forum

Autscape 2007 will be taking place once again from 7-10 August. Those of you interested in attending this wonderful retreat should contact:

AUTSCAPE, PO Box 2041, Emmer Green, Reading RG4 8ZG,  
Telephone 07952223580

Website [www.autscape.org](http://www.autscape.org) [autscape@gmail.com](mailto:autscape@gmail.com)

New Seminar: Relationships and Asperger's Syndrome

Aimed at: Individuals and couples involved in a relationship where either partner has AS and professionals in adult support and counselling

Date 29<sup>th</sup> October 2007 Venue RIBA London

[http://www.aspergerfoundation.org.uk/seminars/asf\\_bookingform29102007.pdf](http://www.aspergerfoundation.org.uk/seminars/asf_bookingform29102007.pdf)

Turtle Key Arts is running a free Documentary Filmmaking Course for 16 to 26 year olds who are on the high functioning end of the autistic spectrum. It runs during the autumn and winter terms on a Tuesday, and is an Open College Network qualification. For further details contact: Turtle Key Arts, Ladbroke Hall, 79 Barlby Road, London W10 6AZ

Tel: 020 8964 5060

Fax: 020 8964 4080

**Book review - "MARTIAN IN THE PLAYGROUND" by Jonathan Pitt - a member of ALAG**

I will start with a quote from the book: "Each child with Asperger's is an individual."  
(Sainsbury 2000 p.130)

The book "Martian in the Playground." is a very good insight in what it is like for a child with Asperger's whilst she or he is at school. Clare Sainsbury has Asperger's and so in detail she can describe her experiences of her time at school. She thought that she had something wrong with her and was unsure what it was. She thought that a spaceship would one day come and take her away. At the age of 20 years she had a diagnosis of Asperger's syndrome and Clare felt if only her teachers were aware of Asperger's and would have been able to help her.

For a child with Asperger's, being at school is a very daunting place. A teacher who has a child with Asperger's in his/her class needs to have a good understanding of Asperger's. and ways in which they can help the child to learn. The book is divided into chapters: an explanation about Asperger's, about a child's time at school, how to help a child with Asperger's after they leave school and it concludes that each child will have specific learning needs and how their teacher can facilitate it.

I found the quotes of people with Asperger's time at school very informative and Clare's own experiences. For example Clare's school reports said that she was a loner, very stubborn, did not like working with others and appeared to be in her "own world". Some of the people Clare spoke to told her that they were seen as not very bright and were placed in classes or schools with children with a variety of special needs which they felt did not help them.

There are many quotes from books on Asperger's, for example Temple Grandin who is seen as an expert on Autism and Asperger's. Also there is a list of recommended books to read.

I feel that this is a very good book for parents/carers and teacher of children with Asperger's and people who are interested in the areas of autism and Asperger's syndrome.



**Do you have any news, events information, reviews or know of any activities taking place...?**

**If so, let us know - get in touch through  
autism London HelpLine - 0845 6037954 or email -  
[info@autismlondon.org.uk](mailto:info@autismlondon.org.uk)**

**Your support remains invaluable and very much appreciated by those  
who access our services...**

New 'LOGO' for Autism London. Can you help?



Which of these logo's best reflects Autism London and the work we do?

We would like to hear your opinion

Please phone Dee or Ethney on: 0845 6037954

e-mail [ethney@autismlondon.org.uk](mailto:ethney@autismlondon.org.uk) or [dee@autismlondon.org.uk](mailto:dee@autismlondon.org.uk)

or write to us at: Autism London

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602 Chigwell road

Woodford Bridge

IG8 8AA

**Please let us know your views by 11<sup>th</sup> July**