

## South Hampshire Branch

Dear Friends

Please find below all the latest information from our branch, along with other information that we hope you will find useful. This month there is news of two great speakers coming to our support group meetings and information about other activities in the area. Also, details of how you can get involved with the Hampshire Autism Voice Network and have your say about how autism is being supported in the county.

### Monthly Support Group

Our next support group is on **Monday next, 16 March** held, as usual, at Bishopstoke Evangelical Church at 7.30pm (a location map can be found at [www.shantsnas.org.uk/Home/SupportGroup](http://www.shantsnas.org.uk/Home/SupportGroup)).

We are delighted to welcome, as our guest, **Madeline Close, Voluntary & Community Sector and Diverse Communities Officer, Healthwatch Hampshire**. Healthwatch is the new independent consumer champion created to gather and represent the views of the public. It exists in two distinct forms – local Healthwatch and Healthwatch England, at national level. The aim of local Healthwatch is to give citizens and communities a stronger voice to influence and challenge how health and social care services are provided within their locality. For more information about our speaker, visit our website at [www.shantsnas.org.uk/Home/SupportGroup](http://www.shantsnas.org.uk/Home/SupportGroup).

There will be plenty of time at our meeting to have a chat and to browse our Resource Library, comprising over 300 books, videos and DVDs on many aspects of autism and Asperger syndrome.

**If you have any books due back or overdue, please don't forget to bring them along.**

### Special speaker for our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary Annual General Meeting – **Update!**

I am delighted to let you know that we have just secured an excellent speaker for our 10th anniversary Annual General Meeting which takes place on **Monday 20 April** at Bishopstoke Evangelical Church at 7.30pm.

**Dr Niko Kargas** is from the University of Portsmouth's Department of Psychology. He is a member of the **Autism Research Network (ARN)**, a network aimed at bringing together academics, practitioners and people with autism and their families.

He will be speaking on

**Sensory issues in the context of communication difficulties from infancy to adulthood.**

Dr Kargas has five years working experience as an Autism Practitioner. In this role he had the opportunity to develop, implement and teach programs and classes specifically designed for children and adults with autism. Also, he volunteered as a citizen advocate for people with learning difficulties in Partners in Advocacy for four years and is a graduate member of the British Psychological Society, the Autism Research Network and the Centre for Situated Action and Communication.

### Family Youth Club

After two very busy and popular youth clubs so far this year, we take a break in April due to Easter. We next meet again on **Saturday 2 May** at Chandlers Ford Methodist Church from 3.30pm to 5.30pm.

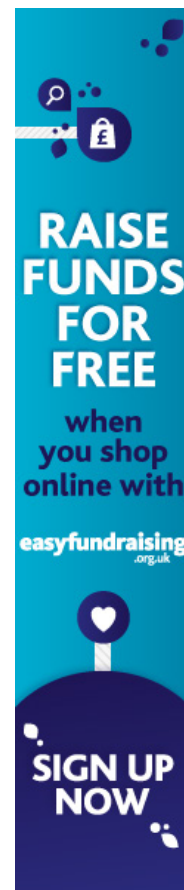
Full details, including a map of the venue, can be found at [www.shantsnas.org.uk/Home/Family%20Youth%20Club](http://www.shantsnas.org.uk/Home/Family%20Youth%20Club).

### LEGO club



Our monthly LEGO club will also not be meeting in April, due to Easter, but continues on **Saturday 2 May**.

To express an interest in your child joining the waiting list for this club, please complete the form (which can be found on our website at [www.shantsnas.org.uk/home/lego](http://www.shantsnas.org.uk/home/lego)). **PLEASE NOTE:** We have been advised



Accept difference. Not indifference.

that, unfortunately, this type of therapy is not successful with children who have an ADHD or PDA diagnosis.

## Our Southampton social groups

### Children's social group

Meeting on **Tuesdays** from 6.30pm to 8.30pm. The group meet fortnightly (all the dates are on our website). An exciting programme of events is planned for the next few months.

### Adult's social group

Meeting on **Tuesdays** from 7.00pm to 9.00pm. The group meet fortnightly (all the dates are on our website). Again, there are lots of plans this year for this popular group.

For more details of both of these social groups, email [aspsq.shants@gmail.com](mailto:aspsq.shants@gmail.com) or contact Sue on 023 8043 2612 or Tracey on 07532 282301. New members are always welcome to attend. Both groups meet at St Patrick's Church, Portsmouth Road, Woolston, Southampton, SO19 9BD.

## Different Together – Support for partners of people with Asperger syndrome

Being in touch with others in your situation can be a lifeline for the NT partner in a relationship. That connection can come as a great relief, validating how you've felt and taking away feelings of frustration and isolation. *Different Together* is a safe, supportive and understanding community for the partners of people affected by Asperger syndrome. Meeting up can be a great way to learn from others and to share experiences about the often frustrating life of loving an adult with Asperger syndrome.

A local group is meeting in Winchester on **Saturday 14 March** at Starbucks on the High Street, between 10:30am and 13:30pm. For more details, join their online group at <http://www.different-together.co.uk/meet>.

## 50% off Mums place this Mother's Day, New Forest

New Forest Activities are offering 50% off Mums place when you book onto one of their great activities taking place on **Sunday 15 March**. You and your Mum could enjoy: A family cycle through The New Forest • A guided family canoe on the stunning Beaulieu River • Both canoeing and cycling on a family adventure day • A laugh as you test your skills at archery. Activities are subject to availability so don't delay! To find out more visit [www.newforestactivities.co.uk/whats-on-in-the-new-forest](http://www.newforestactivities.co.uk/whats-on-in-the-new-forest) or to book call 01590 612377. Don't forget to ask about the Refer a Friend deal.

## Higher Education and Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Parent Support meeting, Romsey

Have you concerns about your child going to university with ASD? Want to find out what support is available? Then go along to The Romsey School, Greatbridge, Romsey, SO51 8ZB on **Saturday 28 March** from 10.00am to 1.00pm for an opportunity to chat to Higher Education professionals. At the meeting the University representatives will explain the application procedure, different courses and support available. We will also be present at this event with our stand and to offer advice based on our own first-hand experience. You will have an opportunity to network during the coffee break and between 12.30 to 1.00pm. For more details, email [jwest@romsey.hants.sch.uk](mailto:jwest@romsey.hants.sch.uk) or call 01794 512334.

## Hampshire Autism Voice Network

As previously circulated, we hope this is something you will be interested to join. As you may know, we are both members of Hampshire Autism Voice and are very keen that all those with an interest in autism can feed their views to the Hampshire Autism Partnership Board, via ourselves, in order that the Hampshire autism strategies are working for you.



Hampshire Autism Voice (HAV) is the parent, carers and people with autism group established within the Hampshire Autism Partnership Board (HAPB).

HAV has been developed to give a voice and active involvement to people with autism, their families and carers within the HAPB and the autism strategy work streams. HAV actively participates in the planning, delivery and monitoring of services for children, young people and adults with autism living in Hampshire.

We are working to establish a HAV Network which we hope will be operational in the coming months and we need your help!

We are looking for the following groups of people below to participate in occasional surveys in order to gain your views on various aspects of how Autism is supported. This will be fed back anonymously to the HAPB. Email is preferred but a postal option can be set up.

- People with Autism
- Families of people with Autism
- Support Workers
- Organisations that work with people with Autism

With your help we can make sure that your views are represented and supported in the Hampshire Autism Strategies.

Please reply to [admin@hampshireautismvoice.org.uk](mailto:admin@hampshireautismvoice.org.uk) indicating which group from above you represent. For more information visit [www.hampshireautismvoice.org.uk](http://www.hampshireautismvoice.org.uk).

## Autism Friendly Film screenings

With World Autism Awareness week and the Easter holidays approaching, look out for special autism friendly screenings at local cinemas. For more information on what is showing visit [www.dimensions-uk.org/support-services/autism-care/autism-friendly-screenings](http://www.dimensions-uk.org/support-services/autism-care/autism-friendly-screenings).



## Toys R Us Store Autism Friendly and Additional Needs Exclusive Shopping Event

To celebrate World Autism Awareness Week, on **Sunday 29 March** every Toys R Us store in the UK (including Southampton) will once again be holding an Autism Friendly and additional needs exclusive shopping event. With reduced fluorescent lighting, no loud music or tannoy announcements and all staff provided with some parent led autism awareness training this should be a wonderful chance to enjoy some peaceful shopping with your children!

This event is exclusively for parents with additional needs children.

The store will be open from 9.00 to 11.00am with tills opening at 11.00am due to Sunday trading restrictions. Staff will make sure there is quick efficient access to tills for payment or offer to hold trolleys until an appropriate time if you wish to pop out and return to pay. Of course everyone is welcome to come along and just browse and play!

For more information about local Toys R Us stores, tel: 08457 869778 Web: [www.toysrus.co.uk/storeFinder](http://www.toysrus.co.uk/storeFinder).

## The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time

The National Theatre's award-winning production of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* has now launched its UK tour and will be at The Mayflower, Southampton from 23 June to 4 July 2015. The National Theatre, have kindly given The National Autistic Society an exclusive £15 rate on the matinee performance on **Thursday 25 June**. This will be open to all of our volunteers, members and their families (acknowledging that this performance is a standard performance and not a relaxed performance). Please use the Discount code: NAS15 when booking.



There is also a Relaxed performance in association with The National Autistic Society on **Thursday 2 July** at 2.00pm. This is a specially adapted and relaxed performance for customers on the autism spectrum or with sensory and communication difficulties or a learning disability. Tickets are £15.00 each.

Please call the Box Office on 02380 711811 for more info or to book. Age recommendation 11+.

## Makaton News – March Madness!

Makaton Charity provides information and advice to families that use Makaton to communicate. This month it's March madness time, with lots of resources on special offer! They also have two free downloads: a Mother's Day card, and signs and symbols for Easter and there is a printable resource to help you get out and about during the Easter holidays (£4.99). For more information or to receive their newsletter, visit their website at [www.makaton.org](http://www.makaton.org); call 01276 606760 or email [info@makaton.org](mailto:info@makaton.org).

## Autism Centre for Employment

We mentioned last month about the setting up of a new and exciting employment programme which will take place this year. The Autism Research Network, in partnership with Portsmouth, Hampshire, Southampton and the Isle of Wight councils have recently received funding from the Department of Health to set up an Autism Centre for Employment (ACE) which will provide work placements for adults with autism without learning disabilities.

ACE is now looking for Mentors who will provide one-to-one support for clients with autism who are undertaking a work placement as part of the project. ACE will cover all reasonable travel expenses to the workplace, the training fees and hospitality associated with the training events.

If you are interested to find out more about this, please visit our website's News page at [www.shantsnas.org.uk/News/Newsarchive#050315\\_01](http://www.shantsnas.org.uk/News/Newsarchive#050315_01).

## New Forest Spectrum 3-day Music Festival

New Forest Spectrum is the first National music festival for those with learning disabilities and will be held in the Foxlease Estate in Lyndhurst. If you have a learning disability and/or autism, this is the music festival for you, your family and care staff! The festival is for all ages, children under 5 go free and all under 18 must be accompanied by an adult. The festival is in a safe environment where you can dance, watch bands perform and get involved with fun workshops. A wide variety of food will be available to purchase. The festival begins at lunchtime on **Friday 10 July** and will continue through to the evening of **Sunday 12 July**. You can take a tent and camp at the site and there will be plenty of toilets and showers for you to use. A limited amount of self-catering accommodation is available. For more details, visit <http://newforestspectrum.org/>.

## SENDirect for Families Website

Are you a parent, carer, supporter or young person? SENDirect is an online service which will allow you to: See what choices are available to you, how much things cost and what other people think of them • Get information about your legal rights • Look at guidance on how to tell if an activity or service might be worth trying for your child • Speak directly to activity providers about adapting services to suit their exact needs • help create suitable new services where currently there are none • shape and buy activities, support and equipment easily online. For more information visit [www.sendirect.org.uk](http://www.sendirect.org.uk) or call 020 7608 8772.

## Autism Friendly Holidays

HolidayPirates have produced an online guide to help families looking for autism friendly holidays. To access the guide, please visit [www.holidaypirates.com/holidaypackages/autism-friendly-holidays-our-guide?utm\\_source=facebook&utm\\_medium=cheap+holidays&utm\\_campaign=hp.com](http://www.holidaypirates.com/holidaypackages/autism-friendly-holidays-our-guide?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=cheap+holidays&utm_campaign=hp.com)

## Reminders:

### Free Training Special Educational Needs (SEN) and the Law, Eastleigh

Hampshire Parent Carer Network (HPCN) are running a day's free training from IPSEA, a registered charity who provide legal advice and support to parents of children with a disability and/or special needs, on the subject of Special Educational Needs (SEN) and the Law on **Thursday 19 March** from 10.00am to 2.00pm at Wells Place Centre, Wells Place, Eastleigh, SO50 5LJ. Email [participation@hpcn.org.uk](mailto:participation@hpcn.org.uk) or call Michala on 01962 832580 to book.

### Toad on the Road

Head2Head Multi-Sensory Theatre for All present Mischief in the Wild Woods Easter 2015 production 'Toad On The Road' (based on The Wind in the Willows by Kenneth Grahame) at Treloar's, Nr. Alton on **Monday 13 and Tuesday 14 April** at 10.45am or 1.30pm. Booking via 01372 278021 or [h2hoffice@gmail.com](mailto:h2hoffice@gmail.com). For more information visit <http://www.head2headtheatre.co.uk/family-holiday-activities>.

### Challengers Play and Youth Schemes

Challengers are running Playschemes and Youthschemes in the area. It's nearly time to book Challengers events for Easter Holiday and the Summer Term – all events running between 30 March and 28 July 2015. For information visit: [www.disability-challengers.org/playschemes](http://www.disability-challengers.org/playschemes) and [www.disability-challengers.org/Youthschemes](http://www.disability-challengers.org/Youthschemes) or for any help or advice email [playandleisureteam@disability-challengers.org](mailto:playandleisureteam@disability-challengers.org) or call 01483 230 939.

### Hampshire Local Autism Directory

The Local Autism Directory (LAD) is funded by Southampton, Hampshire, Isle of Wight and Portsmouth (SHIP), 8 CCGs and Adult Services, Hampshire County Council. Information within it covers children and adults. **Visit the LAD** at <http://www.autismhampshire.org.uk/local-autism-directory/directory/>

### Our Resource library



Our library is available to members at our support group meetings and a small selection is available at our family youth club. Members can join the library for a one-off donation of £5. We have just purchased over 40 new books which will soon be added to the library, bringing the total number of books, videos, DVDs and games to around 350 items.

Up to 3 items may be borrowed for a maximum loan of 2 months. We do ask that items are returned promptly to enable others to borrow them. *Currently we have a number of items that, despite constant reminders, are very overdue, so ask that these be returned immediately please. Thank you.*

### Calling all coffee drinkers!

Do you or your friends, colleagues use Tassimo coffee machines? If so, you can help us raise funds.

Tassimo wants to save TDISCs and outer flow wrap packaging from going to landfill. For the total weight of the TDISCs and outer foil packaging we collect, we are awarded TerraCycle points which are converted into cash for our charity. To date we have raised around £400. Please bring along your TDISCs and outer flow wrap packaging (they do not have to be cleaned) to any of our meetings/activities. Even better, get all your friends involved too.

Also, if you have a link with a local supermarket or place where a collection bin could be sited, please let us know.



### Help us boost our fundraising

This is another great way to raise money for us for free, simply by shopping online through a website called *easyfundraising*.

Whenever you buy anything online (e.g. presents, groceries, clothes, books, train tickets, hotel rooms, etc.) you can raise a free donation for our Branch. There are over 2,700 retailers registered with the site, including Amazon, John Lewis, eBay and Tesco who will donate a percentage of what you spend to us to say thank you for shopping with them.

1. Sign up – go to [www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/shantsnas](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/shantsnas) and click on the button to sign up.
2. Shop – from the *easyfundraising* website, search for the retailer you'd like to shop with and click through to the retailer to make your purchase. This tells the retailer you came from *easyfundraising*. The price is exactly the same as if you'd visited the retailer directly.
3. Get a donation – after you've made your purchase, the retailer will give you a cash reward that *easyfundraising* turn into a donation for our Branch

Please be assured that using the *easyfundraising* website will not cost you a penny. There are no catches or hidden charges and we benefit from any donations you make once registered. Thank you for your support.

What do you buy online?

Whatever you buy online, you can raise free donations for us by simply buying through **easyfundraising**

[www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/shantsnas](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/shantsnas)

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As always, for full details of all our meetings, other dates, news items and information, please visit our [website](http://www.shantsnas.org.uk).

Regards

**David & Rachel Carter**

The National Autistic Society, South Hampshire Branch  
Email: [shants@nas.org.uk](mailto:shants@nas.org.uk) | Website: [www.shantsnas.org.uk](http://www.shantsnas.org.uk)  
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*You will have received this news update because we have your contact details on our list. Should you no longer wish to receive information, please let us know and we will remove you from the list. Thank you*