

Dear Friends

Please find details below of our activities over the next month or so plus other information that may be of interest.

## Support Group Meeting

Our next support group meeting is on **Monday next, 21 March** at Bishopstoke Evangelical Church at 7.30pm.

We welcome representatives from **Support4SEND** and **Southampton Information Advice and Support Service** (formerly Hampshire's and Southampton's Parent Partnerships) as our guests.

Each organisation provides free impartial information, advice and support to parent carers of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and to children and young people with SEND in their respective areas – Hampshire and Southampton. They cover the ages of 0 to 25 and aim to empower children and young people with special educational needs/disabilities, and their parents/carers, to make informed decisions about education, health and social care.

There will be plenty of time at our meeting to have a chat and to browse our Resource Library, comprising over 350 books, videos and DVDs on many aspects of autism and Asperger syndrome. This includes around 40 new books we have recently purchased for our library.

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

## Family Youth Club

Our next Youth Club takes place on **Saturday 2 April** at Chandlers Ford Methodist Church from 3.30pm to 5.30pm. Children accompanied by their families are welcome.

Our usual facilities will be available and our volunteer play facilitators will be present to help the children and young people enjoy the activities we have on offer.

**PLEASE NOTE: Parents must be responsible for their children during the duration of the youth club and must remain in the same room as their child at all times – thank you.**

£1.50 per child. Entry is via the children's garden at the rear of the church, next to the car park.

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

## LEGO club

Our next club is also on **Saturday 2 April** at Chandlers Ford Methodist Church.



This is for children with autism from 8 to 13 years of age. The club is currently full but for more information and to express an interest in your child joining the waiting list for the club, please complete the form on our website at [www.shantsnas.org.uk/home/lego](http://www.shantsnas.org.uk/home/lego).

**PLEASE NOTE: We have been advised that, unfortunately, this type of therapy is not successful with children who have an ADHD or PDA diagnosis.**

## Our Southampton social groups

Both our Children's social group and Adults' social group continue to meet at St Patrick's Church, Portsmouth Road, Woolston, Southampton, SO19 9BD. All dates through to the end of March can be found on our website.

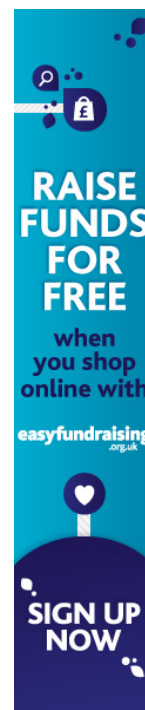
For more details, email [aspsg.shants@gmail.com](mailto:aspsg.shants@gmail.com) or contact Sue on 023 8043 2612 or Tracey on 07532 282301.

## Important notice regarding our activities for children

We have been asked to remind all parents that it is a condition of the National Autistic Society that all children who attend our branch activities **must** be accompanied by a parent/carer. This is because our volunteers are not trained in child care and our insurance would be invalidated if we did not have parents/carers present. In order to ensure the safety and security of all those taking part in our activities, and to comply with our insurance obligations, our safeguarding and child protection policy, and the conditions of hire of the venues we use, we ask that parents/carers observe the following:

- Parents must remain responsible for their children, must remain in the same room as their child(ren) at all times and must accompany their child to the toilet.
- Volunteer helpers who are running this activity are not responsible for supervising children.
- Certain rooms/areas may be out of bounds to us – these will be clearly marked.
- Please respect the facilities (which we use at very low cost) and report any accidental damage immediately to one of our helpers.
- These activities are available to branch member families only, therefore if you haven't yet joined, please complete a membership form (available at our activities or online at [www.shantsnas.org.uk/Membership](http://www.shantsnas.org.uk/Membership)).

And, importantly, we want everyone to enjoy themselves in a safe and secure environment!



## Social Skills group

We are running our next social skills course after Easter for 9 children with autism aged 7 to 11. We hope they will enjoy the course. We have offered these courses since 2006 (whenever funding has been available) and, to date, over 80 young people have benefitted. We hope to offer more courses, for this and other age groups, in the future (subject, of course, to the availability of funding).

## Young Person Parent Carer Forum

If you are unable to make our next parent support group meeting, our guests, *Support4SEND* and *Southampton Information Advice and Support Service*, will also be in the Main Hall at Eastleigh College on **Tuesday 22 March** for a Drop-in from 3.00 to 6.00pm. They will be offering Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) Information and Guidance. Do you want to find out more about Education, Health and Care Plans? Have you got any questions about Special Educational Needs & Disability? Then come along to this drop-in event. For further information, email [cmcbride@eastleigh.ac.uk](mailto:cmcbride@eastleigh.ac.uk).

## Head2Head Theatre – The Wacky World of Oz

This charity theatre group, which has been serving the Special Needs' community since 2006, are presenting this event (adapted from 'The Wonderful Wizard of Oz' by L. Frank Baum) over the Easter period. The dates in Hampshire (sessions 11.15am to 2.00pm or 12.45 to 3.30pm) are:

**3 and 4 April:** Shepherds Down School, Shepherds Lane, Compton, Winchester SO21 2AJ

**5 and 6 April:** Mary Rose Academy, Gisors Road, Southsea PO4 8GT

For information visit [www.head2headtheatre.co.uk](http://www.head2headtheatre.co.uk) or book at 01372 278021, 07519 747 290 or [h2hoffice@gmail.com](mailto:h2hoffice@gmail.com).

## Circus Starr

Circus Starr is a charitable organisation that supports disabled, underprivileged and vulnerable children through its world class show. Full details can be found on their website at <http://www.circus-starr.org.uk/>. Some of you have attended performances in the last two years and the feedback from these was excellent.

As we recently announced, we have again been offered 60 free tickets for the performance on **Wednesday 25 May** (Spring Bank Holiday half term week) at Riverside Park, Manor Farm Road, Southampton, SO18 1DE at **4.45pm**.

If you would like tickets for this performance, please let me know straight away as tickets are being offered on a 'first come – first served' basis. A maximum of four tickets are available per family.

**We currently have a few tickets left, so be quick!**

The only other 'condition' is that, after the event, you let me have your comments about the show, or send in any pictures your children make about the show – this is so we can send these to the organisers who, in turn, can pass these to the local businesses who have donated your tickets. This will help them secure the support of local businesses for future funding.

Details for collecting the tickets will be sent to you on confirmation of your order.

## A day with Dr Temple Grandin

The National Autistic Society is delighted to invite you to this event which will take place on **3 June** in Reading.

This is a unique opportunity to hear world-famous author **Dr Temple Grandin** talk about her life and experiences. She rarely appears at autism events in the UK, so this is a chance to hear her give her views on a range of topics, such as challenging expectations, sensory issues and preparing for older age. Audience members will also have a chance to ask Dr Grandin questions and to seek her advice and opinions. The event will also feature other speakers on the autism spectrum, sharing their perspectives.

Temple Grandin is one of the most accomplished and well-known adults with autism in the world. Her fascinating life, with all its challenges and successes has been brought to the screen. She has been featured in major television programs, such as the BBC special 'The Woman Who Thinks Like a Cow'.

The event will be of interest to autistic individuals, their parents, families and carers – to encourage them to attend, the NAS are offering a reduced fee of £45 + VAT. For professionals, register by **Thursday 31 March** to take advantage of an early booking rate. *Please note: places are limited, so if you are interested you are advised to book now!*

For more information visit [www.autism.org.uk/professionals/conferences/temple2016.aspx](http://www.autism.org.uk/professionals/conferences/temple2016.aspx).

## Worried about employment?

Do you have a child who is an undergraduate student with ASD or is a student in the same course as a student with ASD?

Would you like to help with research what support people with ASD need to gain employment?

Would you like your individual employment profile to help target career development activities?

Dr Beatriz Lopez and The Autism Centre for Employment at the University of Portsmouth are currently conducting research to better understand the factors that influence the employability of undergraduate students with an Autism Spectrum Disorder diagnosis.

To find out how you can help, please visit [www.shantsnas.org.uk/News/Newsarchive#100316\\_01](http://www.shantsnas.org.uk/News/Newsarchive#100316_01).

## Every Teacher campaign

With more than 1 in 100 children on the autism spectrum, and 70% of those children in mainstream schools, every teacher in the UK will teach an autistic child. But there is no compulsory autism training for teachers. The NAS has joined forces with Ambitious about Autism to get autism training for every new teacher.

Sign their open letter if you agree that every teacher deserves the right training, and every autistic child needs a teacher who understands them at <http://www.autism.org.uk/get-involved/campaign/england/education/everyteacher.aspx>



## All teaching staff to learn about the Autistic Spectrum

A UK Government and Parliament petition, on the same lines as the above campaign, has also been launched. Please sign the petition at <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/120424>. Nearly 12,000 people have signed this at this moment in time. When it reached 10,000 signatures, government responded to this petition (with a fairly stock answer!) but at 100,000 signatures, this petition will be considered for debate in Parliament.

Let's make our voices heard!

## Consultation on Proposals for a new Family Support Service

Residents, health professionals, voluntary organisations and other stakeholders are being asked to give their views on a Hampshire County Council (HCC) proposal to transform and modernise existing early help services to better support families in need. A ten week public consultation is now open on proposals for developing a new, single, integrated Family Support Service that would bring together the work of early help hubs, children's centre services and youth support services, while aligning closely with the Supporting (Troubled) Families Programme. The aim of the proposed integrated Family Support Service would be to target help specifically to vulnerable families with children who have multiple needs, often requiring the involvement of more than one agency. Tailor-made support would be provided at a local level, in order to respond to the needs of local families. With one point of contact, families would no longer need to go to different agencies, as is currently the case. Visit <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/childrens-services-consultation.htm> for more information and the consultation questionnaire. Paper copies of the consultation can be obtained by contacting 03005 551384 or email [info@hants.gov.uk](mailto:info@hants.gov.uk). The deadline for responses is **midday on 3 May**.

HCC will be hosting a number of awareness raising events for parents, carers and other stakeholders, where Children's Services staff will be on hand to answer questions and queries. There is one event in each of Hampshire's 11 districts including: **Eastleigh: Thursday 17 March**, 4.30–6.30pm, Wells Centre • **New Forest: Tuesday 22 March**, 9.30–11.30am, Lyndhurst Community Centre • **Test Valley: Wednesday 13 April**, 9.30–11.30 am, The Lights • **Fareham: Thursday 14 April**, 1–3pm, Fareham Community Church • **Basingstoke: Tuesday 19 April**, 1–3pm, Popley Fields Community Centre • **East Hants: Wednesday 20 April**, 9.30–11.30am, Alton Community Centre • **Havant: Thursday 21 April**, 1–3pm, Waterlooville Community Centre.

## Reminders:

### Abundance Music Festival

This festival is from **Friday 15 July to Sunday 17 July** at Foxlease Activity Centre, set in 65 acres of woodland in the heart of The New Forest. Friday 15 July is exclusively for people with learning disabilities and their family and carers, and the weekend (16-17 July) will be inclusively open to the public, so you can invite your friends to come and join you. Tickets can be purchased from [www.abundancemusicfest.org](http://www.abundancemusicfest.org) at the end of March. £80 for all three days, including camping, if you have a learning disability, or £80 for the weekend (Saturday and Sunday) if you are a member of the public. Also check out the Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/newforestspectrum2016](http://www.facebook.com/newforestspectrum2016) for updates on the festival.

### 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/>

### Friends of in touch

*Friends of in touch* is a registered charity, in Eastleigh, that supports emotionally and socially vulnerable children and young people with autistic spectrum conditions, and behaviours associated with them. The aim is to enable anxious or socially vulnerable children and young people to feel more engaged with mainstream education and social activity by helping them develop their self-confidence, self-esteem and their coping skills. There are currently vacancies in their Junior (9 to 13) and Senior (13 to 21) Youth Groups. They meet at Y-Zone Youth Centre, Fair Oak on Tuesdays during term time (Juniors 4.30 to 6.00pm and Seniors 6.30 to 8.30pm). For more details visit [www.friendsofintouch.org.uk](http://www.friendsofintouch.org.uk). Anyone interested should contact [Chris@friendsofintouch.org.uk](mailto:Chris@friendsofintouch.org.uk) or call 07474 539539. Please do not just turn up at the youth centre without having contacted Chris.

### The Eastleigh Social Group

Part of the Serendipity Social Groups Project run by Autism Hampshire, the Eastleigh social group is for people 18 or older who have High Functioning Autism or Asperger's. They meet at the Eastleigh Wellbeing Centre fortnightly on Friday afternoons from 1.30-3.30pm. For more information contact: Eastleigh Wellbeing Centre, 111 Leigh Road, Eastleigh, Hampshire, SO50 9DS, Tel: 023 8063 3951, Email: [Jamie.pratt@autismhampshire.org.uk](mailto:Jamie.pratt@autismhampshire.org.uk)

### My World, National Autistic Society

The NAS is offering a FREE autism classroom resource pack and fortnightly resource emails for teachers who sign up to *My World*. Please pass this information on to all teachers you know. For a video with more information, please visit [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fv66Q-MUxqc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fv66Q-MUxqc) and sign up at [www.autism.org.uk/Working-with/Education/teacher-form.aspx](http://www.autism.org.uk/Working-with/Education/teacher-form.aspx).

## World Autism Awareness Week

**Saturday 2 April to Friday 8 April.** Last year, almost 5,000 people took part in the National Autistic Society's first ever World Autism Awareness Week. It was their biggest ever fundraising campaign, and it raised over £200,000 to help autistic people and their families across the UK. They are to do even more this year, watch out for updates about what they've got planned and how you can take part. Visit <http://www.autism.org.uk/get-involved/world-autism-awareness-week.aspx> to download your pack!

## Autism Alert App

The Autism Alert App, from Autism Hampshire, enables people with autism to share information about their autism and support their autism. It can be used by young people and adults who live in Hampshire (including Southampton, Portsmouth and Isle of Wight). It functions on a smartphone and you can also have an Alert Card. It can be used to explain your condition to the emergency services, any professional, family member or friends who you choose to share it with. Contact Community Access team on 02380 633951 or email [communityaccess@autismhampshire.org.uk](mailto:communityaccess@autismhampshire.org.uk) for an application form. For further details visit <http://www.autismhampshire.org.uk/assets/files/Outreach/Project/Insert%20-%20Community%20Access%20Helpful%20Apps%20&%20Smart%20Phone%20Loans.pdf>.

## 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 now have around 350 books, videos, DVDs and games. 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.

## Calling all coffee drinkers!

Do you, your friends or 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 get TerraCycle points which are converted into cash for us. **To date we have raised over £1200.**

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 situated, please let us know.



## Help us boost our fundraising

A great way to raise money for us for free – shopping online through *easyfundraising*.

Whenever you buy anything online (presents, groceries, clothes, books, train tickets, hotel rooms, etc.) you can raise a free donation for our Branch. Over 2,700 retailers have registered with the site, including Amazon, John Lewis, eBay and Tesco who 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.



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.*