



Issue 5 // Spring 2019

matters

Sharing news of SNAP's (Special Needs And Parents) important work



**CELEBRATING
25 YEARS**

SNAP has now supported over 5,000 families since 1994

Miles of smiles!

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welcome

25 years of family support

Welcome to 2019 and a very special one for SNAP charity. The team is proud to be commemorating the charity's 25th anniversary. SNAP has now supported more than 5,000 families since it began in 1994.

There will be plenty of opportunities to join SNAP in marking its special year. As well as our usual social events and a packed calendar of training opportunities May and June will see some big highlights with a special anniversary Open Day on 22nd May, the SNAP Nuclear 5K is back with some of the team taking part, there will be a new awareness week for our charity and we can excitedly reveal that Clinical Psychologist, Professor Tony Attwood, will be making a welcome return to talk to parents and professionals.

Best wishes,

Karen and Christina

SNAP Managers

If you have any stories you would like to see featured in the magazine, or views on this issue, please contact the SNAP Matters editor, Michelle Andrews - m.andrews@snapcharity.org

Silver coin collection

As part of our silver anniversary celebrations we are asking everyone to collect silver coins throughout the year to help fund our helpline which is a vital source of support for families. You can pick up a special 25th piggy from The SNAP Centre. If you have one of our pigs already then we are happy to bling him/her up 25th style!



about us



Making a difference

Special Needs And Parents - is an Essex charity that helps families with children and young people who have any special need or disability



From its Brentwood base, SNAP offers a helping hand to thousands of families who need support in a variety of ways.

No formal diagnosis or professional referral is necessary to access SNAP services, available to families of children and young people aged 0 to 25. Facilities at the centre include a training room, a multi-purpose activity hall, multi-sensory room and specialist IT suite.

"Our SNAP families are very special and we ensure we deliver a first class support service that builds resilience and empowerment within all members of the family," says Karen Boath, Manager (Families).

"Parents and their children use our facilities and services in a number of ways, and they value the support they receive from SNAP."

SNAP Services

- Helpline and Face to Face Parent Support
- Specialist Talks and Training Courses
- Online Directory and Information Network
- Library of Specialist Books and DVDs
- Parent and Pre-School Children Sessions
- After-school and Holiday Sessions for Children and Young People
- Sibling Support



SNAP contact information:

Call - 01277 211300 Email - info@snapcharity.org

Website - www.snapcharity.org

If this is your first introduction to SNAP then please join our mailing list via our website homepage - www.snapcharity.org

highlights

SNAP's excellence recognised

SNAP scooped a top award at the inaugural Brentwood Chamber of Commerce Awards. The charity won the coveted Not-for-Profit Organisation of the Year Award which recognises the best of Brentwood's charitable and social sector organisations that are making a positive impact on the local community. SNAP's Honorary Life President, Hilary Needham, accepted the award.



"We are truly grateful for the support we receive from the business community that ensures we can continue to support local families and how fabulous to receive this as we embark on our 25th anniversary year."

▼ Focusing on the positive

That was the key message from independent autism expert Geoff Evans when he spoke about challenging behaviours to more than 200 parents and professionals at The SNAP Centre.

Drawing on more than 30 years' experience Geoff delivered three talks on 'A Holistic Approach to Behaviours of Concern, Meltdowns and Closedowns.'

"We all have different thresholds of challenge, some things you can cope with, some you can't, it depends on how you perceive it. We need to be aware of our individual perspective of the behaviour and keep it in perspective.

"To begin to address challenging behaviours in others, we must start by addressing our own well-being, be positive and recognise our own strengths and those in a child with autism. When we see those abilities, it can help us to create coping strategies with them."

Geoff urged his audience to see the environment



from the child's viewpoint and accept their perspective, and find ways to work with it.

"A personalised approach is not about fitting square pegs into round holes, but making that hole bigger. And it's so important that everyone in that child's world is working together – the holistic approach."

"I now understand I need to take care of myself in order to support my child better. I will keep things in perspective while concentrating on the positives."

Geoff will be returning to The SNAP Centre in February - more details on Page 6.



▲ Family fun at Barleylands

Families joined members of the SNAP team at the Barleylands Charity Fun Walk in September. Following the short distance walks of one and three miles families gathered for a well-deserved picnic. The families were sponsored for their efforts and the amount raised was part-matched by the 'charity bonus' accumulated by the event organisers and this all totalled £4,494.



▲ Clubbing together for SNAP

Thorndon Park Golf Club hosted SNAP's 5th annual Golf Day last September and a glorious time on the greens was had by all. 26 teams of three golfers battled it out in a friendly competition with SNAP being the ultimate winner as a fantastic £7,596 was raised.



▼ The icing on the cake!

Homemade cakes and a variety of beverages ensured SNAP's annual Coffee, Cake and Catch-up event was enjoyed by more than 150 supporters who flocked to the centre. New supporters took the opportunity to have a tour of the specialist facilities.

Zoe from Essex County Council's Young Carer's Team was one visitor. "SNAP do a fantastic job, it's great to come and see all the hard work that they do, as well as enjoy the amazing cakes. Roll on the next one," said Zoe.

"We were delighted to extend our usual warm welcome to supporters and we had great feedback from everyone who came along," said Christina Stubbs, Manager (Business).

"The event is always well-attended and it's fabulous seeing so many people in the local community. As well as enhancing SNAP's profile our event also raised just under £2,000 on the day, which will make a big difference to our families."



▲ It was a full house for Comedy Bingo

More than 100 supporters were treated to an evening of laughter courtesy of the entertaining Skittleman who donated his time for free. From doing the conga, to pretending to canoe and a finale with £100 in shopping vouchers to be won the fundraising event raised a magnificent £2,133.

Long-term supporter Julie commented that her table of guests had a great evening: "It was such a fun way to raise money for such a worthy cause."

Pre-school fun at SNAP

SNAP runs a number of different activity sessions for families with a pre-school child with additional needs. It is a chance for parents to chat with each other, use the specialist library and speak to SNAP parent advisers while their children can play in a safe and encouraging environment. SNAP Matters catches up with Family Support Adviser Alison who explains the difference the sessions make...

SNAP on a Monday 12.30pm to 2.30pm in term time

This free play relaxed session gives parents a chance to chat with each other or get support from SNAP parent advisers whilst their children play alongside. Children will have access to a wide variety of toys as well as the centre's specialist facilities. Volunteers are on hand to help and pre-school aged siblings are also welcome to attend these sessions. At the end of the sessions the children are invited to have a drink and a snack around the table together if they would like to and they are also offered the opportunity to join in the musical finale.

Therapeutic Thursdays 12.30pm to 2.30pm in term time

These sessions aim to provide stimulating sensory activities through the use of messy play, music, IT and multi-sensory equipment. Families are allocated one of two courses, dependent on the age and needs of their child. Pre-school aged siblings are also welcome to attend the sessions. These sessions



give parents a chance to chat with each other, as well as use the SNAP library. Volunteers are on hand to help and parent advisers will be available to speak to.

What is there for the children to do in the sessions?

There is an abundance of toys and equipment to support development. From shape sorting puzzles to trikes and trains. Our new soft play area encourages interaction between the children, providing an active indoor space. The sensory room is open for children to use the specialist stimulating equipment supported by one of our experienced volunteers.

As well as all the above in Therapeutic Thursday there is messy play to encourage

exploration. We also have Maggie who provides music throughout the session for the children to engage with songs and instruments.

How does each session support the children?

The sessions encourage interactions between the children and other adults. Children often start in the sessions by playing individually and gradually build up their interaction by playing alongside each other before playing together. The volunteers help to encourage this by being a part of the interactions to enable parents to allow their child to become more independent.

What are the benefits for parents?

Parents are able to use the specialist library, speak to advisers and other parents who understand. Parents often



SNAP on a Monday

"This has helped us to be able to help our son more. Given us more confidence and provided us with sources of information to best care for our son. The sessions have been a blessing to us in so many ways."

Therapeutic Thursdays

"This is the only place where I can talk about my child's needs without being judged or compared to children who do not have autism."

Therapeutic Thursdays

"Meeting other parents who have an immediate understanding of how things can be without judgement is a refreshing and much needed thing for us."

SNAP on a Monday

"There is a really nice relaxed atmosphere at The SNAP Centre and everyone is really helpful and understanding."



say it is the first hot cup of tea they have had in a while!

We can inform them about upcoming training opportunities and events and it's a chance to come to a session where they feel supported and not judged by others which can be the case in mainstream children's sessions.

What's the best thing about each session personally?

Seeing the children develop and progress over time is very fulfilling. Watching their confidence grow and seeing them so pleased to be in a place they feel comfortable.

Amanda who attends Therapeutic Thursdays with her son Noah says he asks to come and see Maggie at SNAP.

"Noah wouldn't interact with adults when he first came to SNAP and now I am able to sit back and relax while he plays with the volunteers and the children.

He has learnt to share and take turns and even help the younger children. His concentration has improved, he now plays with toys rather than throwing



them and his language has developed."

"For me the sessions have stopped me feeling alone. SNAP is a real home from home for us."

Holly brings daughter Rose to the Thursdays sessions too and is delighted to see her daughter smiling and having fun.

"Rose is really interested in things at SNAP and pays attention at music and concentrates longer. It's great for us both and I personally feel really supported at SNAP."

Likewise for parent Natalie.

"From the second I walked into SNAP the staff were so warm and welcoming and I felt like a weight had been lifted. I was able to bring my family along and this gave them a great insight into autism."

"I no longer feel alone or the only one with a difficult child. I'm learning so much from the SNAP team and other parents and the ability to share experiences is invaluable."

"My son Rudy loves the sessions and we both feel included, and not judged by others for his behaviour."

SNAP would like to thank Global's Make Some Noise for supporting SNAP on a Monday and Therapeutic Thursdays.



Essex County Council's Short Breaks and the Rotary Club of Brentwood a Becket awarded a grant to SNAP recently to create and install a soft play area to help encourage social interaction and imaginative play for visiting children.

Working with a specialist equipment company, SNAP created a vibrant and versatile play area that made the most of a small area.

"We really have got the best possible outcome we could have hoped for," said Karen, SNAP Manager (Families).

"Complete with a tower, steps, slide, a secret sensory room to discover and a large area of colourful safety mats that can be removed if the hall needs to be used for another purpose this really is a great addition to our centre."

SNAP Family Support Adviser, Pam is already seeing its positive impact.

"As soon as our families arrive the area becomes a real social hub for the children and this is amazing to see as social interaction can be challenging for many of our children. This new equipment is helping to overcome barriers.

Parent Beth was amazed at her son's transformation as the new equipment was an instant hit with her son.

"It's totally changed how Felix plays and interacts with other children. His first time on it he was playing with two other boys, going up and down and round in circles, giggling and looking them in the eye and engaging with them. He rarely interacts with other children so this was so encouraging to see."

Therapeutic Thursdays

"This session is part of our son's weekly routine and he really looks forward to coming. After he is always content and happy."

SNAP on a Monday

"We need the respite of the calm understanding environment. The broad range of resources available. The opportunity to interact and engage in a supportive environment."

SNAP on a Monday

"Our son has benefitted immensely from the social interactions with staff and other children. The advice and counselling offered here is literally priceless."

Therapeutic Thursdays

"We feel we see a huge difference in our son. He still finds things hard but with the advice given we can deal with things differently and we are all at ease."

Learning to regulate emotions

Parents and Professionals gained an insight into supporting their children understand their emotions when Kathryn and Tanya from the Essex Specialist Teaching Team delivered their talk on The Zones of Regulation (Zones) at The SNAP Centre recently.

The Zones are used as a recognised teaching tool to help children both in the classroom and at home. The system uses effective emotional regulation strategies to problem solve and help children (and adults) understand how their behaviours affect the thoughts and feelings of others.

Through a series of visuals and personal examples they explained how supporting a child in controlling their feelings and giving them tools to help them move between the Zones whilst ensuring they never feel bad about the Zone they are in.

The group also explored the physical effects emotions can have on the body. From feeling 'fizzy' to being 'lethargic'. Parents were keen to share their experiences of how their children feel when in the different Zones and learn practical strategies to help them calm down or energise them for learning.

Due to high demand, SNAP will be welcoming Kathryn and Tanya back in January 2019 to present again so please look out for more details on this.



Fantastic talk delivered by the Specialist teaching team.

The Red Zone - elation, anger, explosive behaviour, devastation

Extremely heightened states of alertness and intense emotions

The Yellow Zone - frustration, anxiety, excitement, silliness, or nervous

Heightened state of alertness and elevated emotions, however one has more control when in this Zone.

The Green Zone - happy, focused, content, or ready to learn

A calm state of alertness - the zone where optimal learning occurs.

The Blue Zone - sad, tired, sick, bored

Low states of alertness and down feelings.

The Zones are similar to traffic signs. When given a green light or in the Green Zone, someone is 'good to go'. A yellow sign means be aware which applies to the Yellow Zone. A red light means stop, and when one is in the Red Zone this is often the case. The Blue Zone is where someone goes to rest or re-energise. All the Zones are natural to experience, but the framework focuses on teaching children how to recognise and manage their Zone based on the environment and its demands and the people around them.

"The Zones of Regulation is a way of life for our family now since being introduced to it by our Occupational Therapist, but I needed more in-depth awareness of this which I received today. Thank you!"

"This has given me a fantastic knowledge of how to start working with the zones of regulation with my son at home and a much broader understanding of dealing with his feelings and where to put them."

Training opportunities for January - April 2019

Sleep Success For Families Of Children With Autism £30 per parent Wed 16th January - 9.30am to 2.30pm

This day workshop will be led by an expert sleep practitioner from The Children's Sleep Charity who has extensive experience of working with children with additional needs.

The day will focus on common sleep issues and strategies to manage these. It will include understanding sleep cycles, establishing routines, keeping sleep diaries and interpreting the data and environments.

Zones of Regulation with Kathryn Miller £5 Tues 22nd January - 7.00pm to 9.00pm

Autism specialist teacher, Kathryn, will be returning to give an overview of how to use The Zones of Regulation to help children develop social, emotional and sensory regulation.

Used in schools across Essex the Zones of Regulation is a practical guide which is designed to help children and young people self-regulate and build emotional control. Suitable for children of primary school age and up.

New Year *New you!*

Style, Colour and Make Up day £10 per parent Wed 30th January - 11.15am to 2.30pm

SNAP parents are invited to experience two great interactive workshops to help you look and feel your best, with make-up artist Leanne Perilly and personal presentation and style coach Elaine Smith.

The day will give you confidence with colour when you shop for clothes and make-up. Learn about:

- How colours harmonise with clothes and make-up
- Top tips for stress free make-up application
- How to be creative with colour

Holistic Approaches to Challenging Behaviour and Meltdowns - Part 2 with Geoff Evans £10 per parent / £25 per professional Wed 27th February - 11.15am to 1.15pm and 7pm to 9pm - Parent Talks 4pm to 6pm - Professional Talk

Independent autism trainer Geoff Evans will be returning to SNAP to present a follow-up talk on holistic approaches to challenging behaviour, meltdowns and shutdowns. He will be providing a range of practical strategies.

The focus of the talk is to understand that behaviours in autism are complex and require a holistic approach that addresses each component of the behaviour and support the person as a whole.

Wills and Trusts £10 per parent Tues 5th March - 7.00pm to 9.00pm

Samantha, from Mullis & Peake solicitors, will be giving guidance on planning for the future.

You may be worried about how your child/young person will manage their financial affairs when you are no longer around and concerned that a large amount of money may leave them in a vulnerable position. You may also be keen to ensure that they continue to receive their benefits but still enjoy their full inheritance.

This talk focuses on providing families with information about writing wills and setting up trusts to benefit their child/young person. Samantha will also discuss Power of Attorney and Court of Protection.

Enhancing Communication Workshop £10 per parent

Wed 20th and 27th March - 9.30am to 12.30pm

SNAP will be hosting a two session course on methods to help support your child's communication.

It will include training on Makaton signing, as well as information around PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System) and Objects of Reference. This practical workshop will help you enhance your child's spoken language as well as exploring non-verbal communication.

There will be crèche facilities available for this course.

fundraising



Left: Luke, Brayden and Forest.
Above: Sage at her science themed party.

Fabulous Forest and friends

Three Basildon boys took to the water for a swimathon to make a splash for SNAP. Forest and two chums - Luke and Brayden - all swim for Basildon and District Swimming Club and when they saw a fundraising Swimathon event advertised, they were keen to take on the challenge, and put their training to good use.

Forest's mum Paula explains what inspired the boys to take on the challenge. "SNAP have supported Forest and our family for a number of years. Forest wanted to raise money for a cause that was personal to him, where he understood how the donations would be used. Forest's friends and their families have seen the support that SNAP provide, and wanted to support a local charity that had made a difference to someone that they knew."

"The terrific trio also set about raising funds too. They started by asking family and adult friends for donations, but as the event started to close in and become more real to them, they asked their own friends and were given some pocket money donations too," explained Paula.

Junior fundraisers making a difference in the community

Forest added: "The swim was hard because it was a long distance and I only had the strength to do it because I knew the money was going to SNAP."

"The swimathon was a positive experience on so many levels. It was fantastic to see Forest enjoying himself with friends, completing the challenge, and starting to understand about doing things which would benefit other people."

Supportive Sage

Kind-hearted Sage made it a birthday to remember for her family and SNAP by asking for donations to the charity in lieu of birthday presents.

"We came up with the idea as a friend of

mine always raises money on his birthday for charities to create a year of good karma. Last year we supported Broomfield Neonatal Unit which saved Sage's life. This year it had to be SNAP," said Sage's mum Natasha.

"SNAP held our hands, educated us, sign posted us and celebrated Sage for being an individual. She attends play sessions which are as much for her as for the parents to network, use their amazing library and make use of the sensory room. Whenever we needed help, there was always a friendly member of the team and a cuppa waiting for us."

Sage had a chemistry birthday party where all the excited partygoers made slime, lemon sherbet, blew smoke rings and learnt about what feeds a fire.

Sage had Indian and British vegetarian food to represent the two families she comes from. She had a traditional Punjabi cake ceremony too where all the kids line up to feed the birthday person some cake.

For us, choosing SNAP was also a part of 'coming out' about her diagnosis publicly.

"It's a brilliant way to fundraise as we are fighting against a material world where duplicate gifts are bought at times. The idea was well received by parents and kids, and was relatively effortless.

Who's talking about SNAP on social media?

f Lorraine We attend SNAP and they are very supportive to all of us. Very friendly atmosphere, everyone is always welcome and the staff and volunteers are amazing.

f Lisa What a fantastic event Coffee, Cake and Catch-up was in true SNAP style! The turnout was certainly testament to how highly you are regarded in the community's esteem! Thank you for your typically super warm SNAP welcome and the gorgeous cakes.

f Suzannah Amazing talk by Geoff Evans, he was brilliant. Made me feel empowered and emotional (in a good way). What a privilege to see him, thanks SNAP.

t Rainer Hughes Thank you so much to @CarltonCole1 and @WestHamUtd for supporting @RainerHughes and @snapcharity at the Christmas Shenfield Fayre

Want to fundraise for SNAP? Visit our website and download SNAP's fundraising pack for inspiration and guidelines - www.snapcharity.org/getinvolved
Contact the Fundraising Team on 01277 245345, or email fundraising@snapcharity.org

Hitting the right note for charity

Danielle and David's efforts

Danielle came up with an ingenious way to raise funds for SNAP and bridge the generation gap at the same time.

"I had parents who came along to our weekly classes with children with special needs and they told me about the wonderful work that SNAP does not only to provide activities for children but to support parents and I was inspired to fundraise for SNAP."

"Several Moo Music franchises around the UK had set up regular classes in care homes a couple of years ago. It sounded so wonderful. I contacted Hutton Village to see if they would like me to come in with a small group of children and they jumped at the chance. We now visit the home every couple of months."

Around a dozen families attend each session. At first Danielle ran the classes for free, for both the care home and the children that attend as she was keen to get involved in some kind of voluntary work.

"I soon thought that we could use this opportunity to raise some money for local charities. We charge £3 per child to attend and we give all of that to SNAP - usually

around £30-£36 per session."

"The residents love seeing all the children and parents singing and dancing together. They really get involved, which is great for their exercises. They help us play instruments, wave pom poms around and have a boogie in their seats!"

"It's so rewarding not only to see how much everybody enjoys the singing and dancing, but the socialising afterwards (the parents and children stay for tea, cake and a natter). It's lovely that I can bring a little bit of joy to everybody's day."

"There are so many small ways in which you can get involved - it doesn't have to be



a big event. Our small sessions might not raise an awful lot of money each time, but as a certain shop would say "every little helps."

David's birthday pledge

An extra special birthday for David gave him the idea of holding a concert in aid of SNAP.

David's musical group - The David Pickthall Big Band - exists with the sole purpose to raise funds for charities in Essex, and has played concerts in aid of SNAP before.

"The idea of celebrating my 60th birthday with a concert met with every one of the 25 players' approval, and we then decided very quickly to split the proceeds 50/50 between SNAP and the Chelmsford Cathedral Choral Foundation, two groups very close to my heart," said David.

"We were delighted that over 250 people attended and had a marvellous night - and that we could then donate £700 to each cause."

If you have any stories you would like us to share in some way please contact the SNAP Matters editor, Michelle - m.andrews@snapcharity.org

Celebrate with us in 2019

SNAP Quiz Night £10 per person
Friday 25th January 2019
The SNAP Centre, Brentwood
 The question is have you got what it takes to win our annual Quiz? Bring your family, friends and work colleagues along to answer questions on a variety of topics, with fun games and top team prizes.



Nuclear Races - throughout 2019
Kelvedon Hatch Nuclear Bunker
 SNAP's Nuclear 5K mud run is taking place again in June 2019 and is perfect for anyone looking for a messy, fun challenge for all levels of fitness. An exhilarating 5K course with obstacles such as the Deathslide and Ziplines over water!

If you don't fancy taking part then how about sponsoring some of our very own SNAP team who will be taking part. Or we are looking for supporters to help out at the nuclear races bag drop events in May, September and November. For every volunteer SNAP receives up to £100!



SNAP Curry Night £20 per person
Thursday 28th February 2019
Indian Night Restaurant, Chelmsford
 Bring your family, friends, and work colleagues along for an Indian feast raising funds for SNAP. Tables of two to 10 people welcome - as an evening out there is naan better!

Shenfield Ball £60 per person
Friday 15th March 2019
Stockbrook Manor, Billericay
 Celebrate SNAP's anniversary by going glam at our stylish ball. Complete with a drinks reception, sumptuous meal and live entertainment plus an auction and raffle.

Brentwood Half-Marathon & Fun Run
Sunday 17th March 2019
Brentwood and surrounding area
 Brentwood is taken over by runners in this popular annual event. We already have a fantastic team of supporters taking part, but we still have some places left if you would like to run for SNAP.

Anniversary Open Day
Wednesday 22nd May 2019
The SNAP Centre, Brentwood
 Join the team in May as we celebrate our 25th anniversary milestone and look ahead to the next 25 years of being an essential part of the local community and beyond.