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welcome

Brighter days ahead at SNAP

Welcome to the summer edition of SNAP Matters - the magazine that's packed full of charity news, information, fundraising challenges and more!

It certainly is wonderful to be welcoming families back to The SNAP Centre, albeit still in individual and soon small group sessions. The SNAP Team are thrilled to see the children and young people enjoying our wonderful facility once more.

Since March 2020 the team have been a hive of activity adapting services and sessions. Look out for our 'Year support in numbers' statistics throughout this issue. Support which so many families tell us is a lifeline in helping them deal with everyday challenges as well as the pandemic.

Two of those core services - our Helpline and Face-to-Face sessions have been the subject of an external evaluation and you can read more on this and download our summary report on page 3.

The SNAP Radio sessions, broadcast live weekly on Facebook, recently celebrated its first anniversary. You can read about the team's recent challenge on page 7.

As we look to a brighter future our Fundraising Team are planning new events - see back page - which we hope our supporters will get behind to help SNAP maintain its position within the community.

Best Wishes, **Karen and Christina,** SNAP Directors



If you have any views on this issue or future stories, please contact SNAP Matters editor, Michelle Andrews - **m.andrews@snapcharity.org**

Special Needs And Parents Ltd Registered Charity No.1077787 A Company Limited by Guarantee in England and Wales No.3805837

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



Sibling Support

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, which is available to families of children and young people aged 0 to 25.

"Our SNAP approach in supporting the whole family unit means we are a reliable constant in their lives and our

experienced team of Family Support Advisers offer an engaging, needs-led, comprehensive service for families," says Karen Boath, SNAP Director (Family Services).

SNAP is currently offering a wide range of services remotely to meet the needs of its families

- Helpline and online Face to Face Parent Support
- Virtual Specialist Talks and Training Courses
- Online Directory and Information Network
- Online Counselling, Benefit and Educational Advice
- Library of Specialist Books and DVD's
- Virtual Parent and Pre-School Children Sessions
- Virtual After-School and Holiday Sessions for Children and Young People

always reassuring me and providing lots of support. Every time I pick up the phone to call SNAP you are always there to listen to all my concerns and help me to answers my questions."

'It means a lot

to me as you are



SNAP contact information: Call - 01277 211300 Email - <u>info@snapcharity.org</u> Website - <u>www.snapcharity.org</u>

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

to say thank you so much for our session. It gave us such a boost seeing you all. My son was so happy and excited to be back!"

"I just wanted



Evaluation gives big thumbs up to SNAP

SNAP's Helpline has been busier than ever over the last year and the team of dedicated Family Support Advisers have responded to 7,358 calls and emails in that time, registering more than 300 new families in the process.

The contribution made by the Helpline and SNAP's Face-to-Face sessions were the focus of an external evaluation, funded by The National Lottery Community Fund, and conducted by evaluation specialists Eastside Primetimers.

Based on a wealth of feedback from parents and carers, the research tells a clear and consistent story of the real and lasting positive impact that SNAP has on family life.

The external evaluator for the report, Neil Smith, found that SNAP occupies a pivotal role in the lives of the families it supports.

"Praise for SNAP is consistently very high. A parent and carer will typically describe their experience as essential, vital and lifesaving. They uniformly report there is no other service like it, and even for those families who are newer to SNAP there is an immediate impact and a 'change of trajectory' as one parent put it."



"Offering Helpline support means I can often be a first line responder to families who have taken the huge step to contact SNAP," says Family Support Adviser Liza. "I am very aware of how daunting this can be and that it often takes a great deal of courage to reach out for support. I want to make it as easy as possible for parents and carers to talk to me and know that I am genuinely there to support and listen. I hope parents feel empowered and less isolated knowing they have the SNAP Helpline available to them."

"Huge thanks to National Lottery players and The National Lottery Community Fund, whose support has been instrumental in helping SNAP support local families," says Sara Clifton, SNAP's Statutory

and Trusts Manager.

"Thanks to Neil Smith for helping us evidence the value and impact of these services and a huge thank you to the SNAP Team, stakeholders and more than 300 remarkable and inspiring families – your thoughtful input is very much appreciated."

You can download the Summary Report here - <u>www.snapcharity.</u> <u>org/externalevaluationreport/</u>

Great mix of online and centre activities

As the country slowly starts to emerge out of lockdown the SNAP Team are gradually re-introducing families back to The SNAP Centre. With individual sessions available since March, the team are now planning small group sessions in the coming weeks.

Once recent beaming visitor to the centre, Thomas, summed up the magic of SNAP on his way home as he proudly carried his box of chocolate rice cakes back into his own home: "Look at what I made at SNAP! It's about a happy Easter because SNAP is a happy place."

The SNAP Team are continuing to offer more in-depth phone and Zoom appointments for families who need enhanced support and are also looking to introduce Face-to-Face opportunities for parents and carers in May.

After-school clubs - Yoga, Drama, Music Therapy and SNAPTASTIC continue to be successfully delivered online with children and young people fantastically embracing accessing the sessions virtually.

SNAP Radio, the weekly Friday Facebook Live music sessions recently celebrated its first anniversary having been broadcasting and bringing families together each week since 24th April 2020.

"It's been absolutely wonderful to have you with us every week for an entire year. It's brought new meaning to the phrase SNAP family," said SNAP parent Liz.

Music Therapist Emily and Dale from the SNAP Radio team delivered extra



families who have children with more profound and complex special needs as they continue to shield and our Music Maker Maggie recorded a mini sensorise session for younger viewers.

The enthusiastic SNAP Team and Emily have even launched a new activity - The SNAP Choir! Running remotely at the moment this session has been well received and the choir even recorded a song for the 24-Hour Kitchen Disco (see more on this on page 7).



The SNAP Team annually produces a Summer Survival Guide packed full of top tips to help support families through the summer holidays. Although this summer may look a little bit different again, SNAP is still on hand with information and ideas. If you have any additions you would like to suggest please email <u>info@snapcharity.org</u>

family services

Here for families during key transitional times

Over the past 27 years, the SNAP Family Team has continued to see clear patterns of when families will often make contact for additional support.

There are key transition points in children and young people's lives when parents seek information and advice on what options are available as well as strategies to support a smooth transition.



You can download our Moving to Secondary School Resource by visiting <u>www.snapcharity.</u> org/need-support/ informing-you-online/ <u>resources-2/</u> The two biggest transition times are the move into secondary education, and options for post 16 and young adult services.

To respond to this, SNAP started running an annual Moving to Secondary School course. This workshop has been run for more than 15 years and adapted for remote delivery in April 2021 to be able to offer the information virtually. You will shortly be able to view the recording of this course.

SNAP has also produced an in-depth Moving to Secondary School guide which complements the sessions information.

"We hope to help parents feel more informed about things to consider when choosing a secondary school for their young person with additional needs and have a clear understanding of the school's duties in regard to supporting those with special educational needs," says Kate, SNAP's Information and Admin Manager.

"The course and our guide look at practical ways to help prepare young people for the transition to their new school, as well as ways to develop new skills that they may need to navigate day to day school life."

To help parents understand the options for post 16 education, employment, housing and



social opportunities, SNAP has previously held its "What's Next?" event, where parents are able to come and speak directly to representatives from a wide range of services that support with this transition.

"As this is not something we can run currently, we are pleased that we have Robyn Steward joining us on 5th May to discuss the range of opportunities out there for young people with additional needs," says Kate.

"As well as our webinars, SNAP has a wealth of information that we can share. Parents can contact us on our phone or email helplines to discuss their specific situation or book >>

Ten Top Transition Tips for Moving to Secondary School

Create a transition book, folder or computer document. Include photos of the new school, names of significant members of staff and other important information such as a uniform and equipment list. Also try to include notes about things that will stay the same, such as friends who will be there, favourite subjects or clubs they can take part in.

2 Familiarise your child with their journey to school. Where to wait for the bus or taxi, and where they will be getting off. It is also a good idea to practise what to do if they/the transport is running late. If your child will be getting to and from school independently, rehearse the route a few times, together at first, and then following them at a safe distance.

Get a map of the school and help your child learn where everything is. Colour coding subjects can be really useful. Using the same colour for the map, lesson timetable, and subject books can help with keeping organised. Corresponding colour coded wallets can be used to store equipment resources for each subject.

Keep a large storage box in a central place at home where each child's school equipment or resources are stored - this 'rule of one place' - avoids the morning rush looking for misplaced homework or items of PE kit.

Use a whiteboard with a weekly or monthly planner to keep details of books/equipment your child will need each day, as well as to remind them about any upcoming events such as school trips, exams or extracurricular activities.

Practise putting on new items of uniform such as a tie or shin pads for PE. Sensory friendly and easy dress uniform can be purchased online. Ensure all uniform and other belongings are clearly labelled with your child's name. Have extra items of uniform and equipment in case the originals are forgotten or misplaced. This takes away the anxiety of being reprimanded for not having the item but make sure to implement the rule that the original must be found the next day at school.

Use post-it-notes, lists and calendar reminders to help promote independent organisation skills.

Practise 'what to do if...' scenarios. Such as 'what to do if you have forgotten your homework; or 'what to do if you are feeling overwhelmed at school.' These can be written down or kept as a note on your child's phone/device.

1 Olt is important to keep good communication with your child, their teachers and the school SENCO. If your child is on a One Plan, termly review meetings should be scheduled.



equally comprehensive **Moving to** Secondary School Guide were produced to give families advice, strategies, further reading links and home learning resources.

<< an extended telephone or Zoom appointment with a Family Support Adviser."

It is often at this time when young people and their families have to make some important decisions about their future and it can be difficult to get a clear picture of what opportunities are available. It may depend on how much support the school or college can give, or whether there is a social worker or Preparing for Adulthood adviser involved to help with the options available.

Some young people may wish to continue their education, whilst others might be keen to start exploring employment, apprenticeships, vocational training or volunteering opportunities. The key time to start planning for adulthood is the Year 9 Annual Review if your son/daughter has an EHCP. The discussions should focus on this preparation and will explore the young person's ideas and thoughts about what they would like to happen in the coming years. Ambitious outcomes should show how they will enable the young person to make progress towards their aspirations.

As adulthood approaches, families often look for ways to increase their young person's independence through accessing social and life skills opportunities. The SNAP Directory has an Into Adulthood category that lists organisations and options relevant to the 16+ age group www.snapcharity.org/directory/

SNAP's 11+ and 16+ Information Networks share articles and notices that are particularly helpful during these key transition stages - <u>www.snapcharity.org/need-support/</u> <u>informing-you-online/information-network/</u>

Year support in numbers

tailored sessions

Parents & families offered individual virtual 'face-to-face' sessions with Family Support Advisers on stressful issues affecting their family.

family services

Help shape SNAP's future from the inside! Have you got what it takes to become a trustee?

SNAP Charity is looking for family trustees to join the board. Here, chair of the trustees, Mandy Carr, talks to SNAP Matters about the role.

"The whole ethos of SNAP and the team is to provide a safe, supportive and friendly environment in some daunting circumstances. This is mirrored by the Trustees who are welcoming and encouraging so that they can collectively support the great work of SNAP and keep it sustainable for many years to come," says Mandy.

What personal commitment do you need to make?

Being a Trustee is definitely rewarding. There is no set time in terms of personal commitment but there are five Executive Committee meetings a year, held in the evenings. There are sub-committees that support the main Board and we ask Trustees to join one of these based on their personal skills or areas that they are interested in. We review these annually so there is a chance to move committees over time. In addition Trustees are asked to attend at least one family session a year, daytime or evening. Beyond this their personal time commitment is up to them, we always welcome help at fundraising events - my speciality is mulled wine at the Shenfield Christmas Fair!

The Trustees are responsible for ensuring the long-term wellbeing of SNAP. There are three overarching areas of work for us - Strategy; to give direction to SNAP and to make major decisions concerning the organisation's objectives, policies and procedures. Governance; to ensure that SNAP works towards its objectives, abides by its governing instrument and obeys the law. Thirdly, Financial Management; to ensure that



resources are managed to best effect and that money and property are wholly used to pursue the objectives of SNAP.

What makes a good trustee?

It is important that Trustees are committed to the objectives and values of SNAP. There are wide ranging discussions at Executive meetings so they must be able to maintain confidentiality on sensitive matters. They must be prepared to analyse information and when necessary challenge constructively. But most importantly they must enjoy working collaboratively.

Do I need to be a registered family to be a trustee?

We would like to be able to include more families in some of the longerterm planning for SNAP. Therefore we would love to talk to people whose family challenges that brought them to SNAP in the first place and who now feel that they could use the knowledge they have gained to benefit others. Without feedback from our families we cannot take SNAP forward and in a way becoming a Trustee is just an extension of that. Behind all discussions is a sound understanding of why SNAP is so vital to so many.

Who is on the Trustee board ?

SNAP's Executive Committee has a balanced mix of parents of children with disabilities and other members of the community, with experience in finance, health and law. There are currently ten trustees but we wish to increase this to 12 if we can. Each of us brings our own life experiences to the team so we are able to draw on a wide range of skills and knowledge to support SNAP's Directors.

Will there be an induction to help them understand the responsibilities?

Yes, we have a full Trustee induction pack/process and every aspect of the role is covered so that new Trustees are welcomed into the team and we are quickly able to use their expertise.

If you would like more details please email info@snapcharity.org

"My heart is filled with warmth seeing Thomas laugh"

SNAP parent Rebecca shares her experiences with SNAP

"SNAP came to our aid when our autistic son Thomas, 10, had been let down by other support services. We had been left with no school placement or alternative provision due to our son's unique complex needs. Social services declined our plea for help and we were on a long list for mental health assessment.

"When I had lost hope and confidence in myself to advocate for my child and feeling exhausted with feeling unheard, SNAP advised us and this gave me confidence that someone was on our side and listening to our concerns.

"Due to past experiences, my son had lost trust with adults and has developed significant social phobia around children, so we couldn't join any home education groups or extra curricular activities. One-to-one sessions were proving hard to arrange and the national lockdown just made everything worse. He was completely isolated. SNAP offered one-to-one play sessions with Family Support Adviser Dale which have been amazing for him.

"SNAP also organised some counselling sessions for me during Thomas' session which are really helping. I'd still be waiting for help elsewhere. Best of all, I don't have to worry about Thomas as I know he's



having a great time with Dale.

"When you are down and have nowhere to turn and think all is lost, SNAP pull you up and give you the emotional support needed to get you back on track to fight the system another day.

"As a parent of a child with complex needs, despite trying our best and reaching out for help, it felt like everyone who was supposed to advise us just kept passing us on to another service, but not SNAP. They wrapped their arms around us and said: 'We can see what you're going through and we are here for you.' It was such a relief to be able to share any issues with the SNAP Team. Like many, I have struggled with my mental health over lockdown, especially not been able to access support for my family, so being able to contact the team has been a lifeline, giving me the strength to keep going.

"It has been AMAZING coming to The SNAP Centre. Thomas wants to go out everyday, but his social anxiety is so extreme everything has to be planned. We don't have family outings. Our trips to the playground are when no other children are there.

"Being able to come to SNAP has allowed us to get out of the house and interact socially in a safe, non-judgemental environment. Dale knew how to engage with Thomas from the start, taking his lead and showing an interest in his interests. It has allowed much needed breathing space for me and my heart is filled with warmth seeing Thomas laugh and smile when he is with Dale.

"During the lockdown, it also allowed time for Thomas' younger sibling to spend some quality time with his father at home, without having Thomas trying to control him as a result of his anxieties.

"Thomas always comes out of his sessions relaxed and happy. He loves the quiet, open space, the soft play area and the sensory room, but mostly chatting to Dale. Thomas' sessions at SNAP have allowed him to start trusting adults again and we will be eternally grateful to SNAP for the compassion they show Thomas and our family.

lear support

in numbers

A programme of 20 Specialist Talks delivered via Zoom webinar so far

with a new Summer term calendar of talks launching

soon on a range of

relevant topics.



SNAP is pleased to offer the opportunity to access our specialist talks via online webinar. These will take place via the Zoom app. If you are interested in accessing any of our previous webinars please contact info@snapcharity.org with your request.

SNAP Registered Parents Cost per webinar: £5.00. Parent/Carer/Family Not Registered with SNAP:£10.00 and Professional: £15.00

Robyn Steward - Transition to Adulthood Wednesday 5th May 11.00am to 1.00pm or 7.00pm to 9.00pm

SNAP welcomes back Robyn Steward, who will be taking a look at the different opportunities for young adults with additional needs. Robyn will look at choices for post-16 education, as well as pathways into employment. She will also explore options when it comes to housing, independence and building relationships.

Dean Beadle - Autism and Anxiety

Wednesday 9th June 11.00am or 7.00pm In this practical and interactive session, Dean will give a personal perspective on autism and anxiety. He will begin by addressing potential causes for anxiety. He will then move on to look at ways to support autistic people through anxiety as well as sharing thoughts on how to modify the environment to prevent anxiety occurring initially. Dean will then close by looking at autistic joy and the profound impact it has on wellbeing.

Navigating School Support for Children with Additional Needs Wednesday 26th May 11.00am and 7.00pm

This talk, in partnership with Kathryn Miller, will seek to explore 'reasonable adjustments' in schools' provisions, thinking through legal requirements of the SEN Code of Practice, how schools manage their SEN provisions, SEN Support Registers

Code of Practice, how schools manage their SEN provisions, SEN Support Registers and Education, Health and Care Plans. Looking at one planning, person centred and annual reviews to ensure that you are able to engage with these processes, know your child's rights and feel empowered.

Can't Eat, Won't Eat

Wednesday 23rd June 11.00am

This talk, in partnership with Kathryn Miller, will explore a range of reasons children might refuse certain foods, restrict their diet and not mix different food types. It will look at developing understanding and empathy for children with restricted diets and strategies to start to explore causes of this as well as helping children to become more flexible with foods they will accept.

Going to School

Wednesday 7th July 11.00am to 1.00pm

This talk will focus on helping children to make that first transition from Pre-school to Reception Class. We will cover a range of strategies for parents to support their child with additional needs in the move to Primary School.





March-ing to make a difference

One SNAP family used the month of March to put their best feet forward and make a real difference to SNAP.

The Crick family embarked on a 250 mile adventure to raise funds for SNAP after being challenged by grandparents John and Mari-Carmen.

"We decided to call it March to 250," explained mum Helen.

"Using the month of March for the children to achieve their grandad's challenge of walking, biking or running a combined total of 250 miles in that month. The month greatly coinciding with coming out of lockdown and back to school.

"It came about after my wonderful parents, realising that lockdown was tough for everyone yet more so for those with learning difficulties in sheltered accommodation and care homes, decided to team up with their local coffee shop, donating monthly cream teas which they helped to prepare and deliver to residents of five care homes/ sheltered accommodation for people with learning difficulties in the Southend area. All done anonymously.

"My parents then decided that they would

like to challenge their grandkids and sponsor them for a charity challenge. A donation to a charity of the family's choice. No doubt in our minds, a charity close to our hearts is SNAP."

SNAP has supported the family for the last eight years.

"I have attended many talks and coffee mornings, asked many a question, used the library and the experience and knowledge of those that work there. My children have all made use of the sessions that are on offer to us including the SIBS4FUN Week for my younger two over the years."

"The children completed their mission by biking, walking and running and we as parents and their grandparents are very proud that they completed it."

"We are delighted to support SNAP with a donation of £1,000," said grandparent John.

"The warmth and energy from The SNAP Centre is apparent as soon as you walk through the doors. We'd like to thank all who work and volunteer at SNAP: you care for our very special young people, help them to develop in a happy environment and you enrich their lives."

Emily's musical marathon is a smash hit

Music therapist Emily' got by with a little help from her friends' to complete a 24 Hour Kitchen Disco Challenge for SNAP.

Emily's musical marathon – held live and virtually from The SNAP Centre on 5th March - lasted 1,440 minutes and was viewed by the charity's families, supporters and the wider community.

She was supported by Director of Family Services, Karen, and Family Support Adviser, Dale, who join Emily each week to bring 'Radio SNAP' to Facebook Live.

A tired but euphoric Emily was blown-away by the reaction to her disco endeavours: "It's been phenomenal, emotional and the most amazing experience. Hearing everyone's lovely comments and knowing that families were singing and dancing at home really helped spur us on."



"I never imagined we would raise such a phenomenal amount of money. I believe music speaks to us all and that it can genuinely change lives.

"I would like to thank everyone who helped to make the 24-hour Kitchen Disco fundraiser as incredible as it was - Karen, Dale, the SNAP Team, the various performers that joined me, our sponsors, those who tuned in at various stages and those who stayed up with us for the whole 24 hours," added Emily.

Karen said the event highlighted the love for SNAP in the community. "I was completely overwhelmed by the support we had and how special it was. The love for SNAP was absolutely immense the whole way through and it was a magical event to be part of and something I will never forget. Every donation is greatly appreciated and we are hugely grateful to Emily."

SNAP Parent Lisa said: "We have all been blown away by your magnificent efforts over the years. This is outstanding in every possible respect! Thank you so, so much on behalf of all the families who desperately need this incredible service. You raised so much money, a testament to how highly regarded SNAP is."

Parent Liz added: "Well done to everyone



involved and for giving us one of the most memorable times in lockdown 2021."

Early plans are in place to repeat the musical marathon in 2022.

The fundraising total currently stands at more than £12,500. You can still donate by visiting <u>https://bit.ly/3tPHyNq</u>

To join the gang on SNAP Radio on any Friday at 9.30am go to - <u>www.facebook.</u> <u>com/SnapCharity</u>

fundraising



The Fun Walk Trust are once again encouraging families to take on a virtual walk of their choosing, anytime in September, to raise money for local charities. A bonus pot donated by local businesses adds to any money raised. Last year we collectively clocked up enough miles to reach Lapland from The SNAP Centre, how far can we get this year with your help? Contact the Fundraising Team for details.

Your small change can help make a big difference

The Pennies from Heaven fundraising scheme enables employees to donate to charity without feeling a financial pinch.

Once an employer has signed up to the scheme, employees can join and have pennies from their salary automatically deducted each month. For example, an employee who earns £850.34 a month would keep the £850 and donate the 34p to SNAP.

The LV= office in Brentwood has supported SNAP through this enterprise and donated a fantastic £2,136.15 during the last year.

"It's something that we have been doing across LV= for 10 years, which has allowed us to support lots of different charities close to our offices," said team member Hazel.

"A colleague in the office brought SNAP to the attention of our Charity Committee a few years ago and we've had a good relationship ever since,



Donate when working

supporting when we can and keeping in regular contact."

"LV= cares about building strong relationships with our local communities and finding ways to make a difference to the people who live in the towns and villages near our offices.

"Pennies from Heaven allows our people to donate the odd pennies from their net monthly pay and anyone can sign up to it. It's a great way to support local charities regularly."

Contact SNAP's Fundraising Team for more information.

Help support SNAP every time you shop! Same products, same

amazonsmile

prices, same service. Make a purchase on Amazon and they will donate 0.5 per cent of the price of your eligible purchases to SNAP at no cost to you. Visit: https://amzn.to/3gqJNCT Just start your online shopping first at easyfundraising, then



Donate when shopping

shop as normal. There's more than 5,148 well-known retailers to choose from. Retailers will then make a small donation to SNAP. Visit: https://bit.ly/32wr00Y

For further ways to get involved contact SNAP's Fundraising Team 01277 245345 fundraising@snapcharity.org