



Issue 4 // Autumn 2018

matters

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

INSIDE:
Find out how
SNAP stays
strong for
Essex families



Family First!

INSIDE
THIS ISSUE

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welcome

First Birthday for our magazine

SNAP Matters is celebrating its first anniversary with this issue. We hope you enjoy reading it as much as we enjoy the production process and having the opportunity to bring so much information and inspiration to you all.

Following a packed calendar of summer activities - see page 5 - our family team is working hard to bring you a wide variety of activities and support services for the new term, and our fundraising team are planning opportunities and inspiration for our supporters, including dusting off their festive jumpers in time for our Christmas activities in the community - see page 8.

We will also be adding even more content to SNAP's new website. In the last few days we have added short films that explore our specialist library and multi-sensory room. If you haven't taken a look yet, then we have a quick guide on page 3.

And don't forget to join us for one of our favourite days, SNAP's Coffee, Cake and Catch-up on Wednesday 7th November at The SNAP Centre between 11am and 2pm. This annual event brings together families, friends, volunteers and supporters - both old and new - to catch-up with the SNAP team in the warm surroundings of our pop-up cafe. Plus, there's a chance to start some early Christmas shopping! Please do let us know if you can join us.



Best wishes,
Karen and Christina
SNAP Managers

Special Needs and Parents Ltd
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Registered Office: The SNAP Centre
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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."

The SNAP Centre offers a wide range of services

Parent Advice and Support

- Helpline (email and telephone)
- Face to Face Parent Support
- Specialist Talks and Training Courses
- Library of Specialist Books and DVDs
- Website with SNAP Directory of useful contacts
- OnLine Information Network
- Counselling
- Education Advice Sessions

Activities

- Parent and Pre-school Children's Sessions
- Music, Yoga, Drama and Activity Groups
- Holiday Sessions
- SNAP+ (for older children and young people)
- Sibling Support
- Multi-Sensory Room
- Specialist IT Suite



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

Taking a tour of SNAP's new website

The SNAP team has completely re-imagined the website, and the result brings families even more help, available at the touch of a button! Michelle Andrews, SNAP's Events and Marketing Officer: "The new site is warm, bright, vibrant and easily accessible, allowing users access to a wide range of online resources. We worked closely with Brentwood based digital agency Blue Serif to produce a site which is visually appealing, reflects our values and unique feel and becomes even more of an important online information portal."

Here's just some of the improved key areas:

SNAP Directory

Karen, Manager (Families)

"With more than 1,500 entries and growing, this comprehensive **Directory** of useful contacts is now more user friendly. The search facility allows you to browse by keyword, location or condition. Alternatively, you can look at our 13 categories covering areas such as education advice, therapy services and more.

All entries are tagged with age relevance and list everyone in Essex concerned with the welfare of children and young people with special needs and disabilities. You can also submit an entry."

Get Involved

Rob, Fundraising Co-ordinator

"Supporting SNAP has never been easier! Whether you want to fundraise, raise awareness or volunteer our re-vamped **Get Involved** area is packed with ideas and case studies for inspiration. All areas have online contact forms, and you can download our new fundraising packs full of top tips and promotional materials to help get you started. Our events calendar has a range of activities and social events that you can join."

Information Network and Downloadable Resources

Kate, SNAP's Information & Admin Co-ordinator

"Our **Information Network** updates you on a fortnightly basis with information relevant to children and young people with additional needs. Information includes social and training opportunities, relaxed performances and events.

There's instant access to **resources** that may offer help with common issues with our downloadable information sheets as well as our Christmas and Summer Survival Guides. Key organisation numbers can also be found here."

Our Impact

Christina, Manager (Business)

"**Our Impact** area sets out SNAP's vision to provide a safe environment offering a wide range of support and specialist services with the aim to increase resilience and empowerment within our families. Rolling statistics gives you an insight into how SNAP has helped families over the years. As we approach our 25th anniversary you can also take a look at our **history**."



Training opportunities for Sept - Dec 2018

How to Get the Best out of your Professional with Rachel Wright £10.00 Wed 26th September – 12.30pm to 2.30pm

Rachel Wright, author of 'The Skies I'm Under', will be speaking to parents about useful strategies to ensure they are getting the best out of the professionals who work with their family. Rachel uses her first-hand experience to empower parents when working with the professionals who support their child.

Parent Time: £5.00 Wed 3rd October – 11.15am to 1.15pm

Informal discussion event for parents with a child in the first few years of primary school. A great opportunity to meet other families in a similar situation and share experiences.

SNAP will be joined by Debra from Families in Focus who provide independent support to parents in Essex on special educational issues.

Eating Talk with Tanya Cotier: £5.00 Wed 10th October – 9.30am to 11.30am

Tanya Cotier, autism and social communication specialist teacher, will be helping families understand how to support children on the spectrum with eating difficulties and sharing strategies to encourage a varied diet.

This is not a substitute for medical advice. If you are concerned about your child's eating behaviour or nutritional intake contact your GP or other health professionals.

Holistic Approaches to Challenging Behaviour and Meltdowns with Geoff Evans £10 per parent / £25 per professional Wed 17th October – 11.15am to 1.15pm and 7pm to 9pm - Parent Talks 4pm to 6pm – Parents/Professional Talk

Independent autism trainer Geoff Evans will present his talk on holistic approaches to challenging behaviour and meltdowns.

Drawing on over 30 years' experience Geoff will discuss what contributes to challenging behaviour in autism, and provide a range of practical strategies that support with behaviour, meltdowns and shutdowns.

Zones of Regulation with Tanya Cotier and Kathryn Miller £5.00 Wed 21st November – 11.30am to 1.30pm

Tanya and Kathryn, autism specialist teachers, will present an overview of how to use The Zones of Regulation to help children develop social, emotional and sensory regulation.

Used in many schools across Essex, The Zones of Regulation is a practical guide designed to help build emotional control. It combines a range of strategies to help teach children and young people to identify and regulate their emotions. For primary school age and up.

Girls on the Autism Spectrum Coffee Morning £5.00 Wed 28th November – 11.15am to 1.15pm

SNAP is inviting families with daughters on the spectrum to come in and share their experiences, with an opportunity to raise questions and use SNAP's resource library.

Special School Coffee Morning £5.00 Wed 5th December – 11.15am to 1.15pm

Giving families whose child attends special school a chance to come in for an informal catch up and share experiences. SNAP parent advisers will be on hand and our specialist library will be available.

SNAP's warm welcome is perfect for families

The SNAP Centre is full of life during our activity sessions as children and young people can play and learn in encouraging surroundings. This means parents and carers can relax knowing that their children are in a safe and non-judgemental environment. This time is invaluable as it gives parents time to talk to SNAP's Family Support Advisers about concerns, and the chance to share experiences with other families in similar situations.

Heidi and Dan from Chelmsford have been coming to SNAP for the last couple of years with their two sons, Frank and Timothy and are very appreciative of the support of SNAP. Heidi has made some good friendships with other SNAP families, and indeed, as SNAP Matters talks to Heidi during a recent summer holiday session she is just filling in a new parent on everything that SNAP can help with.

"We have a WhatsApp group and we often use this to share advice on concerns, triumphs and funny stories we have about our children. No-one completely understands unless you are in the same boat," said Heidi. "We also meet up for lunch sometimes too, and I've recently introduced a friend to SNAP."

"There is nowhere else like The SNAP



Centre, it's wonderful to be able to come here and the whole family is supported. It's clear to see that the team and volunteers here are so caring and passionate about supporting us, Frank and Tim pick up on that too. Tim always asks what he is doing in one sleep and the top three are holiday, CBeebies and SNAP, while Frank jumps up



TOP RIGHT: Heidi and Frank enjoy a game with Pam, one of SNAP's Family Support Advisers who are on hand at all SNAP sessions. ABOVE LEFT AND RIGHT: Friendships forged at SNAP - groups attended SNAP's fundraising and social Curry Evening earlier this year.

SNAP's adult yoga classes - your flexible friend

SNAP runs both young people and parent yoga sessions at The SNAP Centre. SNAP Matters talks to resident yoga teacher, Sarah, about the enjoyment and well-being benefits of attending our weekly sessions.

"I have been practising yoga for more than 25 years, and teaching for around 17 years. I was drawn to try yoga after I had my children, as a gentle way to get back to fitness and to find some time and space for myself. I felt so good after my first class - I had to keep going.

Our adult classes take the form of a gentle mindful strengthening and stretching practice, helping the participants gently improve their fitness and mobility. People are often concerned that they need to be flexible to attend - yoga can be done sitting in a chair for those with less mobility, or using other forms of support to help us to gain greater flexibility - the idea is that yoga will help people improve flexibility, not that you have to be flexible to begin with! Our sessions at SNAP are very relaxed, informal and inclusive.

The session usually starts with checking in with how we are feeling internally, noticing our breathing and just learning to pause for a few moments to ground ourselves. We will then move on to gentle floor or chair based postures that will stretch and strengthen the spine and the core, before moving through postures on our hands and knees, and standing postures before finishing with a period of relaxation. The group is very supportive

and the class is suitable for anyone with or without experience.

Yoga has a multitude of health benefits from the strengthening and stretching of the muscles and joints as already mentioned, to bringing greater agility, mobility and stability into the body. Deep breathing and connecting to our breath as we move helps to lower adrenalin levels, and calm the nervous system, helping us to let go of stress. Yoga helps us to notice our thoughts and habits, and how these have an impact on our well-being.

In our young people sessions we work in a similar format and they learn to notice their bodies, emotions and feelings, and how to self regulate, to notice stress and anxiety, and learn techniques to help them deal with these things. All presented in a fun, active and interactive way."

Yoga helps us to understand and become aware of our bodies, our posture, our breathing, and how this impacts on our health and well-being - this is something that we can then take into our everyday life.

Many students regularly practise some of the simple relaxation techniques outside of the class.

"I continue to both enjoy and benefit in terms of general well-being - quite substantially by following these sessions - really brilliant - thank you."

SNAP's Adult Yoga Classes are held weekly during term time on a Friday at 9.30am to 10.30am. If you are interested in coming along for a taster session please contact The SNAP Centre on 01277 211300, or email info@snapcharity.org



and down with excitement when you tell him we are off to the The SNAP Centre.

"We have attended several of SNAP's training courses recently and we put into practice strategies that these courses have taught us. We have also had face-to-face sessions and read books from the specialist library. There aren't enough words to describe how fantastic it is to be able to come here. My husband Dan is my number one hero, but after that the SNAP team are among the few heroes our family has up there with the surgeons that saved Tim's life!"

Simone who attends SNAP with her son, Hashim, appreciates the benefit of being able to chat to SNAP's Family Support Advisers during sessions.

"It's comforting to know there is an open ear to be a soundboard and I appreciate the very good advice given."

Sharing information

Liz and her daughter attend one of SNAP's weekly activity sessions for older children. Liz's family have made some very special friendships with other families at SNAP since they started coming to the centre just over a year ago.

"We share information, resources and ideas with our friends, and this has made such a difference to our family. The support and advice given from the team is amazing. Keep up the excellent work, it is much appreciated!"

The support and happiness shared by families is very fulfilling for the SNAP team as Family Support Adviser, Pam explains:

"I love seeing the joy on the children and young people's faces when they see staff, volunteers and friends they have made at The SNAP Centre - it's very special. Our activities and sessions are a great time for parents to catch up with each other in a relaxed atmosphere knowing their children are safe and everyone around them is understanding. Parents can catch up with the SNAP Parent Support Advisers with their successes and any challenges they may be facing."



Summer Holiday activities!



The SNAP Centre has been full of smiles and laughter over the school summer holiday period. Every member of the family is able to attend our activity sessions, and SNAP families are very appreciative of having such a safe and welcoming environment to come to as these quotes reflect:

"My son was so excited to come back to SNAP today. He's been counting down the hours since he got up!"

"We have been attending the summer Diddlies sessions at SNAP for the last couple of weeks, and it's been wonderful so far. My son is in the process of being diagnosed and it is such a relief to be somewhere non judgemental where he can be free and I can relax! It's a very warm and friendly environment, both the staff and other parents have been amazing.

We have received a lot of support so far with the diagnosis process, and I know that they are always on hand if we need anything. It has been lovely just to be able to talk to people who understand and relate to what we are going through.

As a bonus, the facilities at SNAP are excellent. My son especially loves the sensory room (I could spend all day in there myself!), and there's plenty of space for all sorts of different activities. I only wish we'd discovered SNAP sooner!"

"I just wanted to say thanks for making my daughter and I feel so welcome this summer. It's such a lovely atmosphere where you can chat to staff, volunteers, parents we know or who are new to us. She always has a great time and remembers where everywhere thing is and homes in on anything new! So thank you to everyone, your continued hardwork is really appreciated."



highlights



▼ Afternoon Tea and Curry Evening success

More than 150 supporters attended SNAP's Curry Evening in May and Afternoon Tea in June.

SNAP's Curry Evening held at Indian Night restaurant in Chelmsford raised a fragrant £1,278 as supporters enjoyed a tasty banquet of food. SNAP's Afternoon Tea held at the historic De Rougemont Manor in Brentwood delighted attendees with sandwiches, cakes and warm scones. Some guests added extra sparkle with a glass of prosecco and a fantastic total of £1,844 was raised.

Michelle Andrews, SNAP's Events and

Marketing Officer said: "It has been a great first half of the year for our SNAP social events. Since January we have entertained almost 400 supporters at our Quiz Night, Wine Tasting, Curry Evening and Afternoon Tea events and raised almost £8,000 to date.

"This fantastic total has put a spring in our step for working on our next events further on in the year, Comedy Bingo, Golf, and our Coffee, Cake and Catch-up event. And we are also embarking on our plans for 2019 when SNAP will be celebrating its 25th Anniversary."



▲▼ The SNAP Centre welcomes the summer

SNAP kicked off a super summer of fun with two of our families' annual favourites in June. Our teddy bear's picnic for our pre-school children saw 30 children enjoy playing, crafts, games, music making and a picnic. As well as sharing the fun with a host of bears, The SNAP Centre also had a special visit from Larry the London Bus who invited everyone to come on board, and handed out books about his adventures. A couple of days later SNAP's Summer Disco saw 27 young people dance the summer night away, with some awesome freestyle dancing and some guests even rocking the mic!



◀ Preparing for Adulthood event

SNAP welcomed more than 40 fantastic organisations to The SNAP Centre in mid June for our What Next? Preparing for Adulthood event. Parents and carers of young parents aged 14+ got the opportunity to find out about options available to them. We received some brilliant feedback from our families:

"Prior to SNAP's What Next? event things were looking uncertain for both my children, but now as a result of being able to meet such a variety of organisations things have improved significantly - thank you," said one grateful attendee."

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▼ Smiles all round as families enjoy great day out

Some of our SNAP families enjoyed a great day out this summer with members of the SNAP Family Team. In May, there was animal magic with a trip to the Zoo made possible by Brentwood á Becket Rotary Club, and in June a trip to Legoland was great fun for a second group of children thanks to Brentwood Rotary Club.

Daniel and daughter Rosie summed up everyone's feelings:

"Thank you for an amazing day, we had a wonderful time, thank you for making it all possible."



fundraising

Events not to be missed

SNAP Comedy Bingo, £10 per person
Friday 16th November 2018

Shenfield Parish Hall, Shenfield

Eyes down for a great evening of Bingo with added comedy from Skittleman.

Tables of up to eight people. Please bring your own drinks and nibbles.

Contact events@snapcharity.org to book.

SNAP Coffee, Cake and Catch-up, £3 per person inc drink and a cake
Wednesday 7th November 2018

The SNAP Centre, Brentwood

SNAP invites everyone to drop in for a catch-up with the team. Plus a chance to start your Christmas shopping.

Contact events@snapcharity.org to book.

Calling our festive friends!

Christmas is the busiest time of year for SNAP's fundraising as each year many of our supporters see the festive season as the perfect opportunity to give their time and money to help SNAP. Whether you would like to get involved with one of our events, or have a fundraising idea of your own we would love to hear from you.

COME AND SAY HELLO AT THE SNAP STALL

Lighting-up Brentwood, Saturday 24th November 2018
Brentwood High Street 1pm-5.30pm

Shenfield Christmas Fayre, Sunday 9th December 2018,
around Hutton Road Shenfield 12pm-5.30pm

Santa Fun Run, £25 /Adult/£10 Children
Sunday 2nd December

Victoria Park, London

Get sponsored to run, jog or walk 5K or 10K around one of London's beautiful royal parks in a Santa costume.

Christmas Jumper Day, Friday 7th December 2018

Whether with your family, friends, school pupils, work colleagues or community group chums this is a great chance to dress silly, have a laugh, and raise funds.

PLUS From mid-September you can download our Strictly Come Dancing sweepstake pack from our website.

SNAP celebrates 25th anniversary in 2019!

Over the coming months we will be unveiling our plans to mark this major milestone and we hope everyone involved with SNAP, and the local community will be part of our celebrations. Here's a few of the familiar ways you can help our fundraising in 2019 to ensure we can continue to be there for families throughout Essex in the next 25 years and beyond.

SNAP Quiz Night, £10 per person
Friday 25th January 2019
The SNAP Centre, Brentwood

Shenfield Ball, £60 per person
Friday 15th March 2019
Stockbrook Manor, Billericay

Brentwood Half-Marathon & Fun Run
Sunday 17th March 2019
Starts and finishes near Brentwood High St

Supporters are mud for it!

A team of 29 SNAP supporters braved the infamous muddy Nuclear Races obstacle course and raced five kilometres through the thick stuff to raise funds for us in June.

The course, in Kelvedon Hatch, is known for its mud and by the end of the event, every one of our intrepid adventurers was covered in it! But getting caked in mud paid off – our SNAP muddy marvels raised an impressive £3,661, proving where there's muck, there's brass.

For Julie Kelly, the day was a great experience. "The best part was laughing at each other

along the way. We would definitely recommend the event as it is a real challenge regardless of how fit or unfit you are, and it gives you a massive sense of achievement – what a wonderful way to raise money.

Mud-caked Emily Grimes, also said it was an experience she won't forget. "I enjoyed giving the obstacles a go and it was amazing crossing the finish line... and the shower and cuppa were even better!"

Added Emily: "The best bit was the water activities – I loved the deathslide and zipwire and the feeling of flying through the air and swimming. The worst bit was getting stuck in the mud!"

Teammate Ben agrees the best bits were the deathslide and ziplines, with balancing obstacles proving the most tricky. "The experience was really positive and welcoming. The camaraderie was great and I hope it grows each year because it is really fun!"



Emily and her friends received a certificate for taking part and over a cold beer reflected on their reasons for taking part.

She said: "SNAP is a very special charity close to my heart and this was a special way of raising funds. Having the event purely for SNAP was such a good idea, as well as it being a personal challenge!"

"I'm not the fittest of people but am up for a challenge and what better way to get people to donate than to push yourself out of your comfort zone whilst looking like a muddy idiot."

"By doing it as a team we got to have fun together and I'd do it again in a heartbeat!"

The SNAP Nuclear 5K will be back in 2019.

Can you help?

Nuclear Races has given us an exciting opportunity to raise money for SNAP by helping out at their **event bag drops**.

For every volunteer that helps on Saturday 3rd November they will make a donation of up to £100! Contact Fundraising to find out more.

For more information on these events, or other ways to get involved contact SNAP's Fundraising Team 01277 245345 fundraising@snapcharity.org or visit www.snapcharity.org/getinvolved