Calling all SNAP’s friends to join our special year

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Making a difference
Special Needs And Parents is an Essex charity which 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.

“WeOur 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 offers an engaging, needs-led, comprehensive service for families,” says Karen Boath, Director (Family Services).

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 213300 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

Welcome
SNAP’s Directors Karen Boath (Family Services) and Christina Stubbs (Finance and Fundraising) talk to SNAP Matters about the charity’s vision and special Anniversary.

How does SNAP meet the demands of families?

SNAP families inform the support and services we provide. We are always looking to improve what we’re offering families and we work hard to ensure that their feedback is reflected in our planning for the future.

Karen SNAP’s support also evolves over time, alongside each family. Often this is simply because as children grow up, the challenges that they and their parents face change. We work closely with families to ensure that the advice and information we provide is helping them to address these issues and enable them to confidently make choices for and with their child or young person.

What is the impact of SNAP?

Our ultimate aim is to help families help themselves. All of the support we provide, be that an activity session for their child, a helpline telephone call during a low moment, or just borrowing a book from the library; SNAP is there to support parents and carers find the tools and knowledge they need to ensure they can give the best possible help to their whole family.

Karen We make sure that anyone coming to the SNAP Centre feels welcome and that by the time they leave, they feel more positive about their circumstances and able to cope.

How can members of the local community help SNAP?

Karen Volunteering is a great way to help and our volunteers are truly the life blood of SNAP. We wouldn’t be able to cope without them.

Christina We cannot continue to support so many Essex families without the help of our volunteers and supporters. Thank you to everyone who has supported us in the past - we could not have made it to 25 years without you.

How proud are you of the difference SNAP makes?

Karen I am so proud of the difference SNAP has made. It has been a privilege to be able to work with all of our SNAP families and watch their children grow and develop over the years. It’s hard to believe how quickly SNAP has grown too. It’s very exciting to hit this milestone and take a moment to look back at everything we have done. It’s a reminder of the progress we’ve made and will give us the momentum to see us into our next chapter.

What are the future goals?

Christina We want SNAP to continue to be here for families who have a child or young person with an additional need or disability and for them to know that they are not alone.

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

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Events kick-start fundraising year
More than 200 supporters attended SNAP’s Quiz and Curry Night held in the first two months of 2019. The two popular events fabulously raised almost £5,000, with attendees enjoying a great social evening with family and friends.

“Great night, varied questions, great pace, enjoyable marathon rounds and fun games; we will be back next year,” said one quiz goer.

Guests at the Curry Night meanwhile, enjoyed authentic food and were entertained by the restaurant’s resident magician.

Workshop wows ‘new you’ parents
The SNAP Centre was alive with a myriad of colours and confident smiles during our ‘New Year, New You’ event.

Make-up artist Leanne Perilly and style coach Elaine Smith delivered interactive workshops to help parents enhance their look and feel their best.

Parent, Alison, found the session very enjoyable: “It was nice to have something completely mummy focussed,” said Alison. While fellow attendee Paula thought the session were “very useful for everyone, and particularly the discussions around confidence.”

Elaine was pleased with the day: “Leanne and myself very much enjoyed the day and it was a privilege to meet so many enthusiastic women.”

A marathon effort
SNAP supporters were once again pounding the streets to raise funds and awareness for the charity in March taking part in the Brentwood Half Marathon. Junior and adult SNAP family members joined hundreds who took on the half marathon or three-mile fun run.

Emily and Steve Webster were running the 13.1 miles for the first time and were stoked to finish in two hours and 22 minutes. They were inspired to raise funds for SNAP because the charity has supported their family since one of their three boys, Kieran, was diagnosed with a brain tumour seven years ago.

“Everything at SNAP is accessible for Kieran and the team have always been at the end of the phone for us to off-load,”

“On the morning of the run we were both a little nervous - having had so much sponsorship there was no backing out now.

“We had mile dedications, the numbers chosen by children who we have met through our son Kieran’s time at Great Ormond Street Hospital. The last couple of miles were tough, it helped to think that these children never give up... so neither should we! Even though our legs wanted to quit".

“The boost we got from the crowds was incredible. We had our friends at various points during the latter stages of the course - thank you to everyone who supported us.

“Did we enjoy it? YES (mostly). Would we do it again....DEFINITELY!”

SNAP’s Community Fundraising Manager, Rob Dennis, is thankful of the fundraising opportunity the Brentwood Half Marathon brings for charities.

“This is the largest charity event in Brentwood and more than £130,000 has been raised over the years for SNAP. There is a great spirit to the day, it is so fantastic to see big crowds cheering in all the runners that are challenging themselves to help make a difference for others.”

If you are interested in taking part on behalf of SNAP in 2020 please email fundrasing@ snapcharity.org

Secrets for sleep
“A consistent routine is the key,” was the underlying message at the Sleep Success for Children with Autism workshop held at The SNAP Centre.

Helen, an experienced SEN sleep practitioner from The Children’s Sleep Charity, led a full day workshop on strategies to help a child with ASD get quality sleep.

The morning began with understanding the importance of sleep and the impact lack of sleep can have on the whole family. The session moved onto how to keep a sleep diary to try and unpick what might be causing the restless nights. The discussion involved looking at sensory needs that are possibly not being met, reducing screen time in the hour before bed, and behaviours/objects that have become embedded as ‘sleep association’.

The afternoon focussed on creating an effective bedtime routine. Helen cautioned families that they may not see any improvement for at least two weeks; however with determination, perseverance and consistency she has seen families have amazing results using these techniques.

“Absolutely brilliant. Lovely to understand possible reasons for my child’s difficulties and how to help.”

This newsletter has been kindly printed by one of our supporters for free.

www.snapcharity.org SNAP matters // 3
A helping hand for everyone

SNAP supports children from birth up to young people aged 25-years-old

This term-time weekly club gives attendees the opportunity to develop social and communication skills. These sessions focus on developing children’s self-esteem, confidence and imagination through games, role play, art and physical exercises. It also gives parents the opportunity to relax together, use the library or speak to a Family Support Adviser. Siblings are also welcome to use the facilities upstairs.

SNAP Parent, Angela, has seen her son’s confidence grow from attending the club:

“If I attend other clubs outside of The SNAP Centre. It is so fantastic to see he has genuine friends here that are happy to see him each week. SNAP’s Drama Club has even inspired Roman to want to become an actor. "Roman recently brought home a book from school and gave all the family different characters to play and we all acted out the story" said Jaime. SNAP would like to thank Essex County Council’s Short Breaks and Global’s Make Some Noise for their support of the Drama Club at SNAP.

SNAP Parent, Angela, has seen her son’s confidence grow from attending the club:

“This term-time weekly club gives attendees the opportunity to develop social and communication skills. These sessions focus on developing children’s self-esteem, confidence and imagination through games, role play, art and physical exercises. It also gives parents the opportunity to relax together, use the library or speak to a Family Support Adviser. Siblings are also welcome to use the facilities upstairs.

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SNAP Parent, Angela, has seen her son’s confidence grow from attending the club:

“These friends are now so important to Adam they are invited to his parties and he to theirs,” says Tracey. “Adam gets the chance to have fun and socialise with his friends like other young people do but in safe and controlled surroundings. He must get a lot out of it. Before we have even left the car park he asks me when the next one is and if he can go!”

“I think I look forward as much as Adam does to the disco. It’s a great evening and we get looked after so well with the SNAP team meeting our every need. I like Adam also enjoy the company of like-minded people. If not myself, one of us always leaves with a bit of information they did not know.”

Fellow parent, Claire, says her son, George, loves coming to the discos too and they are a highlight of his year.

“George talks about it so much leading up to the event, and afterwards with so much happiness. The discos give George some independence away from me and encourage him to socialise and make new friends in an environment he is familiar with,” she said.

“Adam would like to thank the Paul and Rachel Jeffreys Charitable Trust for their support in funding this project.

“My son really opens up during these sessions, actively joining in and showing his enjoyment very outwardly.”

“Volunteer Charles, with SNAP’s resident DJ. Skittleman, who always guarantees a great party experience for all attendees!"
Where there’s a Will there’s a clear path

SNAP recently held a Specialist Talk to help parents make informed choices about their children’s future delivered by an expert in the field, Sam, from Mullis & Peake LLP Solicitors. A Will is an essential way of planning for the future for your dependants, especially those with a special need or disability, but it can be very daunting.

Without a Will it becomes much more difficult for your family and friends to deal with your estate, be sure of your wishes and could even lead to your accounts being frozen. Making a Will ensures your wishes about who should receive benefit from your estate, be sure of your wishes and could even lead to your accounts being frozen.

“I’ve learned a lot about drain covers, focusing on puberty, friendships, teenagers with high functioning autism and the reasons why specific interests occur as part of the overall profile of high functioning autism,” said Jacqui, 1.30pm-4.30pm. “I met the people at SNAP and thought it was a very worthy charity and offered unique support to families. I also had friends who had benefited a lot from help given. It felt like one big happy family and a very personal charity,” said Jacqui.

Moving to Secondary School £15 per parent
12.15pm to 2.30pm
Wednesday 26th April
Wednesday 1st May and
Wednesday 5th May
This three session course will give practical ideas to help with the transition and changes associated with the move from primary into secondary school. It is suitable for parents who have children with special needs in Year 4 to Year 6 in mainstream schools.

Tony Attwood £30 per parent per session
Holiday Inn, Basildon SS14 3DG
£30 per professional per session
17th May – am and pm sessions
Internationally renowned clinical psychologist, Professor Tony Attwood, has been working with individuals on the spectrum for over thirty years. Through his experience he has developed a fascination in Special Interests. “I’ve learned a lot about drain covers, dinosaurs, Thomas the Tank Engine... But I’ve also learnt how to use these Special Interest constructively, as a measure of ability and thinking as well as a means of coping with anxiety. They give energy when depleted and provide a wow factor of appreciation from others.”

Parent Time £5 per parent
Wednesday 24th June – 11.15am to 1.30pm
An opportunity for parents who have a son on the spectrum to share experiences and advice with each other. You will also be able to ask questions and explore the specific resources in SNAP’s library.

Parent Time £5 per parent
Wednesday 24th June – 11.15am to 1.30pm
A chance to meet other parents who share the same concerns.

The 2019 gang (l-r): Alison, Gill, Helen, Jacqui, Carrie and Julie. (bottom row, 5th from left) and her afternoon tea ladies!

Julie Kelly has been supporting SNAP for almost as many years as the charity has been operating. She first heard of the charity when her son, Tommy, was diagnosed with autism at the age of two.

“At the time SNAP was also two and was becoming known for its great support for families. SNAP has helped me and my family in so many ways that I know by fundraising for them they can continue to help other families in the same way,” says Julie.

Julie’s fundraising idea came out of a family tradition. “The females in my family regularly go to London to sample all the wonderful Afternoon Teas on offer so it wasn’t a big jump to put one of our own in aid of SNAP.”

Julie’s family members were quick to offer support. “I have a friend that hires out vintage tea sets and she supplied the china for free. I was also lucky enough to have some good homebakers and sandwich-makers!”

Julie had 30 ladies attend on the day which was full of laughter. “Everyone commented on how delicious the food was and how pretty the china looked. I had a charity box for cash donations of people’s choice, and I added a raffle to boost funds that was donated by one of the guests. A fantastic £360 was raised from the event,” said Julie.

Julie would highly recommend holding an Afternoon Tea as a way to raise money. “It is something that everyone can get involved with and who can resist a nice cup of tea and a piece of cake?”

SNAP’s Summer Survival Guide will be available in June and is packed full of tips and ideas!

And Jacqui has a ball raising money!

Jaci Carver is also a long-term supporter of SNAP who has led a team of dedicated volunteers to raise a phenomenal £150,000 over the last two decades by organising Charity Ball’s.

“I was involved with local fundraising by organising a Charity Ball to raise funds for Shenfield Parish Hall in 2000, and the event was such a success that we were approached by a SNAP supporter, Gemma, to see if we could run a similar event and raise money for the charity. “It met the people at SNAP and thought it was a very worthy charity and offered unique support to families. I also had friends who had benefited a lot from help given. It felt like one big happy family and a very personal charity,” said Jacqui.

“We have raised money for the Endeavour School, Little Haven’s, Dr. John’s Hospice and Great Ormond Street Children’s Hospital too. The team all had young children so supporting children’s charities meant a lot.

Jacqui and the rest of the Shenfield Ball Committee enjoy working together and have a lot of fun during the organisation.

“We work well as a team. We meet up every couple of months to run ideas past each other. Each person in the team brings something different to the event, whether it’s arranging auction prizes, selling tables, helping with the administration or even just picking up prizes and assisting selling raffle tickets on the night.”

“You start to see everyone arrive, looking glamorous and look forward to a great evening. At first it’s a bit like having your own party and you worry about people turning up, there’s always a sense of anticipation and equally you always feel a bit nervous about whether the evening will be a success. Later on in the evening when everyone is dancing and having fun there is a great sense of achievement, especially when you know that you’ve raised so much money for such a wonderful cause.”

And with the £15,000 raised at their most recent Ball held in March, Jacqui is over the moon that the total throughout the years has topped the £150,000 mark.

“It’s amazing, we are very lucky we get a lot of help from SNAP supporters and many of them are very kind and generous, some of whom have attended the Ball since the start. It means a lot and great too to have had so many new families joining us in recent years. When we visit The SNAP Centre and see where our fundraising efforts go and hear the stories of some of the families, it makes you feel really proud and you feel you are really giving something back to a very special charity.

“As an Ambassador I have heard first hand the heart-warming stories about how it has helped families and how much the support means to them.”

A huge thanks to The Shenfield Ball Committee through the years: Jacqui, Gemma, Elaine, Sue, Carol, Lorraine and Helen. And in 2019 also to: Julia, Gill and Alison.

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Come and help us to celebrate 25 years

OPEN DAY
22nd May 2019 11.15am - 2.30pm
The SNAP Centre, Warley, CM14 5WF
Calling familiar and new faces!
Twenty-five years after a group of parents who have children with special needs first got together around a kitchen table, SNAP, the charity they formed is celebrating its Silver Anniversary. All supporters are invited to drop in and mark this special milestone with the SNAP team.

Please RSVP - events@snapcharity.org or https://snap25thanniversaryopenday.eventbrite.co.uk

Brew-tiful way to relax
De Rougemont Manor in Warley to bring you a traditional Afternoon Tea in lovely surroundings. A brew-tiful way to relax with your family and friends whilst supporting SNAP. You can even add some extra sparkle with a glass of prosecco.

Tables of 2 up to 10 guests.

AFTERNOON TEA PARTY
3rd June 2019 From 12 noon
De Rougemont Manor, CM13 3JP
£25.00 per person

Step out for SNAP this summer
Help SNAP take a step in the right direction by taking plenty of your own!
That’s the challenge SNAP is throwing out to supporters this summer – to take as many sponsored steps as you can over the coming weeks and months.
And not just steps – choose a distance, choose any active method of getting there and record your progress along the way.
How far you want to go and for how long is up to you; it’s a personal target that’s right for you and your circumstances.
Whether you want to walk to school or work each day or make a closer look at the lovely environment you live in, SNAP is encouraging you to get moving on your behalf.

Fun Mud Run
Get messy for SNAP with our 5K challenge
June 29th 2019 at 9.00am
Kelvedon Hatch, CM15 0LA
Ages 12-16 £35 / Over 16s £50
Team up with your family, friends or work mates and take on a fun challenge at an exclusive event for SNAP!
Held at the world renowned Nuclear Races at Kelvedon Hatch, Brentwood, this 5K Fun Mud Run will feature some of their well-known obstacles, including the Deathslide and Ziplines over water.

Members of the SNAP team will also be getting muddy!

Step out for SNAP – 25th Anniversary
Go the distance to help SNAP

Our family would be lost without SNAP
Sponsored Fun Walk
A great family afternoon with either a three or one mile walk. Bring a picnic for either one or the longer walk.

The SNAP Centre. It is wonderful to be able to come here and feel the whole family is supported.

Early intervention is key and SNAP has been a major part in that.

It has made a huge difference having specialist contacts and advice from SNAP. As a family we wouldn’t have achieved so much without this support.

“Step out for SNAP” this summer
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Fundraising@

https://snapcharity.org

Events@

https://snapcharity.org/events

SNAP is making a difference for families

SNAP is the thing that has held my little family together.

The centre facilities are excellent and the staff go above and beyond to help.
SNAP’s humble beginnings have now supported 5,000 families!

Founding members Hilary Needham and Paula Hills explain their drive to start a support group

What was the prompt to get SNAP started?

**Hilary** We were a group of friends at the Keys Hall Parent and Toddler Group and we were concerned about the lack of provision for families such as mine who had children with special needs - we teamed up with the toddler group to share their toys. We had to formalise the group so the first meeting was held on 7th July 1994 at 8.00pm round my kitchen table.

How tough were the early days of the charity?

**Paula** With no internet in 1994 there was lots of putting flyers up in doctors surgeries, schools, and playgroups!

**Hilary** As SNAP started to grow there were more and more boxes of toys and information that were stored in my dining room. It was physically demanding to carry them in and out of my car to the hall each week.

My home phone number was at the bottom of the leaflets and I would often have distressed families and also professionals who wanted more information, calling day and night.

When did you realise you were making a difference?

**Hilary** In the early days we had a meeting at NCH Family Centre in Ingatestone and asked parents what they wanted for the future. At that meeting we realised what a lifeline we were to families and how high their expectations were for the future.

They wanted SNAP to have its own purpose built centre so the support services could develop and be offered all year round!

**Paula** I think I began to realise this as the number of families grew. SNAP has always been a ‘needs led’ organisation and the more families we had the more the needs grew so from starting with a toddler group providing information and books we quickly started providing more activities for our families. We began working in partnership with The Brentwood Centre to provide training about our children and how to help them so they would be happy to include them in their sports activities and we haven’t stopped.

The high points along the way?

**Hilary** There have been so many high points but some of the most significant for me must be

- The First office
- The SNAP Directory
- Family Partnership training
- Sibling activity weeks
- The bespoke SNAP Centre
- Multi Disciplinary Assessment Clinic that I had the honour of attending for many years
- My Civic Award, my Dad was so proud and I am so pleased he knew about this just before he passed away
- My MBE received from Her Majesty the Queen
- The 20th Anniversary legacy where we introduced SNAP Events amongst other things raising the awareness of SNAP
- Business awards - it is so good to be recognised as a strong capable well run organisation with robust plans for the future.

**Paula** Getting funding from the National Lottery in 1998 to refurbish and open our first office in Keys Hall which was previously the caretakers office. This gave us credibility, we were serious about SNAP and our desire to improve the lives of our families. This allowed us to move ourselves and our paper away from our homes and certainly felt like SNAP was on the map.

What were the biggest challenges?

**Hilary** In the early days it was certainly the environment - the leaking roof above a desk and the counselling in the shower room with coats on! SNAP’s growth is phenomenal and has to be very carefully managed to balance the needs of our families with the resources and funds available.

**Paula** The biggest challenge for me was to make sure I kept the balance in my life. I didn’t want my son and family to miss out in anyway so I learnt to juggle SNAP and family.

Can you describe the journey?

**Hilary** My son Jack, who still challenges me on a daily basis is the inspiration and drive that changed the direction of my life dramatically. He was of course the start of my journey into special needs.

**Paula** I have often described SNAP as a huge snowball going down a mountain - it just got bigger and bigger and as long as we dug a route for the snowball we could keep it on track!

Did you ever envisage SNAP would be as big as it is today?

**Paula** We have always consulted with our families on what they needed and when in early 2000s the answer came back as our own building - my goodness was that a leap into the unknown. Once we secured the funding and found the ideal building we knew SNAP would be growing.

**Hilary** To think that SNAP has helped over 5,000 families over the 25 years and is currently supporting over 2,600 families is unbelievable.