



Issue 7 // Autumn 2019

matters

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

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SNAP has
been supporting
families for
25 years

A safe haven for families

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A term full of opportunities

Welcome to the Autumn issue of SNAP Matters! Produced three times a year, this edition is packed full of news, informative articles and inspirational stories for everyone with an interest in our charity. It's the start of a new school year and we have some top tips for children moving to secondary school on page 5. Also on this page you can find details of all upcoming Specialist Talks for this term.

Our Fundraising Team are entering their busiest time of year as they plan for the Christmas season and they are hoping the wide variety of upcoming events and activities provides an opportunity for all our supporters to get involved. As our funding from Government and local authorities reduces each year - around just 19 per cent of our income for 2019 - the need for even more successful fundraising becomes vital. On page 6 and 7 we feature inspiring stories from some of our supporters who completed fundraising challenges as part of SNAP's first Awareness Week.

Among our upcoming highlights we hope anyone with an interest in SNAP will join us for our annual Coffee, Cake and Catch-up event on Wednesday 6th November at The SNAP Centre. All are welcome to drop in between 11am and 2pm and hear all the latest news about SNAP's work and chat to the team.

In the meantime, we are now more than half way through our special 25th Anniversary year, and we are extremely grateful for all the support that SNAP has received - it means a great deal to the team.

Best wishes,

Karen and Christina

SNAP Directors

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



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. SNAP's approach is to look after the whole family unit and be a reliable constant in their lives.

The experienced team of Family Support Advisers offer a comprehensive approach that is tailored to each family's needs.

SNAP offers a wide range of services and activities to meet the needs of its families

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

"At every point along the journey, when there have been potential stumbling blocks, SNAP has stepped in to remove them, and given our child access to chances they would otherwise have lost."

"I call SNAP the fourth emergency service when you have a child with special/ additional needs."



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

Professor Tony Attwood makes a welcome return

The SNAP Family Services team were delighted to welcome back Clinical Psychologist, Professor Tony Attwood (based in Australia), to deliver two specialist talks to more than 300 parents and professionals in May.

The Professor's morning talk focused on understanding your child's special interests and how this can be applied positively to help them in education and social situations.

In the afternoon the Professor concentrated on adolescent issues for teenagers with high functioning autism.

"This has helped me to see why my daughter reacts to certain situations in the way she does while appearing no different to others. It has validated decisions we have had to make as parents."

"I have learnt so much from this excellent talk and also from the questions afterwards. I am leaving with an increased understanding and lots of new ideas."



"Working with families with children of profound learning difficulties this talk has given me a more rounded perspective. I feel so much more aware of the assumptions made by neurotypical people and how I can incorporate this into psycho-education with parents. Thank you it was extremely engaging."

Anniversary celebrations



In May, SNAP opened its doors and welcomed more than 130 supporters to join the team to mark the charity's 25th Anniversary. Both the Business Networking Breakfast and supporter Open Day had an upbeat atmosphere and attendees were pleased to be able to give thanks to the charity.

Local business owner, Carmel Jane, attended the breakfast:

"What an incredible charity SNAP is. Meeting other business people in such a positive and charitable environment was excellent!"



Among those attending the Open Day was Moira and her son Karl, one of the many families supported by the charity since it was formed.

"SNAP has always offered me a listening ear, the chance to speak to other people that understand our challenges and been able to offer me advice. Karl has enjoyed many activity sessions, most especially music therapy. His brother, Patrick, has also been able to attend which has given him a chance to experience a bit of normality in an unusual childhood," said Moira.



▼ **Cake expectations!**

SNAP's annual Afternoon Tea was enjoyed by more than 80 guests and brewed up the fabulous fundraising amount of £1,480.

"The SNAP Afternoon Tea has become an annual ritual for my mum and I and our friends," said guest Jane.

"A warm welcome always greets us from the lovely SNAP team and De Rougemont Manor looks after us very well, catering for many



different dietary needs.

"The occasion provides an opportunity to hear the latest news from SNAP and understand the positive impact the services provided have on the families SNAP supports. This need is increasing and fundraising to enable the continual delivery of these services is as important as ever. This event raises much needed funds whilst we enjoy cake!"

▲ **Summer parties for families**

Pre-school children enjoyed a fabulous start to the summer when they attended SNAP's Teddy Bear's picnic in July. In the spirit of it being SNAP's Silver Anniversary year the event was given a Long John Silver Pirate theme and families enjoyed a sea shanty sing-a-long led by resident musician Maggie.

Later the same week SNAP held a summer Silver Disco for it's young people where our excited guests enjoyed expressing themselves with much dancing, singing and several self-penned rap songs.

The first port of call for families

The SNAP phone and email Helpline is often the first point of contact for new families. Last year we answered 2,630 calls and 3,373 emails. Here SNAP Matters talks to one of our team of Family Support Advisers about the importance of the service.

Liza has been working for SNAP for over a decade and has a wealth of experience. Her previous roles before joining the SNAP team have included primary and secondary level teaching where she developed an interest in special needs education. On a personal level Liza is actively involved in helping her nephew who has cerebral palsy and learning difficulties.

"Offering Helpline support means I can often be a first line response to families who have taken the huge step to contact SNAP. I am very aware of how daunting this can be and that it often takes a great deal of courage and a leap of faith to reach out for support. I want to make it as easy as possible, from the outset, for parents and carers to talk to me and know that I am genuinely there to support and listen.

"The message I try to get across is that they don't have to face things alone – there is someone on the Helpline who will give them time to talk. This can often involve some long and in depth conversations exploring parents' concerns and often very difficult situations. I also explain the services we can offer and that SNAP is there to work

SNAP's Helpline is open

Monday-Thursday

9.00am-5.00pm

Friday

9.00am-4.00pm

in partnership with families for as long as they need us.

"I help callers by offering guidance, advice and information and if appropriate signposting to other organisations and services that support around disability and special needs, many of these are to be found in our SNAP online directory – www.snapcharity.org/directory/ – which is an indispensable reference point for advisers as well as a great resource for families and professionals. I hope parents feel empowered and less isolated knowing they have the SNAP Helpline available to them. My aim is to provide a caring and professional response to each call or email.

"Helpline support is not just about first response calls and registering new families. The Helpline is available to any SNAP family if they need to discuss any concerns and for ongoing support. There are often times when it is just not practical to get to The SNAP Centre for a face-to-face advice session.

"There is a huge amount of job satisfaction in knowing you have been a listening ear and may have given someone the time and space to talk freely, without judgement and hopefully to feel they have been heard and understood, often for the first time.

"I feel so much lighter after speaking to you, like there is a light at the end of the tunnel. I feel like I have found an angel."

"I am so glad I called and spoke to you as I wasn't sure if I should. You have made me feel a lot better and I am going to take on board everything we have discussed."

"Speaking to you has made me feel so much better and like I am actually doing something to support my family. I might actually be able to sleep tonight."

Top tips to help your child starting secondary school

Starting secondary school is a big step for any child but for those with special educational needs it's an even bigger challenge.

Good preparation starting at home with the family can really help your child make the transition.

SNAP runs a Moving to Secondary School course each year in the summer term for parents of children in Years 4, 5 and 6. Interested parents should contact SNAP.

Our Moving to Secondary School information sheet can be downloaded from the SNAP website, and books on the transition are available to borrow from our library.



Ten Top Transition Tips

1 Create a transition book, folder or computer document. Include photographs 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 information about things that will stay the same, such as friends who will be there or 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.

3 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.

4 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.

5 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 extra-curricular activities.

6 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.

7 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.

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

9 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.

10 It is important to keep good communication with your child, their teachers and the school SENCO. Email communication can be helpful as it allows important information to be shared quickly with all the relevant people. If your child is on a One Plan, termly review meetings should be scheduled.

Specialist Talks for September-December 2019

Anxiety and Stress Management – Wendy Smith
£10 per parent **Wednesday 25th September**
11.15am to 1.15pm or 6.30pm to 8.30pm

Former Paralympian Wendy shares her experiences to help people become more resilient in life. Learn how to become aware of your triggers and develop the ability to control and dissipate your levels of stress and anxiety. Also find out how to support your children with their anxiety.

Supporting Siblings – Parent Workshop £10 per parent
Wednesday 2nd October - 11.15am to 1.15pm

This workshop will help parents of children with special needs find ways of giving attention, information, and support to the other children in their families. The workshop hopes to give an insight into siblings' needs and experiences. As well as practical ideas for giving siblings attention, explaining disability and supporting siblings with their feelings.

Parent Time £5 per parent
Wednesday 16th October 11.15am to 1.15pm

Parent Time sessions are an opportunity for parents whose children are in the first few years of primary school to meet other families in a similar situation and share experiences. This session we will be joined by a Speech and Language Specialist Teacher.

Grandparents' Coffee Morning £5 per grandparent
Wednesday 23rd October - 11.15am to 1.15pm

Grandparents of SNAP families are invited to join us for an informal opportunity to share experiences and meet others. This coffee morning is a great opportunity to ask questions and find out information to become better equipped to support your grandchild with special needs.

Autism Friendly Periods – Robyn Steward £10 per parent
Wednesday 13th November - 11.15am to 1.15pm

Robyn Steward returns to speak to parents of girls on the spectrum about making periods 'autism friendly'. Following on from her book on the subject she will explain the importance of using literal language and visual supports. As well as how difficulties with sensory processing, emotional regulation and executive function can all impact on dealing with periods.

How to Help ADHD – Steve Challen £10 per parent
Tuesday 19th November - 6.30pm to 8.30pm

SNAP welcomes Steve Challen back to explain how individuals with ADHD can be supported in their day to day lives, at school and at work. Some of the areas he will cover are; an introduction to medication, behaviour management, dietary improvements as well as other useful strategies. Steve has a unique understanding and extensive personal experience of ADHD and coexisting conditions as both an individual and a parent.

Sensorise Coffee Morning £5 per parent
Wednesday 27th November - 11.15am to 1.15pm

SNAP is inviting families, whose children have more profound and complex special needs, to come in for an informal catch up and a chance to share their experiences with each other. It will also be an opportunity to talk to the SNAP parent advisers and get resources and information from the SNAP specialist library.

fundraising

Awareness Week is a real triumph!

Supporters took part in a range of activities to celebrate the first SNAP Awareness Week this summer. There was a series of fun-filled events - here's a round-up of just some of them...



The 'horror spa' crew

A group of 10 young people braved a variety of 'treatments' including a Live Maggot Foot Spa, Fish Slop Fish Face Pack and a Baked Beans bath to raise funds for SNAP!

Like something from I'm a Celebrity, each supporter was nominated by sponsors to take on one of a number of different and equally gross challenges. The volunteer with the highest bid for each 'treatment' was the one that then had to endure it for a good cause. They got more than 90 donations!

The young people – aged between 10 and 16 – are all part of a group of kind-hearted volunteers called 'Lucy's Little Stars,' who meet twice a month on a Saturday afternoon to provide friendship and play for children with complex disabilities.

This ingenious fundraising idea was dreamt up by one of these young people, Lucy, and her mum Catherine Coale who wanted to shine a light on the ways in which SNAP has helped their family over the last decade.

"Our son William, was born almost 10 weeks early and we knew from the outset that he'd experienced a significant brain haemorrhage. I can picture the exact room where we sat to hear William's diagnosis - Cerebral Palsy affecting all four limbs. My heart broke and our world crashed. I hadn't fully



acknowledged it at the time, but a member of the SNAP team was also sat in that room. They were there so that they could catch families like us, and catch us they did. Thank God they did.

"SNAP has been there for our whole family. From offering us a welcome haven and being the only place I could take our three pre-school children to play, offering a listening ear and counselling when I've needed to express my worries and doubts. Music therapy and holiday play sessions dedicated to children with complex needs have also supported William's social and emotional well-being and helped him to express himself."

Lucy, was delighted with the response the idea got: "10 volunteers from the Little Stars came forward. They've all met my brother through the Friendship Group they help at,



SNAP
charity
awareness
week

and they knew about SNAP. Everyone was up for it, although the fish face mask was definitely the worst!"

The long distance runner

SNAP supporter Richard King has pledged to mirror SNAP's 25th Anniversary milestone by completing 25 long distance runs.

He is already more than halfway through his ambitious challenge, having completed 19 runs.

"I was staggered to find SNAP on our doorstep, I can see the charity really does fill a massive void," says Richard.

"This keeps me motivated every step of the way on my challenge - to help them to be able to support more and more families over the next few years."

Richard has the small matter of completing the remaining 6 before he can enjoy a well-earned pint at his favourite pub in Cornwall.



Want to fundraise for SNAP? Visit our website and download SNAP's fundraising pack for inspiration and guidelines - www.snapcharity.org/getinvolved



The hospital heroes

Staff at a Brentwood hospital stepped out to support SNAP with a very special challenge.

The fearless fundraisers from Spire Hartswood Hospital raised more than £1,000 by doing 1,000km between them, with the money raised being split between two charities – one of them being SNAP.

The activities included:

- daily lunchtime walks
- bike and treadmill 30 minute slots in their Physiotherapy gym and Bupa Health Centre
- an 80s themed #ThrowbackThursday spin class
- a bike ride through Thorndon Country Park
- a group dog walk

Jo Dean, Hospital Director, said: “At Spire Hartswood Hospital we offer a Children and Young People’s Service, so we know how incredibly important it is for children and their parents to have the support of SNAP in the community.”

Hollie Davies, Business Development Manager at the hospital added: “Many families feel isolated and have little support but SNAP gives them guidance, empowerment and strength to become better equipped to give the best possible help to their children and young people. Everyone in our hospital has been involved and motivated to come together for this amazing cause.”

The theatre stars

Youngsters from a Brentwood theatre school took centre stage to raise funds. The children and young people from Razzamataz Theatre School in Brentwood held a ‘non-uniform’ day at their club on 21st June by wearing bright colours and making a donation in support of SNAP.

Tutor, Owen Thompson, had encouraged the budding dancers all aged between 4 and 18-years-old to support SNAP.

“I was blown away by the facilities and most of all by the energy and enthusiasm of the staff. I felt inspired to fundraise after seeing first-hand the importance of the service they provide to the families in Essex.”

The muddy marvels

SNAP’s special week drew to a close with a bespoke Fun Mud Run at the Nuclear Wild Forest in Kelvedon Hatch. More than 50 brave supporters joined members of the SNAP team to tackle the varied obstacles and



infamous death slide.

Held on one of the hottest days of the year the challengers all powered their way around the course and embodied the true ethos of SNAP – they all supported each other every step of the way from giving each other a leg-up over obstacles or pulling someone out of the mud.

Supporter Dean Hassan enjoyed the great camaraderie on the day.

“We went out in a large group and everyone supported us through all the obstacles. Even when I was stuck in a mud pit people came back in to drag me out! All of us thoroughly enjoyed it and surprisingly we are looking forward to the challenge again next year.

Sam Alexander from the Nuclear Races and Wild Forest team was impressed with the



whole team effort.

“Everyone working together despite being strangers, conquering fears and stepping out of their comfort zones - in aid of this amazing charity.”

For Community Fundraising Manager, Robert Dennis, this inaugural SNAP Awareness Week has been one to remember and a great success.

“We are so grateful for the support we receive through the whole year, but this has been an extra special week. People have come up with a variety of ingenious ways to raise funds, and our social media followers have created a real buzz. We are delighted that this campaign has been embraced by so many supporters - we couldn’t continue to be here for families without the backing of the local community.”

Our SNAP FunMudRun will be back next year. If you are thinking about taking on this or another challenge for SNAP please contact the Fundraising Team on 01277 245345, or email fundraising@snapcharity.org



fundraising

Showcasing SNAP's great work

Wednesday 6th November 2019 11am-2.00pm
The SNAP Centre, Brentwood, CM14 5WF
£3 per person (including drink and cake)

Families, supporters, professionals and anyone with an interest in SNAP are invited to drop in to our centre to see what we are currently providing and chat with the SNAP team.

The SNAP Centre's main activity hall turns into a pop-up cafe for the day with refreshments and cakes in a-bun-dance!

"Our Coffee, Cake and Catch-up open day is always such a popular and wonderful event," says Berni, one of SNAP's team of Family Support Advisers.

"It's fantastic to feel such a valued and

integral part of the local community and it's great to see families and supporters chatting together."

Debra, an Education Specialist from local support organisation, Families in Focus, strongly recommends visiting the centre.

"I was able to see at first-hand the amazing work being done by the SNAP team to support SEND families across Essex and also meet with other professionals and exchange experiences."



To register your interest in attending

<https://snap-coffee-cake-and-catch-up-2019.eventbrite.co.uk>



Lighting Up Brentwood
Saturday 30th November 2019
12.30-6pm Brentwood High St

Make sure to stop by the SNAP stall and play one of our games. The event culminates with the switch on of the Christmas lights at dusk.

Christmas Jumper Day
Friday 6th December 2019
Anywhere and Everywhere

Gather together family, friends, school pupils, work colleagues or community group chums, for a great reason to dress silly, have a laugh, walk in a winter woollenland, donate to SNAP and raise good fundraising cheer during the festive season.

Shenfield Christmas Fayre
Sunday 8th December 2019
12noon - Around Hutton Road

Shenfield shops and local groups come together with lots of family friendly entertainment stalls and activities. Don't forget to say hello to the team at the SNAP stalls.

Nuclear Bag Drops

Saturday 7th September/ 2nd November 2019

Nuclear Races in Kelvedon Hatch, Brentwood donates to SNAP for every volunteer that works at their event bag drops, up to a maximum of £100 per person. Suitable for individuals and teams with a variety of time slots available, these events have a great atmosphere.

Email fundraising@snapcharity.org to get involved.



QUIZ NIGHT

£10 per person

Friday 31st January 2020

The Nightingale Centre, Brentwood

How about exercising the little grey cells at the SNAP Quiz? Bring your family, friends and work colleagues.

To book <https://snap-quiz-night-2020.eventbrite.co.uk>

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