



Issue 7 // Spring 2020

matters

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



Love is all around at SNAP

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Charity currently
supporting
more than 2,800
Essex families

INSIDE
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programme of term time
services and activities

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Strategies to support
siblings and help their
understanding

7 GET INVOLVED

It makes good sense
for businesses to support
charities such as SNAP

SNAP is always ready to listen

Happy New Year to all our SNAP families and supporters. As we look forward to the year ahead, 2020 promises to be another memorable year for our charity with a wide variety of services, specialist talks, events and activities already planned.

We are extremely proud of the difference the SNAP team makes for Essex families and this excellence was once again recognised last year, this time with a national acknowledgement in Parliament - see page 3.

In 2019 our Helpline team answered 2,660 calls and 3,417 emails and just over 500 new families turned to SNAP.

As well as all our usual term time and holiday services, we've got a packed programme of specialist talks compiled from parent suggestions and topics we believe will offer insights and practical ideas, together with our regular services and not to be missed sessions.

We also have a range of fundraising events throughout the year, including firm favourites such as our Quiz, Curry and Wine Tasting Nights. As a legacy from our 25th Anniversary last year we will once again be holding our SNAP Awareness Week at the end of June 2020. This is a special week to get everyone talking and taking action in the name of SNAP.

Do make sure to join us on our social media if you haven't already, to keep up with all the latest news.

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



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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.

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

"I don't know how my family would have coped without SNAP's help."

"SNAP has helped us unconditionally over the last two years."



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

House party for SNAP team at Westminster

Representatives of the SNAP team were invited to Westminster at the end of last year to receive a very special recognition.

The charity was honoured with a Highly Commended Award after being put forward for a national acknowledgement by local MP Alex Burghart.

Mr Burghart nominated SNAP for an 'Inspire the House' Best Community Group Award recognising SNAP's achievements in the local community hosted by Kids Count, the young people's national charity, to see their work rewarded.

"SNAP offers invaluable support to families in my constituency and across Essex who have children with special needs," commented Mr Burghart.

"So often I meet local families whose lives have been changed for the better because of SNAP. I am immeasurably proud to have nominated them for an award in recognition of their unstinting support and



care to those who need it most."

Karen Boath, SNAP Director (Family Services) - who was at the awards event held on the Terrace at the House of Commons on the day of the Queen's Speech - said the charity was

delighted to be recognised.

"We are honoured to be counted among such fantastic groups," she said.

"We are hugely grateful to Alex Burghart MP for nominating us."



First Grandparents' Coffee Morning

"We enjoyed the Grandparents' Coffee Morning. It was a chance to get together and gave us the space and time to listen and chat with other grandparents. We found it refreshing and supportive to meet other grandparents to our inspirational 'special' children. Thank you SNAP for organising this and making us feel a part of the wider SNAP family." Sandra and Ray Thorpe

ADHD support for parents

Steve Challen from Chelmsford based ADHD+ Support group returned to The SNAP Centre to share his unique understanding of the condition and offer ways on how parents can support their children in their daily lives.

Steve has an extensive personal experience of ADHD and coexisting conditions as both an individual and as a parent. This gives him a key perspective and his advice can help parents to make informed decisions on ways to help their child or young person.

Following an introduction to ADHD and medications often prescribed, Steve focussed

on key areas that can produce benefits:

Diet - Look at eliminating food additives from the individual's diet, taking a vitamin and mineral supplement, locating and removing food intolerances and eating foods with long-term energy release.

Routines - Establishing a good routine is key for individuals as changes cause increased stress.

Behavioural support - Reinforcing positives ahead of negatives and anticipating challenges is key.

Regular physical activity - Individuals can benefit from regular controlled physical activity such as a swimming or dance club or other activity in which they have a natural interest in.

Replenish the fuel tank - After a brain stimulating day at school it is important to 'replenish the fuel tank,' such as building self-esteem, offering rewards and providing relaxation time.

Sleep - Between 8 -10 hours of sleep a night is very important.

Steve stressed that slowly looking at making small changes in all the key areas above can help their overall daily lives.

Please contact The SNAP team if you would like to know about the further reading resources we have available in our SNAP specialist library.

Party fun for everyone!

The SNAP Centre was full of festive fun at our end of year term parties. Preschool children enjoyed an activity afternoon which included a visit from Father Christmas himself, and later in the same week our young people's Disco saw some fantastic dancing and stand-out singing!



The life in a week at The SNAP Centre

Every weekday the SNAP calendar is packed with services and activities to support and empower families. SNAP matters takes a look at a typical term time week.



family services

"That 'special feeling' upon walking through The SNAP Centre doors! A safe, welcoming, warm, understanding sanctuary. We feel truly blessed!"

Monday

Counselling

"This is so empowering for us both. As a parent I am understanding more about my daughter's anxiety than ever before."



Volunteer induction

Family Support Manager Pam, with a potential young volunteer at her induction interview.



SNAP on a Monday

Pre-school children play together with specialist equipment while parents relax and access support.

SNAP on a Monday

"My son had his first session today and it was absolutely brilliant, totally exceeded my expectations."



Yoga Groovettes

Young people activity that uses games and music to help them ease anxiety and boost confidence.

Yoga Groovettes

"My daughter has made a lovely group of supportive friends and really benefits from the group activity."

Tuesday



Face-to-Face Advice

Supportive conversation in our specialist library sharing information and planning next steps.

763
Face-to-Face Advice sessions throughout 2019

Face to Face

"I appreciate your kindness and honesty at a time when it's all a bit confusing. You provided clarity and lots of support."



Individual Advice

Individual advice sessions including Education and Benefits Advice and Parent Counselling.



Information Meeting

Family team's weekly meeting to share the latest information gathered to support families.

770
Specialist Library resources borrowed throughout 2019

Wednesday

Counselling

"We are definitely in a happier place for everyone. Seeing my son happier is such a relief and has made a huge difference at home."



Parent Group Support

A chance to meet other families in similar situations to share experiences and ideas.

992
parents attended Specialist Talks throughout 2019



Specialist Talks

A wide range of training opportunities for parents and professionals.

Drama Club

"My child can relax at this club and not feel like the odd one out."



Drama Club

Developing young people's self-esteem and confidence through games, role play and exercise.

Thursday



Counselling

Specialist individual sessions for children and young people to explore their thoughts and feelings.

Therapeutic Thursday

"The children get to explore all their sensory needs and we can relax as they are in a safe environment."



Therapeutic Thursday

Pre-school session including use of SNAP's multi-sensory room while parents relax and access support.

3,503
hours of Pre-school children sessions throughout 2019

SNAPtastic

"It was fantastic to see my child having such a good time and feel so calm yesterday at SNAPtastic!"



SNAPtastic

After-school club that includes siblings and allows parents to relax and seek advice.

Friday

Parent Yoga

"Yoga is my one hour of relaxation and helps with the aches of lifting my disabled child."



Music Therapy

Uses music to encourage the development of interaction and social skills for pre-school children.

Music Therapy

"My daughter is learning to take turns and as she has no language yet, she is able to communicate through music."



Specialist Resources

The SNAP Library is open during session times or by appointment and contains hundreds of resources.

6,077
Helpline calls & emails answered during 2019

SNAP Helpline

"I am really grateful for your time, kindness and thorough response. I really appreciate your help and useful information."

Specialist Talks for January-April 2020

Girls on the Spectrum Parents Coffee Morning
Wednesday 22nd January – 10.00am to 12.30pm
£5 per parent

SNAP is inviting families with daughters on the spectrum to come in and share their experiences with each other. It will also be an opportunity for you to raise questions and explore the specific resources in SNAP's library. An Autism Consultant Specialist Teacher will be joining us to discuss strategies.

An Introduction to ASD and Understanding the Diagnosis
Wednesday 12th February- 10.00am to 12.30pm / 6.30pm to 9.00pm £10 per parent

A positive introduction to autism and understanding a diagnosis – for parents of children who have received a recent diagnosis of autism, or feel that they would like to gain a better understanding of the reasons for diagnosis and implications of autism for their child.

SEND Law with Irwin Mitchell Solicitors
Wednesday 4th March- 11.00am to 12.30pm
£10 per parent

A representative from national law firm Irwin Mitchell will be coming to The SNAP Centre to help parents get a better understanding of education law in relation to children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

Enhancing Communication Workshop
Wednesday 18th and 25th March – 9.30am to 12.30pm £10 per parent

SNAP will be hosting a two session course on methods to help support your child's communication. It will include training on Makaton signing, as well as information around PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System) and Objects of Reference. This practical workshop will help you enhance your child's spoken language as well as exploring non-verbal communication. There will be crèche facilities available for this course.

Tackling Toileting
Wednesday 1st April- 10.00am to 12.30pm
£10 per parent

There are a significant range of factors that influence a child's ability to be toilet trained. This course aims to unpick and start to explain these factors and recommend strategies and next steps in toileting for children with autism or any social communication or sensory difficulties.

Moving to Secondary School
Wednesday 22nd April, Wednesday 29th April and Wednesday 6th May – 10.00am to 12.15pm
£15 per parent

This three session course will give lots of practical ideas to help with the transition and changes associated with the move into secondary school. It is suitable for parents who have children with special needs in years 4 to 6 in mainstream school.



Supporting siblings with their emotions

As part of our ongoing commitment to supporting siblings of children with additional needs, SNAP invited Clare Kassa - CEO of national charity Sibs - to The SNAP Centre. Clare spoke to parents about strategies to help siblings' understanding, and how to give them the tools to manage some of the more challenging aspects of their family life.

Clare emphasised the importance of parents setting aside dedicated time to give focused one-to-one attention to each child. It should be regular and manageable, so Clare advised to make it a short, fun activity at a time of day you can commit to.

Discussion moved on to supporting siblings with their emotions, both positive and negative. She explained how important it is to let the sibling express how they are feeling, particularly following a disappointing situation e.g. leaving an activity because their brother or sister is struggling.

She advised trying to avoid responding with the 'dodgy three' – blaming, explaining or solving – which are often our go to reactions. Acknowledging how they are feeling is all that is necessary at that time. You can then always revisit and talk about what happened later that day, perhaps during the one to one time.

Clare also explained how siblings often convey that they would like to be more informed and involved

in understanding their brother or sister's needs.

As well as helping improve sibling relationships it can also decrease anxiety around situations such as professionals visiting or hospital appointments their sibling attends.

Clare finished by signposting families to services that provide specific support to siblings. Each local authority should provide a young carers support organisation; siblings of children and

young people with additional needs often qualify as a young carer due to the extra support they provide their sibling whether physically or emotionally.

She also explained how important it is that schools are made aware of the situation as they may be able to offer pastoral care support.

You can find more information, advice and support for parents on the Sibs website www.sibs.org.uk. They also have a dedicated website for the sibs themselves - <https://www.youngsibs.org.uk/>

“SNAP has been a Godsend for more than 12 years now for me and my sister, who has a dual diagnosis of Down syndrome and autism. The support is 10/10 and everyone will listen to anything you have to say. Thanks SNAP.”

fundraising

Why it's good business sense to support charities like SNAP

By partnering your company with SNAP you can reach new audiences, help motivate employees and demonstrate your social responsibility. SNAP matters talks to two local business supporters - **Blue Serif** and **Baker Labels** - about what it means to them to be involved with the community.

What prompted you to get involved with a community cause?

Matt Barry, Creative Director, Blue Serif

We love being an active part of our local area, and part of our ethos is to give back to the community wherever possible. We first got to know SNAP when we worked together on the redesign of the website. We learnt so much about the excellent work that SNAP are doing for the many Essex families that they support, as well as getting to know the fun, enthusiastic team at SNAP. These two elements combined with the fact that SNAP is so local to us cemented in our minds that it was a charity we'd be more than happy to support.

Kirsty Dailly, PR and Marketing Manager, Baker Labels We've always enjoyed being connected to small local charities and being able to form close relationships so we gain an appreciation of where funds are needed.

What benefits to your business does partnering with SNAP provide?

Matt Partnering with SNAP means that not only do we support a local cause as a company, but it also allows our team to carry out charity work. We have baked (and eaten!) cakes for SNAP's Open Day, had lots of fun with our 'Sheriff on the Shelf' campaign raising money for SNAP and cheered on supporters as they've run past our offices. We supported SNAP's Christmas Jumper Day, sponsored a hole at SNAP's annual Golf Day and helped at local Christmas community events. Taking part in events which get the team involved when they might not have the time or financial means to do so outside of work, is a huge



The Baker Labels team are delighted to present members of the SNAP fundraising team with a big donation.



The Blue Serif team (l-r) Claire, Matt, Michelle, Nicola and Jemma.

plus for our corporate social responsibility programme.

Kirsty Employee wellbeing; the positive feeling that they get from knowing that their employers care. The positive PR from supporting charities in turn attracts new staff to want to work at Bakers.

Do you find your employees are proud of your community support?

Kirsty Absolutely and it's one of the reasons we invited members of the SNAP team in to do a presentation to all our staff at a company meeting. They all felt more connected to SNAP after and were willing to volunteer their time and support the fundraising events we organised.

Matt Our team love supporting community

events and causes, and particularly SNAP, as many of us have personal connections with the charity, either having volunteered previously or through friends and family that use SNAP's services.

Do you talk about your charity partnership in your recruitment process and with prospective clients?

Matt Our community ethos is at the forefront of much of what we do, which means that many of our prospective clients and candidates are often already aware of our support of local causes through our social media or word of mouth.

Kirsty We have an emphasis on charity and community on our website that we hope prospective employees will read before attending an interview!

What's the most positive aspect of supporting a charity or community initiative?

Matt Aside from the wellbeing aspect which comes from allowing our team some time to support SNAP during working hours, the best part of supporting local causes has to be seeing the great work that the likes of SNAP are doing in our area, making real differences to those that need it most, with the support of time and money that local businesses can give. Furthermore, the great relationship we have built with the team at SNAP enables us to share our experience and creative output in a positive way for the community.

Kirsty The feel good factor. Everyone gains something from knowing that the company they work for is supporting those families that need it most through SNAP.

If you are interested in finding out more information about supporting SNAP on behalf of your business, either for a one-off event or perhaps to make SNAP your Charity of the Year, please contact the Fundraising Team on 01277 245345, or email fundraising@snapcharity.org

fundraising

Peak-y blinders!

Brave members of Billericay based recruitment agency, **Northreach**, took on a 50K hike in the Peak District and raised a fantastic £1,340 for SNAP. Here, team members Sam and James recall their adventure...



Why were you inspired to raise funds and awareness for SNAP?

We weren't too familiar with SNAP but after some research and an invitation to visit The SNAP Centre, it was clear to see the positive impact that the charity was having.

How did you decide on what challenge to undertake?

Well... for our previous fundraiser, we sacrificed our sleep in a 24 hour video game challenge - this year, it felt like we needed to push the boundaries a little bit and step outside of our comfort zone.

How did you all imagine the challenge would be before you started?

We do try and promote a healthy approach to working and living, however for a few of us, this was perhaps quite literally a step too far.

How did you all find it once the trek was well underway?

We actually spent the night camping before starting the hike, so by 8am we were pretty well acclimatised to the conditions and the team building had already begun. Looking back, I think the real challenge

was learning to pace yourself.

The biggest issue with the weather was the wind which battered us.

What was the best/worse bit of the challenge?

On reflection, I think the best bit of the challenge is the fact that we all pushed ourselves individually and as a group.

At about the half-way point, I think it is fair to say that we were all feeling it in different ways. It was apparent that no matter how much you prepared, nothing could really prepare you for the reality.

How did you go about raising awareness for your fundraising?

We tried our best to get the message out in the weeks leading up to the trek. Obviously, we used our own personal channels. We also have a fantastic marketer who created regular digital content across all of our social media, and flyers and posters.

We had live interviews at Gateway 97.8 and PhoenixFM and Essex Radio featured our story. We have collaborated with EatNatural Bars - they supplied us with energy bars and

we shared/tagged their stuff on Instagram etc.

During the hike, we were streaming it live across social media.

How did you celebrate your achievement?

We were all looking forward to finding the nearest pub. However, by the time we all returned to the camp, it was even a struggle to lift the pint glass to your face.

If someone else was thinking of taking on a trek what top tips would you offer them?

I think my main piece of advice would be that it's a challenge not to be taken lightly! The old saying "fail to prepare, prepare to fail" rings truer than ever. I would also suggest doing it with a good group of people who you can rely on.

Would you recommend taking on a charity challenge to others?

I would recommend it to anybody looking to challenge themselves or organisations/schools undergoing team building.

● Read Sam and James' full story on the SNAP website - www.snapcharity.org/peakyblinders//peakyblinders/

SNAP Quiz Night, £10 per person **Friday 31st January 2020** **The Nightingale Centre Warley CM14 5WF**

Test your knowledge on a range of subjects and compete to win team prizes. Get together in teams of up to 10 people, grab a table and bring drinks and nibbles.

SNAP Curry Night, £20 per person **Thursday 27th February 2020** **Jehan Curry Hut Brentwood CM14 4BJ**

It's chapati time for supporters who love Indian food. This year we're at a new venue but as a night out, there's still naan better. Tables available up to 10 people.

Wine Tasting Night £15 per person **Friday 20th March 2020** **Shenfield Parish Hall CM15 8LB**

White, red or rose? French, Californian or Australian? Everyone has their favourite wine and at our wine tasting night, you'll have a chance to enjoy flavours from around the world, tables up to 10 people.

Brentwood Half Marathon & Fun Run **Sunday 15th March 2020** **Brentwood and surrounding area**

Brentwood is taken over by runners in this popular annual event. Join our fantastic team of supporters taking part. We still have some places left if you would like to run for SNAP.

Nuclear Bag Drops **Weekend 16th and 17th May,** **Nuclear Races, Kelvedon Hatch, CM15 0LA**

Nuclear Races donate to SNAP for every volunteer that works at their bag drops. Suitable for individuals and teams with a variety of times slots available, these events have a great atmosphere.

SNAP Afternoon Tea £25 per person **Monday 8th June 2020** **De Rougemont Manor, Warley CM13 3JP**

A quintessentially British occasion, our afternoon tea in lovely surroundings is a wonderful way to spend a few hours. Jam, scones and even a cheeky glass of Prosecco are on the menu for tables of up to 10 people.



SNAP's Awareness Week 2020 **22nd-29th June 2020**

Following the success of our inaugural SNAP Awareness Week last year we are hoping that SNAP's amazing supporters will get involved with raising the charity's profile and helping to raise funds to allow us to continue our vital work supporting more than 2,800 families.

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