



matters

Sharing news of SNAP's important work



Supporting
over 4,000
families across
Essex

We are here for the whole family

Supporting parents, carers, grandparents and siblings of children and young people with additional needs and disabilities

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About Us



Making a difference

SNAP is an Essex charity that helps families with children and young people who have any additional need or disability, and live under Essex County Council, Thurrock or Southend local authorities.

SNAP offers a helping hand to thousands of families who need support in a variety of ways. No formal diagnosis or professional referral is necessary to access SNAP services, which are available to families of children and young people aged 0 to 25.

SNAP is currently offering a wide range of services - at the centre, remotely or hybrid - 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

Scan me to find out more
information about SNAP!



SNAP contact information:

Helpline - 01277 211300 Fundraising - 01277 245345

Email - info@snapcharity.org

Website - www.snapcharity.org

The SNAP Centre, Pastoral Way, Warley,
Brentwood CM14 5WF

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Wales No. 03805837

For views/future articles, contact editor,
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Welcome

It has been a busy time here at SNAP over the summer. Our holiday sessions have been jam-packed, we hosted SIBS4FUN in August with 54 siblings in attendance, and we participated in the first ever Try-a-Tri in Brentwood! You can find out more about what we have been up to in the highlights on page 3.

With autumn in the air, our family team is working hard to bring you a variety of activities and support services for the new term. After a successful trial run during the summer term, our session named 'Marvellous Mondays' is continuing on Monday evenings for young people in years 6 to 11, who identify as female or non-binary. During this session our young people can enjoy arts and crafts, music, gaming, nail art, and our lovely Counsellor, Tina, is on hand to offer support.

Back to school time also means a whole new line up of specialist parent talks! We have Kathryn Miller joining us again for two talks, one in October explaining the different aspects of neurodivergent conditions Autism and ADHD, and another in November focused on school and anxiety. We will also have Zoë from OCD-UK sharing information on Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder. Check out page 6 for more information on these and how to book.

Looking forward to next year, it is hard to believe that SNAP's 30th Anniversary is on the horizon! We have so many exciting events and celebrations planned for 2024 including the SNAP Masquerade Ball on Saturday 16th March at Stock Brook Manor to celebrate 30 years of SNAP! More details about the event and how to book can be found on our website and on page 8.

I hope to see you all there if not before!

Best wishes,

Karen

Karen Boath, CEO

SNAP in numbers

(January-August 2023)

4,165

Families
supported

453

New families
registered

1,901

Helpline calls

3,328

Helpline emails

5,198

Hours of children
services

811

Participants in
specialist talks &
workshops

Highlights

Teddy Bears Picnic

If you were to go down to SNAP in July, you'd be sure of a big surprise... Our pre-schoolers were greeted by Big Bear at the front desk as they arrived for our annual Teddy Bears Picnic.

Our SNAP pre-schoolers enjoyed music, nursery rhymes, Play-Doh, biscuit decorating, and had a special picnic area upstairs for tea with their favourite teddy. We also had two very special additions: face painting by Mrs Plumstead and some small handmade knitted teddies by SNAP supporter, Ann, for each child to take home. A very special thank you to you both! SNAP parent, Lisa - "We had a really great time and loved our little knitted bears."



The SNAP calendar is always packed with services, activities and events. For the latest updates, follow SNAP on social media.

A big hit!

The esteemed Thorndon Park Golf Club hosted SNAP's ninth annual Golf Day on Friday 15th September, where 84 golfers played in teams of three, hoping to be crowned champions whilst raising money for SNAP.



Congratulations to the winning team, SNAP Duffers - Adrian, Keith and Malcolm! (pictured above)

Eat. Beach. Sleep. Repeat.

SIBS4FUN, the annual activity week in summer dedicated to the siblings of children with additional needs, was a beach bonanza this year! 54 siblings enjoyed a care-free break and a range of exciting activities including Meridian Kung Fu Billericay, an escape room treasure hunt, 'Total Wipeout' inflatable course, Silly Sports competition and Rocky's Animals petting zoo!

One parent shared how much their child enjoyed SIBS4FUN, "They didn't stop talking the moment they got into the car. We get to hear every detail and can tell how much they enjoy their days. So much is packed in to make this a really memorable experience for siblings. Some of their best comments have revolved around the friendships with other sibs. It was lovely to hear them speak about how it was 'meant to be' that they met another child of the same age who had a sibling with Down's Syndrome."

This week is a lifeline for siblings, enabling them to just be children for a week, free from their usual care-giving responsibilities. Thanks to Moody Charitable Trust, Boshier-Hinton Foundation, Haslers Foundation and Baker Labels for helping to fund the week.



A tri-umphant debut!

More than 150 participants put their best feet forward to take part in the first ever Try-a-Tri event in Brentwood on Sunday 2nd July. Organised by Tri Sport Essex, a Triathlon club with a 30-year history, the event provided a great introduction to triathlons and SNAP was chosen as the recipient charity!



First-time triathlete, Scott Lighterness was delighted that his personal efforts raised £540 for SNAP!

"It gave me a really good insight into the workings of a triathlon, without being daunting. Most importantly, it was great to be able to raise money for SNAP Charity whilst having fun."

The Tri Sport Essex team were euphoric with the amount raised. "It gives me great pleasure to confirm that we have raised a fantastic £5,000 for SNAP."

Tri Sport Essex are hoping to host the event again next year, so watch this space!

Trustee Spotlight

Support behind the scenes at SNAP



'30 IN 30' DAYS CHALLENGE

Join the SNAP Team in kicking off our 30th Anniversary with a fun 30 in 30 days challenge!

Choose a challenge to bring a bit of joy and help beat those January blues.

From fitness goals, to making space for simple pleasures, choose the challenge that suits you best and help us raise £3,000 in January.

Just 30 people need to raise £100 each to help us jumpstart our anniversary celebrations.



Which challenge will you choose?

For more information or to register your interest, please email fundraising@snapcharity.org

Sitting quietly (and sometimes not so quietly!) behind the amazing team at SNAP are the Trustees whose responsibility it is to oversee the governance of the Charity to ensure its long-term sustainability.

As SNAP approaches its 30th birthday in 2024 with plans for extending the services offered, hear a bit of what is involved from our Chair of Trustees, Mandy, as we wish to recruit two new additional trustees to support with the successful delivery of these plans.

"Our wonderful board brings together individuals from many sectors including finance, insurance, legal, HR, NHS, sometimes as SNAP families as well.

"As a SNAP family you will have experienced the issues around the provision of support for you, and your children and young adults first hand. Therefore, you will be able to bring a unique and vital perspective to the Board."

The full board meets four times a year, usually on a Wednesday evening. Additionally, all Trustees are asked to join at least one sub-committee, the main ones being finance, critical incident/risk, fundraising and marketing. This would add another four/five meetings per year as well. Finally, to fully understand SNAP if Trustees haven't done so as a family, we encourage them to attend one session a year at the Centre to see SNAP in action.

"We would like our Board to be diverse, reflecting the families we support, so we are keen to find Trustees from a broad range of backgrounds. A full induction and training programme will be provided, so don't worry if this is something new for you.

"Since becoming a Trustee in 2016 and then Chair in

2019 I have had the opportunity to learn about governance and understand how the charity sector works, an environment I had not worked in previously. Prior to this I never understood the complex procedures (or lack of them) SNAP parents face when seeking support for themselves and their children. I love the fact that the Trustee board enable the SNAP team to continue to offer relevant, effective and sustainable services. The outstanding feedback SNAP receives gives me encouragement to continue supporting SNAP as we are accomplishing great things."

SNAP's CEO, Karen, says: "Our Trustee board are a great support for me and The SNAP Team. Not only do we rely on their combined experience and expertise to help us plan for the future, but they are also a great sounding board for navigating difficult decisions. They are a huge help in making sure SNAP will continue to be here to support families in the future. SNAP really would not be the same without them."

SNAP is such an amazing charity and if you feel you have the time and enthusiasm to support it, whilst having some fun as well, the trustee board would love to hear from you. The first step would be to email info@snapcharity.org by **Friday 20th October** with the subject line 'Trustee interest' to let us know that you are interested.



School anxiety

School phobia, school avoidance and emotionally based school refusal are some of the terms used to describe a condition where a child has significant difficulties attending school on account of severe emotional distress during, but very often not displayed until after, their time in school.

Many children show early signs that school is causing them anxiety and that they are finding it hard to cope, as soon as this becomes evident it is important to speak to the class teacher, pastoral team or head of year and ensure they begin to introduce appropriate strategies (see below).

What makes a difference?

- Build your child's trust in you as parents/carers to be 'on their side', talking to them to gain understanding of what the problem looks like for them
- Support them to understand that there are things that can change, and that you and school can help with that

Autism Consultant and Specialist Teacher Kathryn Miller is back and this time she is exploring the causes of anxiety related to school and ways in which families and schools can work together to support a child or young person.

- Ensure you communicate with School, if phone calls are difficult then email instead and agree that school will also email rather than calling.



In my experience **TRUST** is key so when plans and agreements are made make sure they are written down and stuck to by all adults involved. When things have to change (inevitably they will!) explain why to your child, showing empathy that this may be hard for them.

Schools have a duty to make reasonable adjustments. If attendance is proving very difficult (or impossible) for your child you may wish to ask about the following adjustments...

- Having a named member of staff who meets with your child as often as possible, and who they can seek out if they feel overwhelmed

- Having a 'time out' pass that they can use if feeling anxious in a lesson, with an agreed space to go to if they have to use it

- If your child finds particular lessons (or teachers) difficult explore whether there is an option for them to stay out of these lessons

- It may be possible to introduce part time attendance, with a plan to gradually build up time spent in school at your child's pace.

Allow your child some control over the process and try to always be transparent with them.

Clouds and Rainbows provides support, training and advice for families and education settings across Essex and surrounding areas. If you would like further information, please email Kathryn: kathryn@cloudsandrainbows.org.uk

Kathryn is leading a Specialist Talk for SNAP on 'School Anxiety and Emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA)' online and in-person on Wednesday 15th November. More information can be found on page 6.

Fidgets - Yay or nay?

For a while now, fidget toys have been the craze in homes and schools across the nation. A lot of children and young people at SNAP have used them, and will continue to, not because they're a distraction but because they are actually helping with something a lot more complex...

We fidget when we are bored, uncomfortable, anxious, or restless. Others feel a need to move, which can create challenges in school, college or potentially a work environment. If you are repeatedly clicking your pen, or jiggling your leg in a meeting, then you've done your fair share of fidgeting too.

Some may believe that fidget toys are a distraction and not helpful to anyone, but they are actually a

useful self-regulation tool. Fidget toys were originally created to help people focus, though reduced anxiety quickly became an additional positive side-effect. This can also help people to exercise the impulse for motion without negatively affecting their attention and focus.



By giving individuals something to keep their hands busy, fidget toys can have a calming effect. The brain stem plays a crucial role in controlling essential bodily functions like respiration, heart rate, and consciousness. Movement, even just with the hands, helps keep the brain stem alert and stimulated.

So when you next see someone with a fidget toy, or maybe your child asks to purchase one, think about why they may be using it...

Specialist Talks - September to December 2023

The funding SNAP received for our Specialist Talks, Workshops and Coffee Mornings has come to an end. We are now charging a nominal fee for registered SNAP families. SNAP appreciates that the rise in the cost of living has impacted families with children with additional needs more than most, and do not want a family's financial situation to be a barrier to accessing services. Please contact SNAP to discuss payment if this is impacting on you accessing our talks.

For the latest information, visit the SNAP website - snapcharity.org/training or SNAP's social media channels.

Parent Time

Wednesday 27th September
The SNAP Centre - 10am to 12noon

Parent Time is an informal discussion event for parents whose child is in the infant years of primary school (**Reception to Year 2**). It is a great opportunity to meet other families in a similar situation and share experiences. It will also be a chance to look at a range of specialist resources and information.

Crèche facilities are available for this session for pre-school aged siblings - please email admin@snapcharity.org to book a crèche place.

Understanding Autism and Neurodiversity with Kathryn Miller

Wednesday 18th October
The SNAP Centre - 10am to 12noon
Online webinar - 7:30pm to 9:30pm

Kathryn will be looking at different aspects of neurodivergent conditions Autism and ADHD, as well as exploring common co-occurring areas where additional support may be required.

Introduction to Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) - with Zoë from OCD-UK

Wednesday 8th November
Online webinar - 10am to 12noon

This webinar is an introduction to Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and will breakdown exactly what the condition is and how it works. Zoë will look at the different symptoms associated with OCD, and what evidence based treatment for the condition involves. This session will not be recorded.

School Anxiety with Kathryn Miller

Wednesday 15th November
The SNAP Centre - 10am to 12noon
Online webinar - 7:30pm to 9:30pm

Kathryn will be exploring the causes of anxiety related to school and ways in which families and schools can work together to support a child or young person.



Starve that anxiety gremlin!



SNAP's specialist library, based at The SNAP Centre, contains a variety of books, easy reference information sheets and DVDs, that are free to borrow over a four week loan period. The extensive range of resources are available to anyone concerned with additional needs and disability. SNAP's Info & Admin Assistant, Alex, shares one of her favourite reads, *Starving The Anxiety Gremlin* by Kate Collins-Donnelly (two versions - 5-9 years and 10+).

"Both versions of the book are a relatively easy read and aimed at children, with the latest book aimed at 5-9-year-olds being more child friendly including more drawings and explaining anxiety through cartoon type character drawings. At the beginning of the book aimed at children aged 10+, Kate explains what anxiety is, and how it can affect the individual physically or cognitively and how to manage it. The examples included are anxiety disorder, panic attacks, different phobias, health anxiety, obsessive compulsive disorder and separation anxiety. Anxiety often comes alongside some children's additional needs. Towards the end of the book there are lots of activities for the individual to do (boxes to draw in, wordsearches, crosswords, exercises, and an anxiety diary). These tasks could be done alongside an adult or by themselves and the adult could read afterwards so could be a way for the individual to express their feelings without directly opening up. I love this book for this time of year because it's so helpful for children who might be feeling anxious about going back to or starting a new school".



Team Darwin: Conquering the UK three peaks

SNAP Dad, Paul, and his colleagues at Darwin Recruitment took on the UK Three Peaks Challenge earlier this year for SNAP!

Paul heard about SNAP after his daughter, Marcia was born. "When we had Marcia, we learnt about her disability when she was a baby. Within 10 weeks of her birth they identified an unusual chromosome disorder. Afterwards the doctors recommended a charity called Unique, who signposted us to SNAP".

Paul and his family came to SNAP for an initial advice session where they asked questions about Marcia's condition and began learning how best to support her and what the future could hold. Marcia then attended pre-school sessions and Sensorise, a session for children with profound or complex needs. Paul, Marcia and the family have been coming to SNAP for over a decade.

"SNAP has been very personally important to us as a family. Eden, Marcia's older sister was a Helper at SIBS4FUN this year, a special week dedicated to spoiling the siblings of children with additional needs. Eden said, "SIBS gives us a break from our brothers and sisters and a chance to make new friends. It also gives my sister time with our parents." When asked about how they found helping out this year, Eden said, "SIBS is really fun and helps people understand each others needs."



The Darwin Team chose the Three Peaks as a team bonding challenge and a way of giving back after witnessing Paul's experiences first-hand. The Three Peaks Challenge is not for the faint of heart! Those taking on the challenge must tackle Ben Nevis (Scotland), Snowdon (Wales) and Scafell Pike (England) all in 24 hours.

Paul's colleague Gabriella said, "There's a few of us in the office who are always up for a challenge so I felt like it could be a good thing to do and a good way of raising some money for SNAP. Part of the challenge is to complete it within 24 hours but in the end, it was about 28 hours of climbing and driving on repeat with little food or sleep."

Gabriella told us, "I was actually really anxious before it kicked off, purely because I didn't know what to expect. I'd done a couple of mountains before, but I didn't really know how I was going to find doing three back-to-back. The guides were so helpful. To be honest, without them, I just don't think we would have been able to do it. They were really reassuring and tried to help us out as much as possible."

"When we would get back on the bus and it'd be alright for a couple of hours and then we would start to seize up and get quite achy, so we were passing around massage guns and Ibuprofen. But the general team spirit really kept everyone going. I think the hardest mountain, in terms of the tiredness, was Scarfell because we got there at about 9:45pm so we started climbing really late at night and it was about 1am when we got back down to the bottom. Plus that was on top of having started Ben Nevis at 7am."

"The best bit for me was definitely at the top of each mountain, and then at the bottom once we got back down, it was really euphoric. You felt like you'd really achieved something and at the bottom you

were like, "Thank God! I've actually done it!" And obviously the end of all three was absolutely brilliant.



"The worst bit was getting to the top of Ben Nevis, it was just impossible! There was snow on the ground and it was so icy so we were all sliding. By that point we'd been climbing for around three hours and then had to basically scramble on ice. It was just hideous! That was something I wouldn't want to repeat!"

For Paul, the worst part was that he was only able to complete one of the mountains! His knee gave out on him so he became 'team encourager', cheering on the team before they set off for the other two mountains and keeping up morale. Paul said, "I was gutted but we'd done the challenge previously, and completed it, a colleague Sarah had a similar injury to me. It was really good for the rest of the team to have someone to support and raise spirits... so I got to return the favour!"

But the Darwin team's hard work paid off, raising an incredible £11,955 for SNAP! Thank you so much - you are all awesome!

If you would like to fundraise for SNAP, contact the Fundraising Team on 01277 245345 or email fundraising@snapcharity.org

Alternatively, visit SNAP's website snapcharity.org/get-involved

Upcoming events

FEATURING:
Three course meal
Live entertainment
Auction
and
Raffle

Drinks
from 7pm
Carriages at 1am
Maximum
tables of 12

ENJOY A NIGHT OF CELEBRATION!

SNAP'S 30TH ANNIVERSARY MASQUERADE BALL

Saturday 16th March 2024
Stock Brook Manor

**BOOK
NOW**
plus more
information
via
www.snapcharity.org



GET READY FOR SOME CURRY HOUSE ROCK!

ELVIS curry night

SOLD OUT

£35
per person

Register your place via www.snapcharity.org

£5 entry
on the door
includes coffee
and cake

plus Christmas stalls

Coffee
cake
and
catch-up

Wednesday 1st November 2023
11:00am-2:00pm at The SNAP Centre

**Comedy
BINGO**

Eyes down for a great fundraising evening
of bingo hosted by Skittleman

Friday 10th November 2023
The Nightingale Centre, next door to The SNAP Centre, CM14 5GB
Please arrive 7.00pm for a 7.30pm start // £10 per person
Book your place via SNAP's website snapcharity.org

**Quiz
Night**

7pm for a 7:30pm start
Friday 26th January 2024

The Nightingale Centre
Pastoral Way, Warley,
Brentwood, CM14 5GB

SAVE THE
DATE

For more information or to book tickets for any of
these events, please visit snapcharity.org/events.

More events will be coming in 2023 and 2024 so keep
your eyes peeled on SNAP social media platforms
and the SNAP website.



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For more information on events,
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