



matters

Sharing news of SNAP's important work



Supporting
over 4,800
families across
Essex

"You are not alone"

Family Support Adviser, Sasha, shares the crucial role SNAP has played in her family's life for over 20 years and the importance of supporting the whole family.

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The lifeline that
supports many Essex
families

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The term ahead is
packed full of great
training for parents,
carers and professionals

7 Fundraising Champion

SNAP supporter Mike
continues to push
himself to the limits

About Us



Partnering with Parents

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.

At SNAP, we have a wide range of services - at the Centre, remotely and 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
- 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
or familyteam@snapcharity.org

Website - www.snapcharity.org

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

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Welcome

Happy New Year!

It is so hard to believe our anniversary year has come to an end. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who supported SNAP throughout our celebrations. One remarkable supporter is Mike Conyers who has been an amazing SNAP Ambassador and fundraiser for many years. On [page 7](#), you can read all about the daring challenges he has completed to help us make a difference.

Looking ahead we have lots of exciting talks and workshops on the horizon, including another Brighter Futures Course in January and Emotional Resilience Course in March. We are also thrilled to be partnering with organisations such as The Great Little OT Practice, whose expertise is providing families with valuable skills and knowledge. You can find more details about these partnerships on the next page and see the full schedule of upcoming courses and coffee mornings on [page 6](#).

As always, please remember that SNAP is here for you. In this issue, we've spotlighted our Helpline ([pages 4-5](#)), offering insight into how it connects with our wider services, external resources and providers. You will also find a special feature from Sasha, who has shared her inspiring journey with SNAP - from sibling, to volunteer, to valued staff member.

We hope to see you at one of our SNAP events this year, such as our annual Quiz Night in January and a Beat the Wine Bluffers wine tasting in February ([page 8](#)). Both are sure to be great fun! Look out for more events throughout 2025 on our social media, website and supporter emails. Until then, take care and know we are here whenever you need us.

Warm regards

Karen

Karen Boath, CEO

SNAP in numbers

(End of 2024)

4,847

Families supported

594

New families
registered

2,941

Helpline calls

4,265

Helpline emails

6,789

Hours of children
services

540

Participants in
specialist talks &
workshops

Highlights

What a fantastic end to SNAP's 30th anniversary year!
Here are a few snippets of last few months of 2024...

Coffee with Occupational Therapists

Aaron and Jenne from The Great Little OT Practice joined us at The SNAP Centre for two coffee mornings in October and December.

The Occupational Therapists were on hand to answer questions, give advice and help wherever they could with anything OT-related.

Aaron and Jenne will be joining us again in the Spring Term. See the list of dates on [page 6](#).



Sensory Fun

Services Support Assistant, Olivia and Services Support Intern, Hannah have been creating themed sensory trays over the Autumn Term for our SNAP on a Friday pre-school sessions.

Keep an eye on our social media for more ideas this term for your family to try at home.



For the latest from SNAP,
follow us on social media:



@snapcharity @snap_charity

Carp-a-diem

By day, Dan Hockaday is a Community Learning Disability Nurse, but in his free time, he's a keen successful carp angler, having been a Semi-finalist in 2023's British Carp Angling Championship.

Over the last weekend in September, Dan held a carp event in aid of SNAP. The competition saw 35 anglers across the big lake at Suffolk Water Park. The competition was kicked off on Thursday night with a BBQ and social evening and saw the anglers enjoying beautiful weather throughout the weekend. The event attracted many visitors and other anglers who soaked up the amazing atmosphere. On Sunday winners were announced as well as the incredible £4,730.50 the event raised.



Dan presenting Glen Bradley with his award for Section Winner

Read the full story at
www.snapcharity.org/carp-2024

Full of pure joy

SNAP's Drama Club, Junior Choir and Parent Choir came together to showcase their talent in SNAP's Party Bonanza. It was held for the first time at The Brentwood Theatre, in collaboration for both their 30th birthday celebrations. It was an honour and privilege for our clubs to perform there, and for many of our performers it was their first time on stage!

The performers passion and enthusiasm oozed into the audience creating beaming faces and many teary eyes in the audience.

It was a beautiful amalgamation of dedication, hard work and encouragement from Alli, Emily and the rest of the Services team.

Sarah, who is a SNAP mum and member of the Parent Choir said, "Tonight was full of pure joy, everyone was encouraging one another and we all, including my own family in the audience, had so much fun. Thank you SNAP... and also thank you to Emily, our musical genius who takes us under her wing and always brings a smile to our lives."



SNAP's Junior Choir with their certificates of achievement

Thank you to our sponsors for helping to make the night happen - we are so grateful for your support - Blue Serif, Lady Penelope Wines, Parker Smith Inclusion, Baker Labels, Tees Law and 44 Benefit Solutions. Thanks to Red Oak Wear for printing the fabulous t-shirts for our performers too!

Thank you also to the Basildon and Brentwood NHS Health Inequalities Fund, for funding the SNAP Afterschool Clubs this year.

Family services

Here for your family every step of the way

SNAP's Helpline is often the first contact point families have with the charity. Helpline Manager Pam shares some information about the support that Essex families can receive via the phone or email.

"Whether you are looking for specific information or you just need someone to talk to, our Family Support Advisers are ready at the end of the phone with a listening, non-judgemental ear. We enable parents to talk in a safe space and give each person as long they need to express their feelings and concerns about their child/young person. We want them to finish the call feeling as though a burden has been lifted after speaking to us.

"We partner with parents, helping them to identify strategies to improve their situation and give the best possible help to their children.

"On our Helpline, we explain the services offered at SNAP such as specialist parent talks, workshops and courses, in addition to activity sessions for children. SNAP is here to work in partnership with families until their young person reaches the age of 25.

"We have an Online Directory of useful contacts, Information Network and Information Sheets for specific topics, as well as a Specialist Library at The SNAP Centre. We can offer more in-depth Face-to-Face appointments for parents to talk things through in person at our Centre, or extended phone calls if more convenient.



First contact

Call • Email • In Person
Social media

Step
1

Step
2

Follow-up

Signpost to resources

Access to a wide variety of support & resources

Information Network • Parent Talks

SNAP Library • Survival Guides

SNAP Directory • Ongoing support

Face-to-face support • Benefit advice

Children's activities • Information Sheets

Step
3

"The advisers follow up after a helpline call with an email, detailing direct links to the strategies and resources discussed during the call. This could be materials about their child's diagnosis or condition, strategies to support their child, signposting to local organisations for specialist support and more.

"We want parents to know that they are not alone. We are here to help, support and advise."

"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."

"I was totally overwhelmed when I made this call, but I know I'm not by myself anymore and there are things I can do to help him and people who can help."

"Thank you for your support and understanding when I called you feeling exhausted and extremely overwhelmed. I felt a little weight was lifted after we hung up. I really am so grateful for your help."

"I am so glad I made contact with SNAP and can access all this advice and support."

Parent Feedback
After
Helpline Support

Family services

SNAP is a member of the Helplines Partnership – the membership body for organisations that provide information, support or advice via phone, email, text or online.



SNAP's Helpline is open

Monday-Thursday
9.00am-4.00pm

Friday
9.00am-3.00pm


 Telephone Helpline:
01277 211300

 Email Helpline:
familyteam@snapcharity.org

SNAP would like to thank The Henry Smith Charity, The National Lottery Community Fund and the Garfield Weston Foundation for their support in funding the Helpline.

End of
2024
Helpline
stats


1,962
Number of families supported


2,941
Helpline calls


4,265
Helpline emails

"Listening is a great gift that I can offer"

SNAP Matters spoke to one of the newest members of the Family Team, Sasha, who has a long history with SNAP and an amazing journey of how she started to work for the charity.

"I haven't known my life without SNAP. We have been part of the SNAP family for over 20 years. I first visited SNAP at 2 weeks old in Keys Hall, when my older brother John attended, age 4.

"Growing up with two autistic older brothers, SNAP has always been there. From a young age, I wanted to go into teaching and saw volunteering at SNAP as a way to see what it could be like to work with children.

"When I was 16, I started volunteering once a week at Yoga Club after school. I just loved it and how easy it was for all children and young people to access. It was such a lovely place to be. There was no pressure. If a child was emotionally dysregulated and didn't want to join in, they didn't have to but could if they wanted to.

"I then started to do half term sessions. My younger brother George was attending SNAP at this point after being diagnosed with Autism. He was pre-verbal and only communicated via Makaton, but coming to SNAP enabled him to grow and develop his confidence, and he started talking.



Family Support Adviser Sasha with her younger brother George



"Being around neurodiversity my whole life, it was important for me to not just work with neurotypical children at a school. SNAP gave me a bit more of an insight into what it means to be neurodiverse and the support that's available out there."

Sasha went to university to study Education and Childhood Studies with the view of becoming a teacher which she did for 3 years. But she saw a job advert come up on Facebook for a Family Support Adviser role on the Helpline and she was getting to a point where she didn't know if teaching was for her anymore.

"I loved teaching and being able to adapt the learning for a child if they were struggling. I wanted to do more for the children but there wasn't enough hours in the day and I felt I could make a difference at SNAP. I understood SNAP, having been around children with additional needs and how much it means for them and their families to receive support, like my own did.

"The staff at SNAP know that something that works for one child may not work for another. It's important for families to know they are talking to someone who isn't judgmental, it's a safe space and if they've tried things that haven't worked it's not the end of the world, we work in partnership to talk about other strategies and support for their child and family.

"If you ever want to reach out but you feel scared to, drop us an email and we'll get back to you. We hope parents feel relieved and supported after talking with us."

Family services



January to April 2025

SNAP organises a unique and diverse calendar of Specialist Talks, Courses and Coffee Mornings for parents and professionals.

For more information, visit the SNAP website - www.snapcharity.org/training.

Please email info@snapcharity.org to book/register your interest for the Spring Term talks.

Brighter Futures Course

Starts Wednesday 8th January
Every Wednesday for 6 weeks
The SNAP Centre - 10am to 12noon
£60 per SNAP registered parent

Led by Kathryn Miller of Clouds and Rainbows, this course is for parents of primary-aged neurodivergent (ADHD/Autistic) children.

She will cover topics such as understanding neurodiversity, sensory processing, emotional regulation and behaviour as communication.

Emotional Resilience Course

Starts Wednesday 5th March
Every Wednesday for 4 weeks
The SNAP Centre - 10am to 12noon
£40 per SNAP registered parent

Led by Natalie Fernando, this course is for parents of children with SEND.

She will cover topics such as understanding emotions, building resilience, effective communication and self-care.



We are extremely grateful to the Essex County Council Carers Community Fund for funding the courses above.

Informing You online

SNAP shares a wide range of information online with parents and carers through

Survival Guides
Information Sheets
online Directory
Information Network

Head to our website
www.snapcharity.org
& click Need Support

Scan here with your phone



Produced by SNAP with families in mind.

Coffee Mornings with Occupational Therapists

Wednesday 22nd January - SOLD OUT
Wednesday 2nd April
The SNAP Centre - 10.30am to 12noon
Free of charge

Join Occupational Therapists Aaron and Jenne of The Great Little OT Practice, Maldon, who will be on hand to answer any questions, give some informal advice and help wherever they can with anything OT-related.

In Partnership With



In Partnership With



Wills & Trusts with Birketts

Wednesday 29th January
Online Webinar - 7.00pm to 9.00pm
£5 per SNAP registered parent

Natasha, Senior Associate from Birketts, will host a live webinar to discuss the importance of Wills and Trusts and how these can be used to protect your assets and your family members. This will be an informal talk with an opportunity for questions to be raised throughout. Natasha will not be able to give specific legal advice on specific questions but will be able to speak generally about the law and the options available.

ADHD Coffee Morning with Steve Challen

Wednesday 26th February
The SNAP Centre - 10am to 12noon
£5 per SNAP registered parent

Steve Challen from ADHD+ Support will be coming into SNAP to deliver an in person talk on ADHD. In this talk he will cover emotions and behaviour, medication and more. This will be helpful and of interest to parents, and others who come into contact with ADHD, have ADHD, or live with someone with ADHD.

Coffee Morning with a Physio & OT

Wednesday 5th March
The SNAP Centre - 10.30am to 12pm
Free of charge

This session will be jointly hosted by Aaron from The Great Little OT Practice and Neil from Mini Wonders Physiotherapy.

They will be on hand to answer questions and discuss all things Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy.

In Partnership With



We appreciate 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 by emailing admin@snapcharity.org.

Fundraising

"My blindness doesn't confine me"

Mike Conyers featured in our very first edition of SNAP Matters back in 2017 as a Charity Champion raising an incredible £32,000 over 16 years.

Fast forward to 2024 and Mike has continued to go above and beyond for SNAP, pushing boundaries and taking on challenges that are not for the faint hearted. He has broken £50,000 in fundraising for the charity, now standing at £52,000 – a phenomenal sum that SNAP is incredibly grateful to Mike for raising.

By day, you'll find Mike in Crushes Manor Clinic Brentwood, where he works as a Chartered Physiotherapist. He lost his sight at the age of 12 but that never stopped him.

Every day Mike proves that disability does not hold him back.

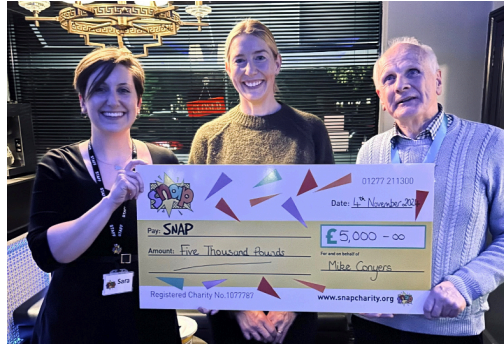
"I like to push myself. I like to demonstrate to people that my blindness doesn't confine me. Many people have sight but not vision. You can see but you don't have any sight."

This belief has spurred Mike on to complete many challenges over the years. In 2021, he was awarded an MBE for his services to charity.

His latest challenge was the Dock2Dock, a swimming competition at London's Royal Docks. He swam a mile (that's 66 lengths of The Brentwood Centre pool!) in open water accompanied by his guide, Jenny Allan.



Mike joined Jenny in open water swimming two summers ago at Stubbers Activity Centre, Upminster. She guides Mike by swimming next to him and they talk to one another as they do breaststroke.



Sara with Jenny and Mike - they raised over £5000 from this one event

It was Jenny's suggestion to take up a one-mile open water challenge, which to Mike sounded a long way! But Mike loves a challenge, so he thought "why not?" and they got to training! They'd swim for about an hour to an hour and a half without stopping and managed to complete a mile ahead of the event.

"On the day, there were several planes over from London City Airport so that was disconcerting and a bit disorientating. As we headed into Victoria Dock, the water became very choppy with high winds and strong currents. I had to keep communicating with Jenny and every time I opened my mouth, I got a mouth full of water which was quite challenging as it made me cough and wheeze, but we got there. We actually did it three minutes quicker than usual in 1 hour and 17 minutes. I can't thank Jenny enough for her consistent encouragement and guidance. Hopefully Swim Serpentine will be our next challenge in 2025."

SNAP's Fundraising Manager, Sara, said, "Mike is an absolute superstar and the team at SNAP are awestruck by his incredible achievements. What an inspiration! Thank you Mike and we can't wait to hear about what you do next!"

If Mike has inspired you to take on a challenge in aid of SNAP, please contact the Fundraising Team on 01277 245345 or email fundraising@snapcharity.org.

Reaching new heights

Mike has completed lots of challenges for SNAP since 2001. He reflects on some of them.

The most exciting challenge

"It would either have to be the skydive from 10,000ft - I kept my eyes closed for that one! Or walking on hot coals, I got carried away with the adrenaline on that one and did it 3 times!"

The biggest challenge

"My biggest challenge has to be conquering Kilimanjaro, Tanzania. It took 4 days to get to the top. The last challenge from the base camp at 15,000ft, we had the effects of altitude sickness, shortness of breath and you challenge the escarpment and shale, at about -5°C.

"That last climb on Kilimanjaro was 80% mental endurance.

"I did some research after and only 30% of people actually get to the top. It's mental endurance, that's the biggest challenge."



Mike at the summit of Kilimanjaro - Africa's highest point

"We are capable of many things. We should push ourselves and demonstrate to others that we really are capable of doing lots of things." - Mike

Fundraising

Celebrating through Song

SNAP's 24 Hour Kitchen Disco was back with a bang in 2024 in celebration of SNAP's 30th anniversary.

SNAP CEO Karen said, "We wanted to bring this challenge back as part of SNAP's 30th Anniversary celebrations. We thought that this would be a great way of getting as many people as possible together to celebrate this milestone whilst also raising awareness of SNAP."

The stream from The SNAP Centre went live on YouTube at 9am on 19 October, with music therapist Emily kicking off the proceedings. She was joined by many special guests including performances from SNAP's Junior and Parent Choirs, as well as two SNAP young people, Tyler and Nathan, who gave solo performances. The Junior Choir wrote a song specially for SNAP's 30th Anniversary.

The event culminated in Family Support Adviser, Alli having his head shaved! Alli said, "I knew I would be playing Uncle Fester in Brentwood Musical Theatre Society's production of Addams Family the Musical at the end of October at Brentwood Theatre. Rather than opting for a latex bald cap to create the iconic character's look, I decided I would 'brave the shave' raising

"You are all doing such an incredible job! Fantastically entertaining and what an amazing wealth of fabulous talent. Our family will forever be indebted to this excellent charity. A literal life saver."
- SNAP Family feedback -

money for SNAP and letting Karen loose with the clippers live at the Kitchen Disco!"

Fundraising Manager Sara said, "It was a wacky way to round off the 24 Hour Kitchen Disco but it really fit with the silliness we had been up to throughout the event. Everyone really got behind Alli and he raised an amazing £1,343! We are so grateful to him for his courage, especially letting Karen shave his head after being up for 24 hours!"

She added, "It was an incredible event. At multiple points I was really moved by the comments, dedicated songs and all the love for SNAP. By the end of the stream, we were exhausted but also elated. In the end the disco raised £9,946.97! This is a huge help and will ensure that SNAP can continue to be here for families across Essex in future."



Front from left to right - SNAP staff Alli, Sami, Karen, and Music Therapist Emily.
Back from left to right - Hannah, Sara, Rachel and surprise guest, Emily

Read more about SNAP's 24 Hour Kitchen Disco on our website:
snapcharity.org/news

Upcoming events

7pm for a 7:30pm start
Friday
31st January 2025
Quiz Night
The Nightingale Centre
Pastoral Way,
Warley,
CM14 5GB

Beat The Wine Bluffers

Friday 28th February 2025

Shenfield Parish Hall
60 Hutton Rd, CM15 8LB



More information and booking can be found at snapcharity.org/events.

Scan the QR code to the left to go straight to the Events webpage.

Remember us in your will

Help local families

Are you thinking about writing or updating your will?

Your donation will help SNAP support families that need our services in the future

Please contact: seniormanagement@snapcharity.org

Thank you for thinking of SNAP



Get all the latest updates by subscribing to supporter emails
snapcharity.org/subscribe.

or scan this QR code with your phone camera.