

# HOT Gossip

Spring 2007

Did you know we are working with the following people?



**60** 1:1 advocacy partnerships with paid staff  
and **14** 1:1 partnerships with volunteer advocates



**60** people in self advocacy groups and  
**30** people who attend the Friday Network



**25** children and young people with autism and  
Asperger's syndrome



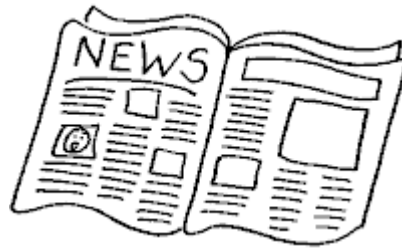
**50** parents who have children with autism or  
Asperger's syndrome

## Speakeasy Advocacy

Giving a voice and support to people with learning difficulties,  
autistic spectrum disorders and/or Asperger's syndrome



Registered charity number: 1108304



## Speakeasy Advocacy News



### **Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy**

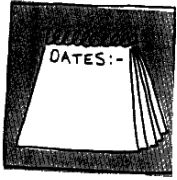
A new law comes into force on 2 April 2007, which gives certain people the right to an advocate. Advocacy projects in Hampshire have been awarded the contract to deliver this service, which is for people who aren't able to make decisions for themselves on where they live or serious medical treatment, and have no appropriate friends or family that can be consulted. Some of our existing advocates are being trained so they can act as Independent Mental Capacity Advocates for people with learning disabilities in Basingstoke.



### **Funding update**

We didn't get the lottery money we applied for, but we have been awarded money for the following:

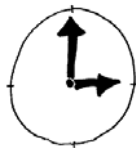
- £7,000 for Internet Explorers
- £24,000 for working with parents who have a learning disability
- £15,000 for providing the new Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy Service in Basingstoke for people with learning disabilities



# Coffee morning dates for 2007



Saturday 3 March  
(Not in April because of  
Easter)  
5 May  
2 June  
7 July  
4 August  
1 September  
6 October  
3 November  
1 December



10 am - 1 pm



17 New Road, Basingstoke

Please bring some  if you want to buy  
drinks or biscuits - for more information



01256 332795



## Self advocacy groups

**Self advocacy = speaking up for yourself**



**Wicked and Wacky** enjoyed travelling to Fleet by bus and having lunch with their friends from the Fleet self advocacy group.

Wicked and Wacky visited The Community Tree exhibition at the Willis Museum that Roger had been working on. From this work Roger now has a job at the museum.

The group have been doing work on keeping safe and are planning to update their person-centred shields and new members can create one.



**Happy Club** has completed their poster about the money they have raised for children in Africa and are very proud of what they have achieved.

The group will be welcoming 3 new members this month and Simon has been doing some training so that he can support Matthew and Richard in their role as team leaders.



**Virtual Friends** The web forum is now up and running and members have signed up and been issued with passwords.

The people that attend Virtual Friends at the moment think it is a very therapeutic group where they can relax and be themselves. Because of this members say they would like to keep the group small and introduce new people one at a time.



**Internet Explorers** have made an application for a grant to buy some new PC equipment. The group have had lots of discussions about the project and have contributed to the application process in many ways. They have had a positive recommendation made to the review board, and hope to get some money later on this year.

The Internet Explorers on-line discussion forum has been launched, and there are 14 members, including some people who don't come along to IE on a Tuesday night. David made the first 'post', and the group are looking forward to making use of the forum in the future.

**Get in touch if you want to know more about the groups**



## Friday Network

This group has been running for 6 months at the United Reformed Church in Basingstoke. Some of the things people have done so far include:



Become more independent by doing things like

- going into town on their own or with friends throughout the day
- deciding how to fill their time during the day and choosing which activities or sessions to do



Learn new skills like

- working out how they feel about things and speaking up for themselves
- taking turns to work in the café and clean up at the end of the day



Found out information about

- local activities in Basingstoke
- what services they can access by speaking to a care manager
- getting a job or voluntary work

The Network members came up with the name and the rules themselves - if you want to know more please call 01256

332795

## **Life with Asperger's Syndrome**

In this edition we will hear from the manager of Speakeasy Advocacy, Amanda Kent, about her recent speech at a conference organised by the National Autistic Society (NAS).

“I was asked to speak at a conference on advocacy for autism called ‘Being Heard’ in Peterborough this February. The NAS have regarded us as specialists in advocacy for autistic spectrum disorders (ASDs) for many years, as we appear to be the only project that provides 1:1 and self advocacy specifically for people with ASDs. The delegates were a mixture of NAS employees and advocates from all over the midlands.

I talked about the history of Speakeasy Advocacy, and explained our approach to advocating for people with ASDs. Hopefully, we give people time and space to be themselves, and are tolerant of behaviours that would often result in other services’ withdrawing their involvement. We have an awareness of ASDs, and because of this are able to support people to develop skills through a mixture of 1:1 and self advocacy, so they can meet the challenges of life a little easier. I ended my speech by pointing out that self advocacy is incredibly powerful, as people with ASDs can learn from and be encouraged by each other.

I also ran some workshops on self advocacy during the day, and got a chance to talk with the delegates about running groups specifically for people with ASDs. One delegate with Asperger’s syndrome explained how he didn’t always feel listened to in his local user forum group. He thought people said they were listening but that they didn’t want to hear what he had to say. Others in the workshop weren’t sure how to start a self advocacy group, or whether it would be of any benefit. I hope I was able to offer encouragement by sharing examples of where people’s lives had been changed through advocacy, either because they had spoken up for themselves, learned new skills, tried a new activity, got employment or made new friends.

I left Peterborough feeling grateful for 2 things. Firstly, that people with ASDs have been involved in the running of Speakeasy from the early days, so they have been able to say what kind of advocacy they need. Secondly, I am grateful that the trustees, staff and volunteers have listened, so we can offer different types of advocacy that hopefully go some way to meet those needs.”

## How to get in touch:



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Web site: [www.speakeasy.advocacy.org.uk](http://www.speakeasy.advocacy.org.uk)

## Would you like to write for Hot Gossip?



You can do this by writing with words, drawing a picture or using a tape recorder - whatever is easier for you

Please let us know if this is something you would like to do, and if you would like our support