



Winter 2007

Speakeasy Advocacy
invites members to the
Christmas Party



with food and drink, and a disco



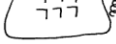
Friday 14th December 2007



7.30pm - 9.30pm



17 New Road, Basingstoke

Bring food or drink if you can -  on 01256
332795 if you want to come

Speakeasy Advocacy

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



Giving a Voice

Registered charity number: 1108304



Speakeasy Advocacy News



Loddon Alliance

The two successful candidates Ken and Paul have now started their paid job as Project Facilitators. They have both attended several meetings and been able to make valuable contributions. Some of the meetings can be difficult to sit through but hopefully they will become easier to understand. Both Ken and Paul have been given small tasks to complete and they will be presenting their results to the management meetings at Loddon Alliance.



Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy

This is a new type of advocacy created by the Mental Capacity Act, which came into force in April 2007. It is for anyone who can not make decisions on their own about where they live or serious medical treatment they might need.

Since April we have had 130 enquires in Hampshire, and advocates have been working with 38 of these people to ensure that their wishes, feelings, beliefs and values are taken into account when important decisions are made.



Funding - we continue to look for more funding so we can carry on what we are doing.



The Annual General Meeting was held on Wednesday 25th July 2007. It was well attended and the new trustees were voted in. Someone from each of the different sections of Speakeasy spoke about what had happened during the last year. Members were able to ask questions.

There was an Annual Report and several people from other organisations told us they really liked what was in it and how it was laid out. Ask us if you want a copy of the report.



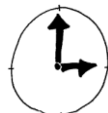
An event for volunteers was held in October. This gave people the chance to meet other volunteers and share experiences. It also gave us the chance to say "Thank you" for all the time volunteers give and the work that they do. We were able to give out a newsletter which keeps our volunteers informed about national and local issues that may impact on their work.



Our next Coffee Morning is on:



Saturday 2 February 2008



10.00 am - 1 pm



17 New Road, Basingstoke

Meet up with friends for a drink and a chat or help out in the kitchen if you want.



Self advocacy groups

Self advocacy = speaking up for yourself



Wicked and Wacky

"We are a group who enjoy learning how to speak up for ourselves and taking more control of our lives. Over the last few months we have been looking at consultations and giving our opinions on direct payments, complaints procedures and Adult Services in Hampshire. We have three new group members and two new volunteers."



Happy Club

Happy Club have three new members who are getting to know everybody. As the group's confidence has grown they have been spending less time in the group room and more evenings out and about in the local community. Simon did some training and he is now a team leader - a job in which he is doing extremely well.



Virtual Friends

Virtual Friends have a forum for people with Asperger's. It gives people a chance to speak to others and build friendships. Virtual Friends have decided that they will re-launch after Christmas with some new members, old members and a couple of people from Internet Explorers who will be moving up to this group. We will be inviting people soon to come along and share their ideas and to plan for the future of the group.



Friday Network was set up as a drop in so that people with learning disabilities can access the community, and to learn new skills such as self advocacy, working in the cafe, self development and being part of a management committee. Members can also speak to a Care Manager, and people who can help with benefits, staying healthy, housing, and employment. There is also a broker who can support people to find new activities and information. People can also just meet up with friends or make new ones. The Friday Network has just celebrated its first year with a party and certificates to recognise each member's development over the year. The MP for Basingstoke, Maria Miller, was there, as well as the Gazette and other guests.

We currently have approximately 60 members and average about 32 people a week.



Speakeasy has a new member joining the team.

We have received some funding for another worker at the Friday Network, and this will be a lady called Sarah Hawden. Sarah spent 6 months with us this year as a student social worker on placement, but has now completed her course and passed her exams. Sarah was interviewed by members of the Friday Network who all agreed that she should get the job. Sarah's main role will be to work with people from the Friday Network, and also to work with anyone who would like a Person Centred Plan. She will help people to make plans for their future and support them to become more in control of their lives. Sarah started on 16th November and we are all looking forward to working with her again.



Internet Explorer's, the self advocacy group for young people with Asperger's Syndrome, has had a busy year so far. They all went to see the Simpson's Movie at the beginning of the Summer - something they'd been keen to do even before the film was released. They had a trip to the leisure pool and they also went to the local park on one of the days this summer that it wasn't raining! Everyone took part in a rounders match - and made the rules up as they went- and five-a-side football, with volunteers joining in. More recently the boys had a Halloween party. Everyone brought along food to share, and we even made our own popcorn.

The group was also successful in obtaining a Hampshire County Council Youth grant to buy some new PC's for the Internet Café. 'ASPC', the name the boys decided for the project, is in full swing, and we hope to purchase and install the computers before Christmas.

The Christmas party will be the next big event to take place in the IE calendar, and this year it will be on Tuesday, December 18th.

.....and their parents

Speakeasy has supported local parents to set up a Basingstoke branch of the National Autistic Society. Parents and professionals were telling us that they wanted a group which was both local and supported by a national organisation. 98% of people who responded to a survey said that they would like the NAS to be involved.

The launch of the group at the Ark on October 10th saw over 200 people attend. Paula Fretwell has taken on the role of Branch Officer and is excited to be up and running. We will continue to work with this group as they evolve to meet the needs of local families affected by autistic spectrum disorders.

Life with Asperger's Syndrome

In this edition, we begin a series of articles based on a presentation to a local group of parents in April this year by Matthew, one of our trustees. Matthew was given some questions in advance, and answered them on the night.

“What was it like growing up, and did you feel different or know you were different from other children?’ A lot of these questions were about early childhood years, and I had consultations with my mother as I couldn’t remember much about it. I asked her about this question and things like this, and my mum said yes I did know I was different. I know that in my teenage years and early twenties I did know I was different but I can’t remember earlier. My mum said I was upset, and used to ask her why I was different, and mum had a really good answer. She said it was because I was special which is a lovely answer. It is really interesting that I did know I was different, and I think the things that made me realise I was separated was that I didn’t play with other children as I didn’t really know how to play. I preferred to be on my own, and would only go out with my mum and my dad or another family member. As much as they tried to help me play with others I couldn’t do it. It was hard as my school report used to say that I didn’t play with other children, but I just didn’t know what to do. I didn’t like the idea of trying to do it either. I was actually quite frightened of other children, as I didn’t understand them or understand how they worked, I wasn’t quite sure of what they were going to do so I was more comfortable with older people. I didn’t spend much time with children as I felt I was doing something wrong..... What was it like growing up is difficult because I don’t know what it was like for anyone else! One thing I have learned as I have got older is that everyone has a disability of some kind, so although I have problems everyone has problems. So for me growing up there were good times and bad times, but there were a lot of good times. We were a close family unit, and my mum and dad did everything they could to help me but I had issues that made it even more difficult. On reflection, I don’t think I would be where I am today if I didn’t have them to help me, I wouldn’t be able to stand here and do this...My parents never held me back, and always wanted me to do as much as possible even from an early age.”

If you would like to ask Matthew to do a similar presentation, please get in touch with us at Speakeasy and we will pass on your request.

How to get in touch:



01256 332795



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Email speakeasy.advocacy@btconnect.com

Web site: www.speakeasy.advocacy.org.uk



Trustee meetings in 2008:

Wednesday 13 February 5.30pm

Wednesday 7 May 5.30pm

Wednesday 30 July (Annual General Meeting) 6pm

Wednesday 12 November 5.30pm