

# Livability Lifestyle Choices

## Support for AB Members

You may recall reading in an earlier newsletter about our new joint venture with the Bromham Millers and Livability Lifestyle Choices. The project, backed by Bedford Borough Council, aims to provide support for adult members in Bedford Borough to find volunteer opportunities and employment locally.

The charity Livability Lifestyle Choices, under the guidance of service manager Mandy Himpson, also provides support in many other aspects of life to people across the whole of Bedfordshire. Their support includes both 1:1 and small group support. They run regular cinema, ten pin bowling, golf and other outdoor groups to name a few. They also provide 1:1 support with tasks such as weekly planning - the range of support is endless and is as flexible as your need. Team leader Malcolm Ross also highlights the fact that many carers feel selfish about taking a break. "With our support we can ease that feeling and provide an opportunity for respite for carers - with the carer knowing that their loved one is enjoying a chosen activity, whilst they themselves enjoy a break".

Livability Lifestyle Choices staff, who are already supporting AB members outside the joint venture, have all undergone autism awareness training here at our St Mark's offices. Their staff have also assisted AB staff member Chris Johnson with recent AB Social Group events in Luton and Biggleswade. We are pleased to be working with Livability Lifestyle Choices and appreciate their support at these events.

If you would like to know about their support work you can contact them on 01280 840 049 or by email at [MRoss@sda.livability.org.uk](mailto:MRoss@sda.livability.org.uk) or visiting their web site at <http://www.livability.org.uk>

## Autism Strategy Launch

On 25<sup>th</sup> January Bedford, Central Beds and Luton Borough Councils, NHS Bedfordshire and NHS Luton held the launch of their Autism Strategies. We have been actively involved in the development of these strategies and are also involved in the development and delivery of services to help fulfil the requirements.

If you would like a copy of the strategy please contact Marek Zamborsky, Commissioning Officer, Bedford Borough Council, telephone 01234 228933 or email [marek.zamborsky@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:marek.zamborsky@bedford.gov.uk)

## Adult Skills Group Visits the Houses of Parliament

Following the successful event last year when two local MP's, Alistair Burt and Richard Fuller, visited AB's Adult Skills Group, the group visited the Houses of Parliament, at the invitation of the MP's, on 24<sup>th</sup> January. The group had been busy organising the day and were excited about the chance to be shown around the building. They also met MP's for an hour in one of the committee rooms, giving group members a further chance to talk about their lives, problems and issues. The next Pathway should have a full report on the day.



## RESEARCH

### Infant Scientist Wanted!

Are you pregnant or do you have a baby aged 0-9 months who has an older brother or sister with autism? The British Autism Study of Infant Siblings is undertaking a project working with parents to maximize the opportunities for social communication with their baby in infancy.

To find out more visit the website [www.medicine.manchester.ac.uk/ibasis](http://www.medicine.manchester.ac.uk/ibasis)



### Sensory Experiences

A Goldsmiths University undergraduate is recruiting participants for a study investigating sensory experiences. She is looking for anyone aged 18+ with autism or the mother, father, brother or sister of individuals with an ASC to participate.

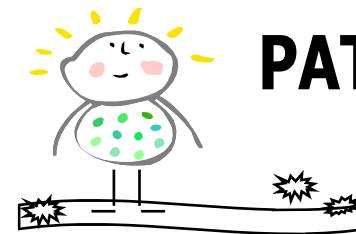
The study involves completing 3 questionnaires and should take about 15 minutes. These can be completed online by visiting [www.sensoryexp.co.uk](http://www.sensoryexp.co.uk) or by sending a mailing address to [ps901nb@gold.ac.uk](mailto:ps901nb@gold.ac.uk)

### HELPLINE

9am-3pm 01234 350704



Please leave a message if you get our answer phone and we will call you back



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Articles printed in this newsletter are not necessarily the views of Autism Bedfordshire. Items are accurate to the best of our knowledge but we do not take responsibility for any errors in information provided to us for inclusion.

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**Calder Rise, Bedford MK41 7UY**  
**helpline: 01234 350704**  
**general enquiries: 01234 214871**  
**e-mail: [enquiries@autismbeds.org](mailto:enquiries@autismbeds.org)**  
**website: [www.autismbeds.org](http://www.autismbeds.org)**



to all our readers from us at Autism Bedfordshire

## Summer Activity Schemes 2012

As you may have read in the November/December issue of Pathway, the Development Team is already in full swing organising the summer programme for 2012. Enclosed in this issue are date request forms for you to complete if you are interested in joining us for this year's summer activity schemes and supported trips.

Our 2012 Bedford and Luton schemes will consist of the following groups:

**ACTIVITY SCHEME:** For children with autism and Asperger Syndrome aged 3-9 years old. We provide 1:1 and occasionally 2:1 support for up to 25 children each day.

**JUNIOR HOLIDAY CLUB:** For young people with autism and moderate to severe learning difficulties between 10-13 years old. We provide 1:1 and occasionally 2:1 support for up to 8 young people each day.

**SENIOR HOLIDAY CLUB:** For young people with autism and moderate to severe learning difficulties between 14-17 years old. We provide 1:1 and occasionally 2:1 support for up to 8 young people each day.

**SUMMER FUN:** For young people with high functioning autism or Asperger Syndrome between 10-17 years old. We provide support for up to 10 young people each day.

All of our activity schemes provide a wide range of appropriate and engaging social, play and sporting activities including sand and water play, art and crafts, bouncy castles, swimming and visits to popular outdoor activity centres. Please note that all activities are subject to change.

The date request sheet must be returned to our office as soon as possible, but no later than **Friday 9<sup>th</sup> March**, together with your deposit - full details are on the form. Any requests received after this date may be unsuccessful and you must be a member of Autism Bedfordshire to be able to access the schemes. Membership renewals will be sent out mid-February and must also be returned by **Friday 9<sup>th</sup> March**.

If you have any questions, or would like to talk to one of the Development Team about which group would be most suitable for your child, please feel free to contact the Autism Bedfordshire office on 01234 214871.

## NEW! Supported Trips Out for the Summer



New for this year will be four supported trips within the county which will include swimming, bowling and visits to Thomley Activity Centre in Womblinghall, Bucks. See the website to find out more about the centre <http://thomleyactivitycentre.org>. Although currently still dependant on funding, we are hoping to provide these valuable experiences for our young people which can either include the whole family or support the individual to enjoy the activities independently with the assistance of our experienced staff.

These trips will take place during the fourth and fifth weeks of the summer holidays. The proposed dates are 14<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> August. Transport will not be provided, and you will need to meet us at the venue, or drop your child off and pick them up at the end of the session. Please show your interest by ticking the required boxes on the date request sheet enclosed and return by **Friday 9<sup>th</sup> March**.

Please be aware that we will be unable to confirm exact details until the end of April.

# LOAF Loads of Autistic Fun

PART FUNDED BY Bedford Borough Council, Central Bedfordshire, LUTON

## “HO HO HO”

Bedford, Biggleswade, Leighton Buzzard and Luton LOAFs celebrated Christmas with family parties held at the LOAF venues.

Well done and thank you to all the families and staff who made the parties a great success. Our thanks also to Tesco Stores for providing money for some of the refreshments.



**children's links** Children's Links are holding a free taster day event at the new Hart Hill Adventure Playground in Luton, on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> March. Places are limited so email

[amanda.anthony@childrenlinks.org.uk](mailto:amanda.anthony@childrenlinks.org.uk)

for more information and to book your place.

## Have Some FUN!

Families United Network has a FUN programme of activities and workshops planned for its members during February half term. Telephone Sandra 01582 523691/Diane 01525 636680 or take a look at the website to find out more [www.familiesunitednetwork.co.uk](http://www.familiesunitednetwork.co.uk)



Luton Borough Council's Autism Spectrum Team run this family support group for Luton families affected by autism.

Please feel free to go along and meet the team, other parents and professionals at Limbury Fields Community & Children's Centre, Icknield Pavilion, Icknield Way, Luton LU3 2JR.

Please note change of venue.

Contact 01582 548151 for more information about the group and for details of future meetings.

## Families Wanted for Leighton Buzzard LOAF

This is a message for all families living in Leighton Buzzard, Dunstable, Houghton Regis and the surrounding areas. If you are a family with a child or children diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Condition or Asperger Syndrome aged from 0 to 12 years old and are looking for an autism friendly family support group then we will be able help you.

We provide a safe environment, a short break and a chance to meet other parents with lots of age appropriate activities for all children to play with. If you are interested please call or email the AB office.

## Aquatic Learning Disabilities Club

Dunstable Leisure Centre  
Fridays 7-9 pm, £2 per session



For further information telephone 01582 608107  
email [dunstable@harpersfitness.co.uk](mailto:dunstable@harpersfitness.co.uk)

A mini music and singing group for children with additional needs aged 0-5 years, 10-11.30am in the Family and Sensory Rooms at Peter Pan Children's Centre, Edward Road, Bedford MK42 9DR. This group is free to attend and there is no need to book. For more information please telephone 01234 269512 or email [info@surestartcauldwell.co.uk](mailto:info@surestartcauldwell.co.uk)

## DADS (Dads Autism Discuss Support)

This group supports fathers/male carers of children with autism/Asperger syndrome, who are currently unable to access AB's LOAF groups.

Fathers/carers have the chance to talk openly, offer each other practical suggestions and support, and to laugh.

For more information please contact Matthew Sims, Team Leader, Integrated Services for Children with Additional Needs, email [matthew.sims@luton.gov.uk](mailto:matthew.sims@luton.gov.uk) telephone 01582 548113

The next meeting is Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> March, 7-9 pm at  
Limbury Fields Community & Children's Centre, Icknield Pavilion,  
Icknield Way, Luton LU3 2JR

Please note change of venue.

## Fundraising Activities



'Marathon Man' Charlie Arnold is once again running the Brighton Marathon on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> April, raising valuable funds for AB and Breast Cancer UK. If you wish to support Charlie in his amazing efforts you can sponsor him on his online sponsorship page

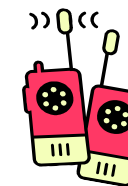
<http://www.mycharitypage.com/CharlieLeSharce>

## Donations Needed



We would like to put out a request for donations of digital cameras and walkie talkies in good working condition for our family support groups - Loads of Autistic Fun (LOAF) and youth groups (Wanted Fun) across Bedfordshire.

These are essential resources needed to support our groups to collate evidence for children's achievement, funding evaluations and training resources. If you have any suggestions or are able to donate any of these items please call our office, telephone 01234 214871.



## TAKE ACTION!

The Government is planning to cut the amount of additional Child Tax Credit that families with disabled children receive by 50%. The plans are part of the universal credit proposals outlined in the Welfare Reform Bill.

Mencap are leading a campaign against this cut.

If you wish to show your support, please email the Prime Minister - see this web address for full details

<http://e-activist.com/ea-action/action?ea.client.id=6&ea.campaign.id=13027>



World Autism Awareness Day Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2012

Declared by the United Nations to increase and develop world knowledge of autism. For more information about promoting autism awareness and events being held visit the website [www.worldautismawarenessday.org](http://www.worldautismawarenessday.org)

## Our grateful thanks go to....



Andy Grover and Advantage Utilities Ltd for supporting us once again with a fabulous donation of £700.

Mr Rowland and the members of the Dunstable Lodge 1022 for their continued support with a wonderful cheque for £320.

AB member Anita Moss who very kindly bought Christmas gifts for all the children at Biggleswade LOAF.

The pupils and staff of Cardinal Newman School's Learning Support Department who held a Festive Tea Party raising a fabulous £287.69.

AB staff member Claire Shuffill who organised a very successful Fundraising Quiz Night in November raising £272.42 towards the costs of Leighton Buzzard LOAF.

Staff and students of Cedars Upper School for the amazing £1,000 donation raised during December's highly successful Help Week.

Members of Beds & Herts Sub Mariners Association for their fabulous support once again with a donation of £100.

William Austin Infant School staff for their lovely £23 donation raised through a Christmas Wishes fundraiser.

Aylesbury Luncheon Club supporting us, once again, with a generous donation of £85 raised through a Christmas raffle. Special thanks to Keith Anderson for proposing us.

Staff of Flitwick Lower School who kindly sent us £10 in lieu of sending Christmas cards to each other.

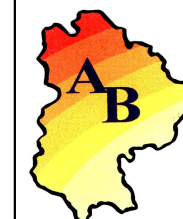
AB member Emma Winchester who kindly supported us by recycling ink cartridges through [Recycle4Charity.co.uk](http://Recycle4Charity.co.uk) raising £4.

AB member Laura Charnock who very generously has made monthly donations to us totalling over £100.

The following Tesco Stores who generously donated money towards the cost of buying refreshments for our LOAF Christmas parties:

Cardington Road, Bedford - £10  
Riverfield Drive, Bedford - £25  
Skimpot Road, Dunstable - £15  
Coniston Road, Flitwick - £25

## Fee Increases



Autism Beds has recently increased the cost of its groups entrance fees and our Development Officers have been attending these groups to talk to any parents who have concerns.

Our membership fees have also increased as unfortunately it is not possible to maintain the level of services without some additional income, and our fees had been frozen for nearly 6 years. Membership renewal paperwork will be going out to members mid-February.

If you would like to talk to someone about the increases please telephone or email the AB office and our Development Officers will be happy to help.