

# Kingston Connections

## Spring 2007

### The newsletter for disabled children, their families and carers.

#### From the Editor:

Another Christmas and New Year have flown by and many of the children enjoyed the benefits of attending the play schemes that were available, happy and tired children are a true Christmas present for families. Well done to all those involved in the organisation!

I do hope that the information enclosed in the newsletter is helpful and if anyone has any contributions for the next issue the copy date is the 8<sup>th</sup> May.

Caroline Baxter

The views, articles and suggestions in this newsletter are those of the individual contributors and are not necessarily supported by the Editor, EnhanceAble or the Team for Disabled Children. The Editor cannot accept responsibility for any goods or services mentioned or enclosed in the newsletter.

The Disabled Children's Register and the Team for Disabled Children distributes this newsletter.

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### Information Service for Disabled Children

Changes are afoot for the service and all are positive. The service will remain in the voluntary sector and continue to be managed by EnhanceAble & jointly funded by EnhanceAble, the Team for Disabled Children, Kingston hospital and the PCT.

We have secured funding for an Assistant Information Officer who will be working 18 hours a week. The post should be up and running from the beginning of May.

We plan to hold workshops with parents who have children with similar disabilities, or come from the same cultural background. We hope that this will encourage a greater number of parents to engage with the local services that are available to them and to get to meet each other. We are very aware that being the parent of a disabled child can be a very isolating experience and we really hope to be able to ease that problem.

Please also see the enclosed letter regarding another exciting change to the service. From May we will be managing the Parent Partnership Service, offering accurate and impartial advice on educational matters.

If you have any suggestions for additional services that you would like to see offered by the Information Service do let us know.

Contact details:  
020 8934 6378

[Caroline.Baxter@kingstonhospital.nhs.uk](mailto:Caroline.Baxter@kingstonhospital.nhs.uk)



## Dates for your Diary

Special Needs Toy Library - Friends Meeting House, Eden Street, Kingston - 10 - 12  
every Friday

Fortnightly Sunday Play Sessions 3-5pm for SWAPS members held at Warren Pk  
contact Sian Palin for dates 8549 3072

17 <sup>th</sup> Feb	516 Club	
19 <sup>th</sup> Feb - 23 <sup>rd</sup> Feb	<b>HALF TERM</b>	
21 <sup>st</sup> Feb	Parents Forum Event	(Call 8547 6582 for info)
3 <sup>rd</sup> March	516 Club	
7 <sup>th</sup> March	Dysart open evening	5.30-7.30
13 <sup>th</sup> March	SWAPS meeting Warren Pk	8.00pm
17 <sup>th</sup> March	516 Club	
14 <sup>th</sup> April	516 Club	
28 <sup>th</sup> April	516 Club	
2 <sup>nd</sup> May	Memorial Service for Babies - Shiraz Mirza Ctre	7.30pm
12 <sup>th</sup> May	516 Club	
26 <sup>th</sup> May	516 Club	
9 <sup>th</sup> June	516 Club	

### Farewell from Pam Jefferies who retires at the end of March

I am writing to say goodbye to you all, as I will be retiring at the end of March when Mike Corrigan will be joining Kingston as the manager for the new integrated service.

It is going to be a wrench for me as I have worked in Kingston for a long time and have been working in the service for disabled children and their families since 1992.

Since then, I have played a part in developing services and this has meant that I have got to know a large number of parents and carers, and children and young people. It has been an exciting and rewarding time and for me personally and a privilege to have been involved with so many of you. I have been able to see little children grow into young people and enjoy their achievements first hand.

For the past 18 months I have been collaborating with many of you on the Integration Strategy.

It has been a busy time for everyone involved and enjoyable for me because everyone has worked together to achieve tremendous progress. Parents and carers have made an outstanding contribution to developing the strategy, which has now been agreed.

After all this time, it is hard for me to say goodbye but I am very glad that the plan to improve services is now in place. Mike will arrive on Monday 26 February and we will have a 5 week handover before I leave.

I send you all my very best wishes and my heartfelt thanks for the achievements we have shared over the years and in particular for the support many of you have given me.

With best wishes

*Pam Jefferies*

Alison Witt - Manager Warren Park.

As some of you will be aware there have been lots of changes at Warren Park. I would like to introduce myself. My name is Alison Witt and I am currently the Project Manager. I started in September 2006 following on from Maria Dowling who left us to return to teaching.

My background is two fold; I am a qualified social worker, having spent my entire career working with children and families. I also have been a foster carer for over 20 years, looking after other people's children, who for whatever reason, are not able to be brought up within their own family.

My experiences are interesting and varied; mainstream social work, child protection, family centre work, looked after children, social worker in a fostering team, with a special interest in assessing families for children to be brought up within their own family network (kinship), court work, youth work with young offenders, volunteering and management of volunteers, also management of residential services for young people.

If you were to ask about my experience of disability, I would answer that I have very little. I do have an understanding of what it is like to access services for young people and to work with the many agencies involved to achieve an holistic service provision to meet an individual young person's needs.

In my fostering role I have cared for many children and young people who displayed challenging behaviour. I have fostered young people with diagnosis of ADHD, (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder), ODD (Oppositional Defiant Disorder), OCD (Obsessional Compulsive

Disorder) and Autism. I have had the experience, and have had to face many of the difficulties with regard to lack of service provision, educational & health support.

Enough about me! What's happening at Warren Park? Warren Park has a new management structure; I am Project Manager, Marcia Hearne is unit manager at Hazel House (shared care), Jenny O'Connor at The Burrows (respite care) and Les Bowdrey After School and Holiday Clubs Co-ordinator. Les has been at Warren Park since February 2006, Marcia and Jenny joined in August 2006.

Warren Park is growing and developing. We are currently in the process of recruiting more project workers and care bank staff to enable us to increase the respite, shared care, after school and holiday club services that we provide for children with disabilities.

I feel it is important that Warren Park has a consistent well-trained staff team who are able to care for children and young people.

I believe strongly that the young people and their families who currently use Warren Park or those who use the facilities should be consulted and participate in the decision making for the services available.

If you have a young person who attends Warren Park and they or you are interested in developing the services offered please contact us at the number below.

**Alison Witt -Project Manager on 0208 481 0200**

### [A Celebration of 20 years of Portage in Kingston](#)

The Portage Christmas Party took place on the 18<sup>th</sup> December at Warren Park and was an opportunity to celebrate 20 years of Portage in the Borough.

Portage is a home visiting educational service for children with developmental delay and their families. It was developed in the early 1970s in Wisconsin, USA and the success of the approach led to its introduction in the UK. There are now 140 services registered with the National Portage Association. ([www.portage.org.uk](http://www.portage.org.uk))

The Kingston Service is funded by the Local Authority and was established in September 1986. In the early days there was just one Portage Worker who was based at Tolworth Hospital with the Maple Child Development Team. This was an innovative and exciting development for Kingston and helped to establish the excellent links that Portage has with the health professionals.

Since then Portage has grown and developed and is now part of the Local Authority's Pre School Support Service, based at the Dukes Centre. There are now 3 team members (equivalent to 2 full time Portage Workers).

The Kingston Portage Service has supported over 300 children and their families. Because the home visits usually take place on a weekly basis, the Portage Workers often develop a close bond with the children they support and may also get to know brothers, sisters, grandparents and other members of the extended family.

Fundamental to Portage support is the principle that building on abilities and strengths rather than focusing on difficulties best supports children's learning and enjoyment and it is this positive approach to a child's play and learning that can be passed on to the receiving pre-school or school.

Ann Macpherson  
Portage Co-ordinator/Pre-School  
Support Service Co-ordinator  
0208 547 6698

[Ann.macpherson@rbk.kingston.gov.uk](mailto:Ann.macpherson@rbk.kingston.gov.uk)



Anne Macpherson; Patrick Leeson,  
Director of Learning and Children's  
Services; children and parents  
celebrate this wonderful achievement.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS ADVICE AND INFORMATION FOR PARENTS**

The Council's Assessment & Support for Learning Service chose 2007 to look in detail at its advice and information for parents of children with SEN, particularly Parent Partnership and Statutory Assessment.

At the beginning of this term, we welcomed Jill Braun as Parent Partnership Officer to temporarily replace Nikki, who left Kingston after 10 years! We were pleased to be able to extend this advice and support service so it's available throughout the spring term, Monday to Friday. Contact Jill on: 0208 547 6675.

We have invited parent representatives from local support groups to come and talk to us after half term about the information the Statutory Assessment Team provides for parents. We asked the London SEN Disagreement Resolution Service (LSDRS) to arrange a group discussion using one of their independent SEN mediators because of their experience providing SEN Advice to Parent and resolving disputes between families and authorities.

**We are looking forward to launching a new Parent Partnership Service with EnhanceAble from May 2007, 5-days a week, 52-weeks a year. Please see the enclosed letter for more details**

### **INCREASING THE RANGE OF SEN PROVISION**

Children with SEN are being taught in every Kingston school. When the Council launched its' plans to include more children in local schools, some who have greater needs, it was building on firm foundations. Parents, who gave their views on proposals for our 3 special schools and increasing SEN

resources in mainstream, influenced the Council's decisions.

Here are some of the changes that have been taking place:

- St Philip's purpose built 6<sup>th</sup> form is open
- Knollmead Primary School has a full, infant aged specialist resource 'Sapphire' of 8 children with autism and developmental delay. This term the school welcomes the first of 4 younger children with similar needs into the Nursery, which has undergone accommodation improvements.
- Malden Manor Primary School opens its new specialist resource for children with emotional and social difficulties later this term. Major rebuilding for the whole school has including new SEN rooms.
- Tolworth Infants will shortly open its adapted nursery to accommodate 4 children with moderate to severe learning difficulties. Other building changes in the school will introduce 8 infant places in a specialist resource from September.
- Specialist staff training for has been taking place across all of the schools 'hosting' SEN resources

We are continuing our work with school staff at Latchmere Juniors and Tolworth Girls to be able to include more children with autism and we know that we need to have junior provision in place for the infants at Knollmead and at Tolworth Juniors for the children from the Infants.

All Kingston schools are continuing to admit children with SEN.

**Julie Ely, Head of Assessment & Support for Learning**

## Bedelsford School News

Greetings from Bedelsford School and our best wishes to everyone for 2007!

We have had a busy time since the new Head Teacher arrived in April 2006, and this starts a new chapter in the life of Bedelsford.

The school has always received good support from the local community, which is greatly appreciated. Early in the summer term a new minibus arrived which was funded jointly by local and national charities and the school. On 15<sup>th</sup> May Sir Tim Rice visited the school to hand over the bus and to hear our pupils sing a thank you song. We are very grateful to the Lords and Ladies Taverners, Coombe Wood Golf Club and Masterchefs for their generous donations which now mean the pupils can more easily access Off Site educational visits. In September we also received a large donation from Malden Golf Club, which will enable us to put lights and a sound system into the hydro-pool. Without these injections of capital it would take the school a long time to realise many of these projects, so we are very appreciative - thank you.

The Bedelsford School Association has also been very busy. They sponsored a disco for the pupils in November and for Christmas they organised a raffle and a Christmas Bazaar, which allowed the pupils to do their own Christmas shopping. They have also helped the school by buying more sensory equipment, computers and play materials. It is not just the fundraising but also the extended opportunities that the pupils appreciate so much.

This term we have two major events taking place. On Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> March

Barclays is holding a sponsored walk along the bank of the Thames between

Kingston and Richmond to raise money for specialist lighting in the main school hall. The Bedelsford School Association, in conjunction with the Molesey Players, are having a night of drama and the proceeds will go to the school. For details of both these events please contact the main office at the school on 0208 5469838.

We are also currently developing the outdoor play facilities so if you are interested in helping us do contact the Headteacher, Mrs Angela Evans.

In the meantime the work goes on with many of our pupils spending time with local mainstream schools. More of this next time!

Kingston Libraries



# Story time for children with special needs

Stories, simple songs, finger plays and rhymes for  
**Children with special needs**

Story times will be held every **4<sup>th</sup> Saturday**  
Of the month during term time  
Age group: **3-8 years**

**Time:** 10.30-11.30am  
**Place:** New Malden library hall  
**Dates** for spring term are:  
24/02/07 & 24/03/07

Kingston Road  
New Malden  
Surrey KT3 3LY

Tel no: 0208 547-6490

[www.kingston.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.kingston.gov.uk/libraries)



## News

Older and disabled people who might be eligible for the loan of equipment and/or minor home adaptations from Kingston's Integrated Community Equipment Service can now assess themselves online, using a locally customised version of ADL Smartcare

RBK has been selected to run one of 11 Department of Health Self Assessment Pilot Projects. This will enable older and disabled people to assess their own needs for assistive equipment - of the kind issued by our Occupational Therapy Service - using a computerised system called ADL Smartcare.

Smartcare is now up and running connected to the Council's Website. This can be used directly by service users or can be accessed on their behalf by relatives, friends or professionals. Age Concern and KCIL (Kingston Centre for Independent Living) are also partners to the project and will assist service users to complete assessments.

ADL Smartcare assists people to identify solutions (equipment or services) to meet their needs using a powerful database. The information provided will include services offered locally by the private and voluntary sectors, as well as those provided by the Council. It is hoped that it will be possible for some items of equipment to be ordered directly, on completion of the online assessment, to aid speed of delivery and reduce administration.

To access the self-assessment from the RBK Website Home Page, select "[Health and Social Care](#)" and the link to the self-assessment can be found under the "[Community Care for Adults](#)" heading. N.B. please only enter real service user data.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to email me.

Bill Brittain  
Principal Manager - Health, Disability and OT Services  
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Surbiton, Surrey, KT5 9AL  
Tel: 8547 4737 Fax: 8547 6100  
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Or you can visit our web site at:  
<<http://www.kingston.gov.uk/community/careservices/>>

## Housing News

Any families on the RBK Housing Transfer list, they need to check the weekly advertisement of vacant properties either by looking on the RBK website or in the free paper available from local estate agents. The properties are advertised each Wednesday and tenants can make a bid for any that they are eligible for according to their reference codes for priority and type of property for the disabled persons mobility needs. The bids close on Sunday evening at midnight and properties are offered to the highest priority tenant who makes a bid on Monday mornings and they are invited to view it. The Choice Based Lettings site is now available on the computer in reception here under the Internet Favourites listings, for any family that does not have access to their own PC. The Housing department no longer offers properties to tenants and they need to be making an active effort to find their own property, but unfortunately 3 bedroom houses with gardens suitable for a wheelchair user are extremely rarely available in any part of the borough.



[National Autistic Society EarlyBird Programmes in RBK](#)

[EarlyBird - for families with a pre-school child with ASD](#)

Kingston's EarlyBird Team has recently completed its fourth autism-specific programme for parents/carers of pre-school children with autistic spectrum disorders. The National Autistic Society EarlyBird Programme is run at Surbiton Children's Centre and delivered by Kingston's team of licensed trainers. The aim of the programme is to support parents in the period between diagnosis and school placement. Each programme accommodates two parents/carers from up to six families and crèche facilities are provided.

The 13 week programme combines eight day time group training sessions with individual home visits and is designed to help parents understand their child's autism, develop their communication skills and establish good practice at an early age so as to pre-empt the development of inappropriate behaviour.

To date, 22 families have successfully completed Kingston's EarlyBird programme and feedback has been very positive.

*"It's an excellent all round education in autism; a chance to carve out some time to reflect and discourse. A chance to share worries with other mums"*

*"The course helped me to be more open about autism and helped me to talk to other people about it"*

*"The course helped me to face different issues and look from a better point of view. It gives me hope for the future"*

The trainers are looking forward to starting the next EarlyBird programme in September 2007. An information meeting will be held at Surbiton Children's Centre Nursery at 9.30 a.m. on Tuesday 3rd July. If you would like further details about the information meeting and EarlyBird programme please contact:

**Chris Chong - Special Needs Co-ordinator**

**Surbiton Children's Centre Nursery**

**020 8390 2555**

[SHN@rbksch.org](mailto:SHN@rbksch.org)

[EarlyBird Plus - for families with a child aged 4-8 years with ASD](#)

Following the success of the EarlyBird pre-school programme, The National Autistic Society (NAS) has developed a modified programme to meet the needs of families whose child has received a later diagnosis (4-8 years).

The EarlyBird Plus programme addresses the needs of both home and school settings by training parents/carers together with a professional who is working regularly with their child.

Kingston's first EarlyBird Plus programme has just started and is being run at Knollmead Primary School. This course is fully booked but the plan is to run the programme at least once a year. If you would like further information about EarlyBird Plus please contact:

**Marie Doyle, 020 8547 6674**

[marie.doyle@rbk.kingston.gov.uk](mailto:marie.doyle@rbk.kingston.gov.uk)

Written by Margaret Vyse, Educational Psychology Service

### Sports & Recreation Services.

In October 2006 we appointed a part time Community Multi-Sports Coach for Disabled Children, Mr Andy McKee. This is a new role with the aim of setting up and implementing coaching of a variety of sports for Disabled Children in the Borough and to create a sustainable environment accordingly. The role is 18 hours a week with 3 years of funding. Andy has written to every parent of a child who is on the disability register to find out what sports (if any) your child currently accesses and what sports they would like to take part in. If you are a parent who has received this letter we would be most grateful if you could fill in the attached questionnaire and return it to Andy ASAP. The more feedback that we receive the easier it is to plan and implement new activities.

### Club 516

Saturday morning sports club for children with special needs runs fortnightly. Children can come along and take part in one and a half hours of fun playing Basketball, Sports Hall Athletics, Mini Tennis, Kwik Cricket, Mini Squash, Boccia & much more..... Sessions are: 10.00am to 11.30am for children aged 5 to 10 years of age. 11.30am to 1.00pm for children aged 11 to 16 years of age

Cost: £5 per session

Venue: The Arena Sports Hall, Kingston College, Kingston Hall Road, Kingston upon Thames KT1 2AQ

**Dates for your diary:** Feb 3,17 March 3,17,31 April 14,28 May 12,26 June 9,23

For more information please contact Sports & Recreation Services on 020 8547 5207 or visit

[www.kingston.gov.uk/sport](http://www.kingston.gov.uk/sport)

### Swimming Lessons at Kingfisher Leisure Centre for children with special needs

**Tuesday's** 4.00pm for children aged 8 to 10 years of age

**Wednesday's** 5.00pm for children aged 10 years and over

**Wednesday's** 5.30pm for children aged 5 to 7 years of age.

For more information or to book your child onto the sessions please contact Kingfisher Leisure Centre on 020 8546 1042.

**Please note: Both the Kingfisher & Malden Centre pools have fully accessible changing/shower/toilet room that is equipped with shower bed and hoist. Both pools can be accessed via a pool hoist and there is also an additional mobile hoist for use around the changing village.**

### Kingston Leisure Card

The Kingston Leisure Card allows residents of the Royal Borough to enjoy savings on a wide range of activities at leisure centres throughout the Borough. You can apply if you live in the Royal Borough and you:

- Are aged 60 or over,
- Receive Jobseeker's Allowance,
- Receive Income Support,
- Are a full time student in further or higher education,
- Are registered disabled or receive disability benefit, or
- Receive Carer's Allowance

You can pick up an application form at the following centres:

- Malden Centre
- The Kingfisher
- Tolworth Recreation Centre
- Kingsmeadow
- YMCA Hawker Centre
- Kingston YMCA
- Chessington Sports Centre
- Albany Park Canoe and Sailing Centre

You can also call Sports & Recreation for an application form 020 8547 5207



## Farewells

**Vicky Blackburn** - Clinical Nurse Manager at the Maple Short Term Care unit has left the hospital and the NHS for a complete change of direction. She will be working in the flower shop she and her partner own and most important of all she is expecting a baby in the late spring. Vicky was a much-loved member of the Maple team and we will all miss her very much.

**Nikki Anghileri**- Parent Partnership officer. Nikki is moving to work in Surrey on their extended schools project.

**Nora Lack** - retired from the OT dept based at the Maple in December

**Angela Manton** - Occupational Therapist at Maple and Dysart left in December to return to her native Australia

**Katherine Tyas** - who has worked closely with Pam Jefferies, has moved to Surrey County Council

All will be missed and we wish them all the best for the future.

## Welcome to:

**Teresa Siesun** - joins the Maple team as an Occupational Therapist

**Lorna Davies** - joins as a therapy assistant at the Maple Centre

## Cinema info

You can now apply for a cinema exhibitors association card which allows an accompanying carer to go free into any cinema. For more information you can contact the Card Network:

The Card Network  
The Technology Centre  
Rossmore Business Park  
Ellesmere Port  
Cheshire. CH65 3EN

Tel: 0845 123 1295  
Fax: 0845 123 1296

Minicom / Text phone: 0845 123 1297

[info@ceacard.co.uk](mailto:info@ceacard.co.uk)

Or visit the website where you can download the application form at [www.ceacard.co.uk](http://www.ceacard.co.uk).

The cost of the card is £5 and you will need to provide a copy of one piece of evidence of proof of disability.

The Rotunda Kingston and the Odeon's in Esher and Epsom all accept the card.

## **Kingston Special Needs Toy Library**

**Open every Friday between 10am and 12 noon**  
**(Except for August)**

**At the Friends Meeting House**  
**(Next to Primark)**

78, Eden Street  
Kingston - upon -Thames  
Surrey  
KT1 1DJ

For more information ring:

Roma on 0208 398 6565

Charlotte on 0208 541 5157

Sarah on 0208 399 3247

Or Visit our new website at:

["http://www.kingstonepublish.org.uk/kingstontoylibrary"](http://www.kingstonepublish.org.uk/kingstontoylibrary)  
[www.kingstonepublish.org.uk/kingstontoylibrary](http://www.kingstonepublish.org.uk/kingstontoylibrary)