



# Support Group Hitchin Newsletter

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Welcome to the Angels Newsletter for Autumn 2006. I hope you all had a good summer, and the transition of going back to school isn't too tricky.

As you can see, we have a new format for our newsletter, which allows us to include a great deal more information than previously. You will find within this booklet, the programmes for Hitchin and Stevenage Angels for the Autumn Term, as well as information about other Angels services. There is also a section on useful contacts and information.

I hope in future editions we can have some articles from members with their experiences and helpful tips. Between us we have so much experience of bringing up our children and overcoming the challenges our families face. One of the things Angels members are frequently saying to me is that they learn so much from talking to other members at meetings. Not all our members can get to meetings so this could be a great way to share our knowledge. If any of you have a story to tell, or a tip to pass on, please email me on [leise.cooper@ntlworld.com](mailto:leise.cooper@ntlworld.com), or ring me on 01462 421108.

I hope to produce another newsletter like this in the New Year, with short updates in between if need be. Any feedback would be very welcome on the above phone number/email. What else would you like to see included? Was anything not useful? Please let me know.

There is a great deal going on with Angels this term. Stevenage Angels will finally be meeting weekly on Thursdays, alternating between evening and afternoon sessions. Hitchin Angels has a really interesting programme, including, in December, a talk from Ros Blackburn. Ros is an adult with Autistic Spectrum Disorder who is a professional speaker, and is very entertaining and enlightening. We are so excited she is coming to talk to us, and if you haven't heard her before, she is not to be missed.

We are running our Angels Music Club again this term, on Wednesdays, from 4 - 5pm. This was great fun last term and the children really enjoyed it. The club is for primary age children of Angels members, and brothers and sisters are welcome. There are still places for this term; if you are interested please call Alicia on 01763 244896.

Hope we see you soon.

Leise Cooper  
Chair

# Angels Support Group Hitchin

## Who's Who on the Committee 2006

### **Trustees :**

Leise Cooper, Jane Wareing, Maria Willcock, Mandy Dockery, Emma Doherty, Louise Slater.

<b>Chair:</b> .....	Leise Cooper
<b>Treasurer:</b> .....	Jane Wareing
<b>Secretary:</b> .....	Maria Willcock
<b>Membership/Speakers:</b> .....	Diana Foley
<b>Outreach:</b> .....	Elaine Wright
<b>Stevenage Liaison:</b> .....	Mary Mottram
<b>Signposting:</b> .....	Miranda Mumby
<b>Resources:</b> .....	Vanessa Tassell
<b>Music Group:</b> .....	Alicia Boyer
<b>Meetings:</b> .....	Tracey Hilton
<b>Support Group Facilitator:</b> .....	Lorraine Jones

### **Committee Members:**

Mandy Dockery (HCC), Margaret Bracey (NHDC), Emma Doherty, Lorraine Whitley, Martin Fountain (NHDC)

### **Signposters:**

Miranda Mumby, Tracey Hilton, Lorraine Whitley, Cheryl Taylor, Jennie Starr.

## **Useful Websites**

[www.ukparents.co.uk](http://www.ukparents.co.uk) – website offering parenting advice, with forums on every conceivable topic, including special needs, ASD and ADHD. Opportunity to exchange info and chat with other parents.

[www.info.autism.org.uk](http://www.info.autism.org.uk) – PARIS, the Public Autism Resource and Information Service. A new online service provided by the National Autistic Society, giving a UK-wide database of diagnostic services, schools, support groups, training courses, residential and day services and much more.

[www.nas.org.uk](http://www.nas.org.uk) – website of the National Autistic Society

[www.addiss.co.uk](http://www.addiss.co.uk) – website for ADDISS, a national ADHD charity.

[www.autismconnect.org](http://www.autismconnect.org) – Autism Connect website. Information about Autism from around the world, including good news section and latest research.

[www.cafamily.org.uk](http://www.cafamily.org.uk) – Contact -a- Family website

[www.peach.org.uk](http://www.peach.org.uk) – Website for PEACH - Parents for Early Intervention in Autism.

[www.parentlineplus.org.uk](http://www.parentlineplus.org.uk) – Parentline Plus website.

[www.bibic.org.uk](http://www.bibic.org.uk) – website for BIBIC. Has chat rooms and forums for parents to discuss issues with experts and therapists.

[www.network81.co.uk](http://www.network81.co.uk) – website for Network 81, charity giving free support on educational issues.

[www.understandingindividualneeds.com](http://www.understandingindividualneeds.com) – website with info for parents of children with a newly diagnosed learning disability, and parents of children with a learning difficulty who are reaching adulthood.

[www.tfhuk.com](http://www.tfhuk.com) – website for all special needs children, their families and carers, provided by tfh, the specialist toy manufacturers.

[www.adviceguide.org.uk](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk) – Online Citizen's Advice Bureau service, gives independent advice on your rights, practical, reliable and up-to-date info on a wide range of topics.



Spaces left for  
this half term!  
Call Alicia on  
01763 244896

## Music Club

After School Musical Fun!

Weekly Music Classes for Primary age children  
of Angels Members

- & Every Wednesday , 4 – 5pm**
- & In the School Hall, Oughton School, Hitchin.**
- & Brothers and sisters welcome**
- & Starts Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> September**
- & Loads of fun, lots of participation**
- & Designed to encourage social interaction**
- & Run by Tick Tock, adapted for Angels**
- & Classes are FREE, FREE, FREE!!!!\***

The only cost is a one-off admin charge of £2 per family per half-term.  
Call Alicia on 01763 244896 to book your place.

If you are interested but cannot make Wednesdays, please let Alicia know. Later in the year we will run the classes on a different day, so that as many members as possible get the chance to attend.

# Are You Unhappy With Your Weight?

- ★ Do you want to do something about it?
- ★ Are you fed up with being told to JUST!  
“Eat less and do more exercise”?
- ★ Do you want to take control of your life and put yourself first?
- ★ Do you want to try something different to reach a long-term goal?

Look no further....try a FREE 12 week

## Life Skills & Weight Management Course

Designed with you in mind

Every Tuesday for 12 weeks

Starting 19<sup>th</sup> September 1.00 –3.00pm

At The Community Learning Room,  
Oughton School, Mattocke Road, Hitchin

Limited Places! - £10 Refundable Deposit to secure a place  
Crèche provided at a small fee of 50p per family per session

Call Diana Foley on 07786 391 456 or  
Hannah Goodliff on 07785 385 256

North Herts and Stevenage  
Primary Care Trust



in partnership with



The Obesity Awareness & Solutions Trust  
Head Office: Latten Bush Centre, Southern Way, Harlow, Essex CM18 7BL  
(01279) 866010 Registered charity No 1088048

## **Angels Computer Workshop – watch this space.**

As some of you will know, last term the Angels Computer Workshop did not take place, as there were not enough people enrolled on the course for North Herts College to run it.

We are talking to North Herts College about how we can take this forward, as we are aware that quite a few people would like to attend but cannot in the current format. Angels wants to continue with some sort of computer course or computer club, but we need to know what you would all like. If you have any feedback on the course, or any comments about what you would like to see in future, please let me (Leise) know, on 01462 421108 or email on [leise.cooper@ntlworld.com](mailto:leise.cooper@ntlworld.com).

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### **How did you get your child's diagnosis?**

Diana Foley is working with Dr. Bommen on developing a new Care Pathway for children with ADHD or ASD. In order to do this they need to do an Audit of the existing pathways, listing all the different routes to diagnosis that people have taken in the past.

Diana would very much appreciate it if everyone could compile for her a simple time line / flow chart of your own experience of the pathway you took with your child leading up to diagnosis and beyond. For example; who did you first ask – GP, Health Visitor, school? What happened next? Who referred you to the CDC, or did you go through CAMHS. Please include all professional contact, voluntary, statutory or private. Also include who referred you and relevant intervention or support from school, NHS, CSF, Angels or other support group, private therapy, etc. Whatever seems part of the pathway you took and are still taking? If possible, in another section of your email please could you write a list of what would have been your ideal pathway leading to diagnosis?

Please send your "Care Pathway" to Diana at Cherry Trees, Hitchin Hospital, Talbot Street, Hitchin, Herts, SG5 2QU or email it to her on [Dianafoley@hotmail.com](mailto:Dianafoley@hotmail.com). Alternatively hand it to Diana or myself at a Tuesday Angels meeting. The more examples we can give, the better the chance we can improve the route families have to take in future.

# **Special Educational Needs Contacts**

Having trouble with your child's education? Here are some useful contacts....

## **Herts. County Council**

**Hertfordshire Parent Partnership** – offer support and advice to parents and carers regarding special educational needs. North Herts. Supporter: Irene Holland, tel: 01462 634488.

**Special Needs Officers – North Quadrant** – Area Education Centre, The Old Grammar School, Broadway, Letchworth, Herts. SG6 3TD.

**Autism Advisory Service** – The Woodside Centre, The Commons, Welwyn Garden City, Herts. , tel: 01707 320697

**AAS Advice Line:** - 01707 320697, open Mon, Tue, Thur, 1.30-4.30pm. Manned by Advisory Teacher to give advice to teachers and SENCOs who have a pupil with ASD, (don't need to be statemented).

## **Independent SEN Advice**

**Network 81** - charity which supports parents of children with special needs, advising on all aspects of the educational needs of your children – helpline – 0870 7703306, email ; [Network81@btconnect.com](mailto:Network81@btconnect.com), website : [network81.co.uk](http://network81.co.uk)

**Consensus** – mediation service for Herts run by Mencap offering impartial advice and support for parents of children with SEN who are in dispute with their LEA – 01284 748320

**NAS Advocacy for Education Service** – support for parents for children with an ASD to help them understand legal rights and entitlements regarding Education. Can provide free legal advice to anyone appealing against LEA decisions on their children's education, right through to Tribunal. Helpline – 0845 0704002, email: [advocacy@nas.org.uk](mailto:advocacy@nas.org.uk)

**IPSEA** – Independent Panel for Special Education Advice

Give free independent advice, advice on appealing to tribunals including representation if needed, and free second professional opinions. Cover all special needs and any aspect of education. Helpline – 0800 0184016 (Open Mon – Thurs 10am -4pm , 7pm – 9pm, Friday 10am – 1pm, 7 -9 pm.)

## **Rathbone Special Education Advice**

Helpline which offers advice on SEN including getting support in school, assessments and statementing, appeals, annual reviews, exclusions and admissions. Helpline – 0800 917 6790. Also have dedicated Asian SEN helpline, 0800 085 4528, with advisors who speak a number of Asian languages.

## **Financial Help:**

**Money Advice Unit (HCC)** – County Council Project aimed at helping people claim all the benefits to which they are entitled. Can help you apply for benefits such as Disability Living Allowance, and help you appeal if you are turned down. Children with Disabilities Advisor is Yvonne Deal, tel: 01992 556370. Address: Room 340, County Hall, Peps Lane, Hertford, SG13 8DE.

**Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).** Disability and Carers Service deals with claims for DLA and Carer's Allowance. Website: [www.dwp.gov.uk](http://www.dwp.gov.uk).

**DLA department:** Disability Living Allowance, Warbreck House, Warbreck Hill, Blackpool, FY2 0YE. Tel: 0845 7123456

**Carer's Allowance Unit:** Palatine House, Lancaster Road, Preston, PR1 1HB. Tel: 01253 856123.

**Benefit Enquiry Line** for people with disabilities: tel 0800 882200.

**Carer's UK** : Advice on all benefits available to Carers, including Income Support, Housing Benefit etc. 20-25 Glasshouse Yard, London EC1A 4JT.

**Carer's Line:** 0808 808 7777, Mon -Fri 10am-12, 2-4pm.

**Family Fund** – grants for families with disabled children, can be used for holidays, equipment, driving lessons, activities, if shown to benefit your child. Stevenage and North Herts. Contact; Janet Edmonds – 01438 354921. Contact Janet to find out more, or request an application form.

Or write to: The Information Officer, The Family Fund Trust, PO Box 50, York, YO1 9ZX. Tel: 01904 621115.

**Motability** – for those who receive DLA mobility component at the higher rate, Motability can help you buy or hire a car or wheelchair. Address; Goodman House, Station Approach, Harlow, Essex, CM20 2ET. Tel: 01279 635666.

### **Cake Stall**

Angels ran a cake stall in Hitchin Market on Saturday July 8<sup>th</sup>. We had great fun running the stall and made an amazing **£140**, which meant that the Summer Trip to Thames Valley Adventure Playground was free to members.

So a very big thank you to everyone who made cakes – we sold every one. Also many thanks to Emma Doherty for the fantastic job she did organising the whole event. Finally, thanks to Diane and Amanda Hilton, and Lianne and Rhiannon Doherty for their help in running the stall, and their brilliant efforts in collecting donations.