

January 2009 No.18

Parent and Carers' Newsletter

Dear Parents/Carers,

Happy New Year to you all. I hope this year we can rise above the economic doom and gloom around us and make 2009 the best it can be for us all.

Xmas playschemes went off well. All our staff went home totally exhausted which is usually a good sign of how much fun the kids had. I would like to give a special thank you to the staff on PS1 who picked up the extra commitment necessary to help me cope with my bad back at the time.

Looking forward to 2009, we will be running After School Club almost at capacity. Several families are benefitting from an extra day, and it is pleasing to look back at the number of new children who have come to us in 2008.

For After School Club, could you please start collecting cardboard boxes of all sizes, but no bigger than a cereal box. Please flat pack them so we can store them ready for an Art activity we have planned later in the half term.

With Saturday Club funding in place we will be developing the group further with a greater emphasis on going out on trips and having events happening within the Centre. At times this may result in you being asked to contribute towards transport or entry costs, but I will try to keep these to a minimum wherever possible, as well as giving you as much notice as possible also. At the moment we have a few places that are unfilled for Saturday Club. If you would be interested in having a permanent second place per month please contact me at the office. Such a placement would operate under the second place arrangements at ASC, that is, should a new child wish to start you would be asked to give up your extra place.

As part of our development of Saturday Club, do you, or anyone you know, have any hidden talents which would provide a good activity for the children? This can be anything art/crafty to physical movement, story telling to cooking. It need not go for a whole session, even an hour would be great. If you have any ideas give me a call or email.

The funding 'crisis' highlighted the need for sustained funding streams, which includes your contributions. Dawn and the Accounts

Dept. have worked very hard to get the invoice system to work smoothly, so that this half term will see a seamless posting of invoices across all our services. I have attached the terms and conditions regarding payments, please read them carefully to avoid any embarrassment.

I am looking to offer half term family days again. The two days we had in October were not very well attended. I'm not sure if that was because the weather gave you an opportunity to organise other things to do or whether you would like something different to be on offer during half term. A Playscheme cannot not be offered, and indeed the focus of the family days is for the whole family to be involved allowing you time to relax and have a chat to other parents as well. I would be interested in your suggestions.

Watford Mencap is looking to raise money from the sale of items over Ebay. We all have stuff cluttering our house that is 'too good' to just dump, but we really don't need or use. That's just the sort of thing we could sell over Ebay. Please contact Rose Kreloff on 01923 713 627 if you have anything to donate. And on the same idea, Rose is looking for an Ebay volunteer to help her catalogue and track the items that we have in storage and online. If you or anyone you know has the time to offer please call her.

Another fund raising scheme is Rags to Riches. Apparently we can get £3 for every bag for rags. I will have more details shortly, so if you're looking to start throwing away old woollies, or once you've stuck to your new year's resolution and changed shape so your old clothes don't fit (I wish), put them to one side, we may well be able to put them to good use.

Can I remind you that every Tuesday, Berrygrove Children's Centre operates their Toy Library from our Rainbow Room? They have a morning session every Tuesday during term time from 10-11.30, and will soon be open after lunch 1-2.30. They have a lovely range of toys for all kids including sensory toys. If you would like further information call Shammi on 07982 806 790.

The revamped leisure centres at Woodside and Central offer a 70% discount for any registered member who has a disability. You might like to make use of this opportunity.

So we're off and running for a new year. Just as long as we stay thawed, I'm looking forward to it being a productive one in which I can offer increased and even better services for you and your children.

Ro. Linton

Children's, Young Peoples' and Families' Services Manager