



# Stories and Fun

'Stories and Fun' provides a time for children and families to get together at The Chapel, Graylingwell in Chichester from 3.30 to 4.45 pm weekly during term time for all sorts of inclusive and interactive stories and activities. My years of experience enable me to offer a very varied afternoon for the 'Story and Fun Family'.

Storytelling is a human activity remaining since time began and connecting us with each other in all our diversities and whoever we are.

There are so many ways for us to tell our stories.

We can write them in words or record them; paint them in pictures; express them in dance and movement; tell them in games; use sounds and musical instruments; use technology and a wide range of other resources.

I love being creative including story making and telling, and this was a large part of my life whilst a teacher, social worker in child health and now continuing through my current workshops with 'Freedom Through Fun'.

A typical inclusive 'Stories and Fun' session begins with varied movement to music using ribbons and juggling scarves, then singing songs including those we move to, thinking about where and how we are in our space. High or low, moving fast or slowly, feeling happy or sad. Using a theme from a chosen story, we sometimes use fabrics and tissue paper to create our own settings. If the story is in a wood, children make their very own wood. Every week we use a variety of musical

instruments to 'paint pictures and stories in sound' or create rhythms and patterns. We also use puppets to bring our stories to life. Everyone enjoys the parachute games playing 'popcorn' or being part of a story about the stormy sea - some children sitting in the parachute whilst others shake it to create waves. Seagulls fly overhead whilst children make the gulls' voices 'Aaaark!'



One important element is using our imaginations, encouraging children to be part of the story making. Who is the story about? Where does it happen?

What takes place? When in time? Why has it happened? These five basic questions apply to all stories throughout history.

Depending on the weather, we are either indoors or out under the beautiful trees which

have their own magic. If we're outdoors we enjoy very big bubble makers and stomp rockets as well as all the other activities we enjoy indoors.



Occasionally I bring other experiences for the children to try out including circus skills and sometimes some magic. Most

recently I've provided balloon modelling with cats and dogs for each child.

At the end the children also have stickers to take home.

During the time we're together I notice children gaining in confidence, enjoying each others' company playing together, mums and dads having their own time too. A story and fun time community!



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**RECENT THINGS FAMILIES  
HAVE SAID:**

*"A wonderful friendly atmosphere perfect for after school on a Monday. Great mix of activities – perfect!"*

*"It's great to meet other local parents and children. Chris is really fun and interacts so well with everyone".*

*"A great evening of friendly family fun. Our boys love it, thanks Chris and Team!"*

*"Great fun for my 3 year old daughter and I can imagine we'll continue coming well into her starting school".*



*"My children (3 and 5 years) absolutely love Stories and Fun. They love how enthusiastic Chris is and everything about the story, games etc. Stories and Fun is always one of the highlights of the week!"*

Huge thanks from me to all the families for making this Fun time so special.

To book go to The Chapel, Graylingwell website and find Stories and Fun!

<https://graylingwellchapel.com/whats-on/>

*Chris North*

## The Puppet Asylum

You may remember reading "Leo's Adventures" in the last newsletter. When I saw Leo at Wheely Wonders earlier in the year, he told me about his other interests...(Lizzie Baily)

My hobbies are watching musicals and reading about them online. I go to a dance group every Sunday and I have just joined a new group called Challengers where we go on days out to different places such as the cinema and swimming, theatre, bowling, slime making and lots of other fun things.

I have been in some musical productions at my school. I was in Buggy Malone and Trojans. Next year I will be performing in School of Rock at school.

This year, I also danced at the Minerva theatre in Chichester with my dance group. I have also danced at several festivals and fetes this year.

Last year, my mum saw an advert on Facebook for a film that was going to be made, and sent some photos information about me. I didn't have to audition so I was very happy and excited when my mum told me I had got the part!



The film is called The Puppet Asylum, and it was written and directed by Otto Baxter, a filmmaker with Down's Syndrome. It was shown at a few cinemas and is now showing on Sky TV and has a 15 rating. The film stars Paul Kaye as the Master and Rebecca Callard played my mother. I played a 10-year-old boy called Titus. The film is set in London in Victorian times.

It was filmed last summer. I found it really interesting being on set and seeing how films are made. I enjoyed having my make-up done - I had to wear little horns! I enjoyed meeting lots of new people and talking to the actors and the producers.

The only thing I found difficult was wearing the shoes that they gave me for my costume because they hurt my feet! In the end, they let me wear my own trainers!



*Leo Gilbert*

# Adam's Music Workshops

It's great to be writing another report for Wellspring. This year has been very exciting and great fun. With funding from the **Wellesley Charitable Foundation** I was able to deliver a good number of workshops and also support, and work alongside Chestnut Tree House with two music events!

## SEN Sessions at mainstream

The year started with some successful sessions for SEN students at Kingslea Primary School in Horsham.

The Year 5 students were able to create, edit and record their own compositions and vocal performances. The sessions gave the children confidence to perform in front of each other and enabled them to gain skills on the music making equipment.

*"Thank you for all your help with Kingslea and can you thank everyone you brought along.*

*The children all enjoyed the sessions"*

Alexis Conway,  
Head Teacher, Kingslea School.

## Dropping Beats at PACSO

PACSO was great this year.

I ran four sessions this summer for their holiday clubs, with the help of Dom Beatbox and DJ Scratchy. Two of the sessions were Brazilian percussion which were loud, great fun and fully accessible. All the children joined in on the drums and had a ball!

The two DJ workshops were great too and gave Dom Beatbox an opportunity to perform and deliver a short tutorial on beatboxing. This was well received by the group, who all got involved, and an important opportunity too for Dom and his own confidence with group workshops. DJ Scratchy AKA Ryan Spencer was helping too. He set up the decks, helped with the karaoke booth and was able to assist some of the participants using the decks. All the sessions were brilliant!

## Chestnut Tree House Music Festival

On July 23rd myself, DJ Scratchy, DJ Megamix and Dom Beatbox were invited over to Chestnut

Tree House for their first music festival at the house! It was a privilege to be involved and both DJs played some great tunes to get the crowd going. When Dom Beatbox took to the stage he blew everyone's minds with incredible sounds and beatbox skills. Utterly amazing!

It was a beautiful sunny day with loads of great acts and once again an important opportunity for our DJs and Dom to showcase their skills. Both DJs and Dom have benefitted from Wellspring sessions over the years and

having events like the music festival, are so important and beneficial for our legacy work.

## Pride in Brighton

It was a very wet and windy Saturday on 5th August, but that didn't stop Horsham Boom Tribe, Chestnut Tree House and thousands of other organisations and people take to the streets in Brighton for Pride 2023!

We took our drums to the promenade alongside our friends at Chestnut Tree House to promote their great work. It was my first Pride and I was astounded at how well supported it was, with everyone lining the streets; even when it was practically a monsoon! It was a great opportunity to help Chestnut Tree House raise awareness for their work and it was also brilliant for Boom Tribe

to drum at the event. Horsham Boom Tribe are an integrated Samba Band with drummers with and without disabilities, and we loved parading with Chestnut Tree House. It was a fantastic day!

*"I just wanted to say a huge thank you to you and your samba band, I had so many lovely compliments from people saying how great you all were. You all made the parade feel fun and created a wonderful atmosphere for everyone even on a day where the weather wasn't the best!"*

Amy Victory,

Community Fundraiser, Chestnut Tree House





### Holiday sessions at QM Studios

QM Studios in Horsham is a great venue and very popular with musicians rehearsing, bands playing and community music sessions too. I was able to deliver three holiday sessions at the studios with the Wellspring funding. We had over 20 attendees in total over the three sessions who enjoyed accessing the decks, computers and instruments. It was a lovely atmosphere with everyone getting involved with Beatboxing as Dom and Scratchy were once again on hand.



another great year of accessible music making with some excellent opportunities for colleagues and assistant leaders.

There is one more event for this year that will benefit from the funding pot and that is the 'Friends of Manor Green Christmas Spectacular' in December. I'll be taking over members of Horsham Boom Tribe to Manor Green Primary School in Crawley and we'll be joined by some students from Manor Green College to play and parade at the event. It should be a great way to finish off a truly eventful year of work!

Delivering music sessions for Wellspring is always fulfilling, humbling and great fun. It's been

*Adam Gellibrand - Music Workshop Leader*  
*info@qmstudios.co.uk*

## East Toast Cafe

The opening of the cafe in January 2023 was exciting and a real achievement. We all came up with the name East Toast Cafe as it represents our menu and location well. We had fun getting everything ready for opening, such as painting, cleaning, shopping and learning how to cook food on the menu. The cafe needed a fresh look, new colour and furniture. We all spent time planning how to decorate, choosing bright cheerful colours to give a modern feel to the cafe. We all got involved in creating artwork to hang on the walls. Before making decisions on the furniture, we researched well so as to make good choices.

### The Superheroes Team

When we started as trainees in September, we didn't know each other but very quickly became friends working and learning together in a safe and happy environment. Since opening, we have continued to learn so many different skills, gaining confidence in cooking using the coffee machine and customer service. It is so nice to meet new customers and see regulars each week. Feedback has been really useful and

appreciated; it helps us improve our service and menu.

### Food and Drink Menu

We wanted to offer toast-based options. A mix and match idea so the customer can choose what type of bread and how they want it served toasted, not toasted, grilled or served open. Then you can choose a delicious topping or filling such as scrambled eggs, bacon, tuna melt, avocado. We have lots of vegan and veggie options too.



### Takeaway Deliveries

We now also offer a delivery service using Just Eat. Or, if you'd prefer, you can phone ahead to order if you are in a rush. Our team is looking forward to welcoming old and new customers. We are open Monday to Thursday from 9am to 2pm.

The East Toast Cafe is at 38 Lyndhurst Road, Worthing, BN11 2DF  
Tel: 01903 202088  
Facebook: @easttoastcafe

*Lewis Aflie Bargeman*

# 4Sight Vision Support

4Sight Vision Support (4SVS) is a registered charity which has been supporting blind and sight impaired children and adults across West Sussex for just over 100 years. It offers emotional and practical support after diagnosis, including help to understand individual conditions. It achieves this with a small, highly skilled and dedicated team, and with the support of around 200 volunteers. All of its services are free.

Our vision is to enable people to live life without limits: our holistic and person-centred approach offers tailored support and advice to help maintain independence, access education, stay in/find employment, obtain financial assistance, promote health and wellbeing and remain active participants in family life and the wider community. We also support parents, carers and other family members whose lives are impacted by sight loss.

When a client contacts us they speak with a member of the Client Services Team. This team then triage the clients' needs, which are often more complex than the client initially perceives them to be, analysing this so that they can be put in contact with the correct area of specialist support. By having one point of contact into the organisation 4SVS ensures everyone is registered onto a bespoke care pathway, there is continuity of service, and it identifies ongoing needs and coordinates the most relevant support.

Our team of Outreach Workers works closely in partnership with the West Sussex County Council Rehabilitation Officers for the Visually Impaired, to help deliver vital support and guidance to those living with sight loss. Its work is largely self-funded, through donations, community events, its own commercial activities and the support of Charitable Trusts and Foundations.

4SVS has a Vision Support Advisor who provides specific tailored support to schools and colleges, and one to one support for children, young people and their families. The Advisor can spend time supporting sight-impaired children with their educational needs, for example, to ensure that appropriate exam provisions are in place, such as accessible formats, extra time, screen readers, scribes and additional breaks.

This Advisor has also worked alongside educators to ensure that the teaching environment is accessible and appropriate for individual students, e.g. checking lighting levels, improving contrast on floors to easily identify stairs and doorways and

helping to make reading material accessible, and offers suggestions on what equipment may be of benefit to the students to help with their continued learning.

4Sight Vision Support has also run events for young people, including a trip to Aldingbourne Country Centre, a Halloween party, and a rock-climbing/bowling event.

## Services include:

**Low Vision Services** – dedicated assessments to identify magnifications, techniques and products to help with everyday tasks such as reading, shopping, medication and preparing meals, helping clients to remain safe and independent at home and out in the community.

**Vision Support Advocates** – specialising in and coordinating specific support needed by different age groups, from liaising with schools and colleges to make learning more accessible, helping to complete complex benefits forms, ensuring homes are safe, generally helping clients remain as independent as possible, and educating employers on making workplaces more accessible.

**Accessible Technology Service** – advice and assistance with setting up and using a broad range of devices to make daily life easier, including phones, tablets, televisions and home speakers. **Health and Wellbeing Services** – social activities, transport, peer support groups and in time, one to one support with accessing health, leisure and recreational activities across the county. Plus promoting eye health information, including preventative information to help people retain and preserve their sight.

**Newsletter** – a bimonthly newsletter available in five accessible formats keeps clients updated with the latest developments across the sector, our forthcoming social activities, changes in technology and tips on using devices, as well as member stories and other topical news.

4SVS Client, age 17. *"I feel so much more confident at college now. I never imagined I could be in a meeting on my own and not feel scared. I am very proud of my assessment results and feel much happier."*

If you or someone you know is living with sight loss and you would like to find out about 4SVS's services, or you are interested in fundraising or volunteering with the charity, contact us.

Tel: **01243 828555**

Email: [enquiries@4sight.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@4sight.org.uk)

[www.4sight.org.uk](http://www.4sight.org.uk)





# PACSO Summer Fun

We had an incredible summer here at Parent and Carers Support organisation (PACSO), welcoming 100 children and young people to our Summer Playscheme and Youth-Scheme. We had a jam packed 3-week playscheme for ages 5-19 years old and our theme for this year was 'The Dawn of The Dinosaurs.' We had a ROARsome time! At PACSO we love to offer our children and young people a whole range of activities and opportunities, everything from messy play to music workshops and animal visits to magic shows. It's so lovely to find an activity that really engages a child and to see the pure delight on their face as they discover something new that they enjoy.

Our Youth-Scheme for 16 to 25 year-olds is designed to help our young people access hobbies and activities that their mainstream peers may take for granted. We base our summer Youth Scheme at Chichester College and go out and about into the community every day. Our outings are varied and include activities such as bowling, a game of footie in the park, grabbing a milkshake or going to buy ingredients for a baking session back at the college. Last year we were lucky enough to be invited to our local museum, The Novium, to take part in a street art workshop with a local artist. What an opportunity! It gave the PACSO young people such a sense of achievement to have their work displayed in the museum for all to see.

Not only do we go out and about, but we also have a whole range of brilliant professionals who come to us! Our young people particularly enjoyed the DJ workshop run by Adam Gellibrand, DJ Scratchy and Wolfman and kindly funded by **Wellspring West Sussex**. We had everything from The Wiggles, right through to Stormzy, and that is the beauty of PACSO! It was also great to see how friendships were formed and solidified throughout these sessions, with the young people being supportive of one another and encouraging each other's individual tastes.

As we move into Autumn Term and towards Christmas, we have kept the opportunities wide and varied for our members. Our after-school club provision this term has included forest school, farm club and horse riding. We also offer bowling, soft play, music therapy and Adventure Club. There's something for everyone!



After school clubs provide brilliant opportunities for our children and young people to try new things and find new hobbies. Sometimes children find a real love for something, and they are then able to access a new hobby outside of PACSO, with their families.

We also often hear of other benefits to our children and young people. For example, one family told us that their child's physiotherapist had commented on how much better their core strength and balance was since he had been coming to weekly horse-riding sessions with us. Another young person came riding with us for many years and it influenced him enough to decide that he wanted to attend Brinsbury College to carry out a land-based course. It was so brilliant to hear that his hobby had become a passion and something that he wanted to pursue in the future.



Reflecting on some of these stories reminds me just how important clubs and hobbies are for everyone. They can progress our physical and cognitive abilities, provide direction for future learning and careers, and more importantly than anything, improve our overall happiness and wellbeing. We must never stop striving to provide opportunities for everyone to access a hobby. Young or old, rich or poor, able bodied or wheelchair user, everyone deserves the chance to find something that they love.

*Emma Kennedy*  
PACSO CEO with Play Lead  
Tel: 01243 533353 Email: [admin@pacso.org.uk](mailto:admin@pacso.org.uk)

# Wheely Wonders 2023

We have had another brilliant year with Wheely Wonders days at Applefield in Sidlesham.

We've had one a month on a Sunday from April to October. Here's an update of everything we have done since our last report...

**June** - We had a great day with 17 children (3 had not been before), and lots of Father's Day activities. Woodland Wonders Forest School with Jen and Sam included sawing wood to make remote controls or sailing boats and decorating crowns.

At Lizzie's Craft Club we made people collages and decorated photo frames for dads. Chris North provided his wonderful magic with lots of children assisting in different ways and some incredible giant bubbles! We had a great parade with everyone making their way around the fire circle, using musical instruments and ribbons in any way they liked!

Lots of the children were able to bottle feed David the lamb as well as holding Bedroom Slippers the bantam hen! It was great to see Leo Gilbert again and he was very proud to see his article "Leo's Adventures" printed in the newsletter!

**July** – We started off with a drizzly morning but ended in warm sunshine with 12 children plus parents and carers. Jigsaw, Olive and Chilli the goats and Rosemary and Angela the donkeys were very happy to see everyone arriving!

Tam and Sam K ran the Forest School activities, making wooden puppets and clay sculptures before the usual fire lighting fun.

At Craft Club, colourful flowers were created with pipe cleaners in mini terracotta pots which were individually decorated.

It was great to see everyone trying out new circus skills with Chris and enjoying his awesome giant bubble makers!

We were so pleased to welcome Kirsty and Scooter and hear about their adapted surfing – children were able to try out the surf board and beach wheelchair. We finished the day listening to Scooter's story and bottle feeding David the lamb.

In **August** 11 children attended including one new family. We met, petted and fed the animals, then explored, bug hunted, played in the hammock and nest swing. The children used tools to make puppets or drums and made bubble wands with Jen and Tam from Woodland Wonders. Before lunch toasted marshmallows were made into S'mores. At Lizzie's Craft Club the children (and parents!) used fabric paints, stamps and stencils to create wonderful fabric placemats as well as decorating slap bands with a choice of stickers. Scooter and Kirstie came back to help all day and more families tried their equipment. Chris entertained the children with his magic show and we finished the afternoon listening to Scooter's story.

It was very special to see children meeting old friends, making new ones and parents getting together again. Thank you all our lovely volunteers who gave their time and to **The Alpkit Foundation** for the funding for the day.

**September** started off with grey skies and it turned into our wettest ever Wheely Wonders day! We welcomed two new children as well as friends we hadn't seen for a while and the farm animals were very happy to get attention on a gloomy morning.





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Jen and Tam took everyone to the woods and managed some time sawing, bug hunting and using the hammock and swing before the torrential rain and thunderstorms! Back in the glasshouse, wooden snails and boats were made and hot chocolate warmed people up before lunch.

A free choice scratch art session kept children and parents busy before creating paper plate pictures and autumn wooden wind chimes at Craft Club. As we ended the crafts, it stopped raining so we moved out to the field with Chris for some music making, a dragon hunt, story time and magic, then ended the afternoon with lovely sunshine and bubble fun! Thank you to the families for sticking it out despite the wet weather!

On **Friday 29th September** we had a beautiful sunny day welcoming 24 first year Childhood Studies students from the University of Chichester to Applefield for a Wheely Wonders type day, experiencing Woodland Wonders Forest School, Lizzie's Craft Club and Chris' 'Freedom Through Fun' music time as well as meeting all the animals! It was great to get to know the students during their Induction Week and we hope to see them again, volunteering with us over their time at university!

**October** was our Wheely Spooky Day with 14 children and it was lovely meeting 3 who had not been before. The day was funded by the **Wellesley Charitable Foundation**. It was very special to meet 10 month old baby Pippa whose brother Alexander was the founder member of Wheely Wonders in 2017. The weather was very chilly, but everyone wrapped up well and as always, the donkeys and goats were very pleased to see everyone! We also had 3 volunteers from the University of Chichester who are running The SEN Library Project (see page 11). At Forest School with Jen and Sam, some wonderful non-carve pumpkins were decorated as well as sawing wood to make pumpkin medals



with fun on the swing and in the hammock, before fire lighting and marshmallows. The glasshouse was full for the afternoon, designing Trick or Treat bags and making various Halloween decorations at Lizzie's Craft Club. The children all had a turn at the Spooky Lucky Dip too! I was also presented with a beautiful card from some of the families and proudly showed everyone my MBE medal. We finished the day with spooky music and dance, magic and circus skills with Chris.

Unfortunately, due to Storm Ciaran and the very muddy ground at Applefield, we had to cancel our fireworks themed Wheely Wonders in **November**.



Here are some of the lovely comments from parents and children:

*"We absolutely love coming to Wheely Wonders. Getting the chance to meet many other families, the forest school, crafts, magic shows, are all amazing. We are always welcomed by the whole team"*

*"I love coming here and there is nothing I would change"*

*"I like the magic show with Chris and playing the instruments."*



*"We love coming here and seeing the animals. We enjoy feeding them and doing various crafts in the forest area and with Lizzie. It is a wonderful environment and an opportunity to meet other families."*

Huge thanks to all our fantastic helpers this year, and to the **Boltini Trust** for their funding from June to September. It has been wonderful to make special memories with all the lovely families. We look forward to starting again in March or April depending on the weather. If you would like to be added to the Wheely Wonders mailing list, please get in touch!

Lizzie Baily MBE  
lizzie@wellspringwestsussex.org.uk

# Edie's Art Work

My name is Edie, and I am 10 years old. I live in Angmering with my Mum, Dad, my big sisters, Flo and Gracie, my dog Bertie, and my cats, Mitski and Melvin. It is a very busy house!

My favourite subjects at school are English, Music, PE and Art.

My hobbies are Singing, Drawing, Painting, Baking, Reading, Acting, and Swimming. I go to swimming lessons, Church Youth Group, Street Dance, Netball, Brownies and Musical Theatre.

I like to draw my family, friends, and pets. The Family Fund provides Digital Skills workshops online (for free) to families who have received an iPad from them. They teach us how to use and enjoy some of the free apps available. I have learnt to use Garage Band (composing music), Clips (making videos), iMovie, Hopscotch (coding) and the app I

use to create my art which is called Tayasui Sketches School.

The teachers were very good and happy to repeat anything you didn't understand. The apps are very clever, and you can spend a long time working out what they can do. I wouldn't have known how to use them if I didn't do the course. On this page you can see a picture of my sister Gracie, and some that I did for Lizzie of her Investiture!

I like that I can access so many fun activities provided by disability charities, as Gracie's sibling. I get to do so many things that my friends at school don't!

In the future I would love to be an author and illustrator!

*Edie Faulkner*





# The SEN Library Project

We are Keely, Katie, and Jessamine; the faces behind 'The SEN Library Project'.

We are third-year students from the University of Chichester who are passionate about making libraries an accessible asset to all children, regardless of need. Together, we are aiming for book publishers to commit to publishing more SEND-accessible books and resources for children.

Specifically, we are striving to see more books containing braille, large print, page fluffers, board books, noisy books, high-low books, and non-fiction texts with fewer words and more pictures. This list is non-exhaustive as we want all children to be able to access the library and enjoy reading for pleasure, just as much as everyone else. We believe that no one should be held back due to a SEND need.

Under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, libraries have a statutory duty to "provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons" (Public Libraries and Museums Act, 1964).

A comprehensive service would facilitate all or nearly all aspects of SEN needs and as such provide a broad range of SEND-accessible books and resources that can be engaged with. With the current provision, SEN children often fall behind as libraries are not meeting their statutory or legal duty. However, this is attributed to the fact that these texts do not exist to the extent to which they would need to successfully meet the requirements of this legislation.

Being the group of student primary teachers we are, we feel that this is unacceptable and needs to change. As such, we started this journey in September and have already gained a lot of support from those we have reached

via our social media platforms on Facebook, Instagram, and X, (formally known as Twitter). We would love for this support to grow further and to achieve our mission of ensuring that publishers are committed to creating the inclusive resources children deserve.

From here, our next mission is to send out a survey that will be sent to primary schools across the UK. The results will be collated into a spreadsheet that can be sent to the publishers, showing them the level of need that is required, especially when 16% of children in the UK have a SEND need, (Department for Education, 2019). We have also created a survey for parents and carers of children with SEND to also



highlight to publishers this need. The link to this can be found on our social media pages or below:

<https://forms.gle/f8SAD6AxbJrK2sRMA>

We have also had exciting news that our government petition has just been published!

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/647051>



We were delighted to have the opportunity to meet lots of like-minded people at the October Wheely Wonders event and spread the word about our project.

We still have a long way to go, however we are proud of all we have achieved

up to this point. We are excited to see where this project will take us and how it will benefit SEND families across the UK and boost their chances of excelling academically.

We would be grateful if you could follow our social media pages to support our cause:

Facebook: **The SEN Library Project**

Instagram: **the\_sen\_library\_project**

X, (formally Twitter): **@sen\_lib\_project**

# True Partnerships in SEND

For over 30 years, as we've navigated our respective careers and personal lives, we've had the privilege of listening to parents and professionals who are often struggling and broken. These experiences have left us with a deep sense of powerlessness within our various roles and positions. As we searched for information and literature, it became evident that while there was a wealth of guidance on partnership working, most of it was written by professionals and academics, representing only a fraction of what partnership truly entails. We recognised a pressing need to hear the authentic voices of "everyone", with a particular emphasis on parents... and so, we decided to write a book that did just that and that is how True Partnerships in SEND was born.

Although the book carries our names, Heather Green and Becky Edwards, both Senior Lecturers at the University of Chichester, it also contains contributions from Chris Smethurst, the Co-Director of the Institute of Education and Social Sciences at the University of Chichester and Brian Lamb OBE - a consultant specialising in Special Educational Needs (SEN) and chair of the Lamb Inquiry into Parental Confidence in SEN from 2008 to 2009. Both played an essential role in helping us to shape the collective narrative of our book.

## Where to Start?

We began this journey with a fundamental commitment: the words and thoughts of parents had to be at the heart of everything we wrote. We conducted interviews with numerous parents and professionals to gain an understanding of their lived experiences in partnership work. We wanted to delve deeper into the approaches that have proven successful and the challenges people face when working together to support children and young people. What struck us the most was the incredible generosity of these individuals in sharing their stories, their raw truths, and their sometimes painful, often difficult and occasionally celebratory experiences. We were overwhelmed by parents' willingness to revisit their most challenging moments over numerous cups of coffee and through heartfelt tears.

## Key Findings

Conversations with parents and professionals revealed common themes and key messages that resounded with passion and urgency:

**1. Open and Honest Communication:** The most crucial element is to provide assistance in navigating the complex "system." Parents expressed a desire for guidance right from the beginning, with comprehensive information and support on issues such as benefits and paperwork.

**2. Focus on Capabilities, Not Disabilities:** Parents urged professionals not to dwell solely on their children's disabilities, as they were

already well aware of these challenges. They longed for encouragement, hope, and aspirations, as they knew their children's potential extended beyond their disabilities.

**3. Time:** Both parents and professionals stressed the importance of time. Parents need to be heard and professionals need time to truly listen and advocate for the children. The quality of the relationship often hinged on professionals who were 'child-focused,' showing a genuine interest in the child's wellbeing.

**4. Chronic Sorrow:** The concept of chronic sorrow, a normal response to an abnormal situation, played a crucial role in shaping professional responses to families with children with SEND. While the term "chronic sorrow" may not always be used, it is present in parents' stories, creeping up on them in moments like birthdays.



## Take Away Messages

Our journey in writing this book was both humbling and moving. We encountered parents who face daily battles and also those who have received the support they needed. No matter the starting point, true partnerships are possible if professionals run alongside individuals with SEND and their families, in the direction they choose. To summarise, several key elements are crucial for effective partnership working:

- **Allocate time and space for true partnerships to develop.**
- **Understand the long-term impact of chronic sorrow.**
- **Empower individuals and families to co-create their own aspirational outcomes.**

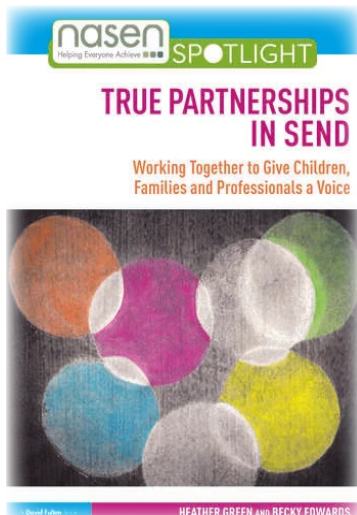


- **Base decisions on a strengths model rather than a deficit model.**
- **Ensure that decisions are not driven by tokenistic rhetoric on overcoming societal barriers.**

One parent reflects, "I remember one sports day when James ran in the opposite direction to everyone else. I remember thinking this is the journey that you go on with a child with special needs, you always feel like you're running in a different direction."

In conclusion, true partnerships must be based in a shared vision of better outcomes for all. This is where our journey begins and ends, with all of us running together, whatever direction that takes us in.

We hope our book will inspire and guide those who work tirelessly to support children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.



Copies of the book can be found through Routledge Publishers: [www.routledge.com/True-Partnerships-in-SEND-Working-Together-to-Give-Children-Families-and-Green-Edwards/p/book/gclid=EAlaIQobChMI97m7royrggMVmvntCh2t4w-kEAAAYASAAEgIGv\\_D\\_BwE](http://www.routledge.com/True-Partnerships-in-SEND-Working-Together-to-Give-Children-Families-and-Green-Edwards/p/book/gclid=EAlaIQobChMI97m7royrggMVmvntCh2t4w-kEAAAYASAAEgIGv_D_BwE) For more details, or to request a copy for review, please contact Tom Eden, Marketing, Education, [tom.eden@tandf.co.uk](mailto:tom.eden@tandf.co.uk)

*Heather Green and Becky Edwards*

## Sunbeam Swimming Club

Sunbeam Swimming Club is a friendly, inclusive club meeting every Saturday from 12.30-2.00pm at Pavilions Leisure Centre in Horsham. The club started in 1982 (more than 40 years ago!) and some of the founding members are our most regular swimmers. Sunbeam hires the entire main pool (8 swimming lanes, 25m length and 1.2m deep) ensuring a private and safe swimming space for 70 members. We divide the pool into wide lanes and volunteer coaches swim alongside swimmers giving encouragement and motivation. Swimmers practise swimming strokes, improve fitness, keep healthy, socialise, make new friends and just love being in water!

There are opportunities to enter events such as Swimathons, team challenges and galas. Sunbeam has a tradition of swimming as a club virtually around an island or a body of water over the 8 weeks of the summer holidays. Everyone swims as many lengths of the pool as they can; we keep a tally of the total lengths swum, convert that to distance and mark that against the real distance of a real place. For example,

we have virtually swum across the English Channel (there and back), around the Isle of Wight and Ibiza. This year all members voted to swim virtually around Tenerife and we managed 4992 lengths (which equates to 89km) as a team. The summer challenge keeps everyone fit and motivated, it's great fun, and of course there are medals for everyone at the end!

We are very proud that in November, 16 swimmers are entering an inclusive gala in Dorking and 3 swimmers are in the British Down Syndrome Swimming Championships in Crawley. Wish us luck and follow Sunbeam on Facebook! [www.facebook.com/SunbeamSC](http://www.facebook.com/SunbeamSC)



This is our new Sunbeam logo. Designs were created by a very artistic person and all the members voted for their most favourite logo - we try to be a very democratic club and give young swimmers a real voice!!

*"I like Sunbeam Swimming Club because I love swimming and it's exercise. It's enjoyable and makes me happy. It makes me feel better because I'm swimming with my bestie."*  
Heidi, aged 15

# Investiture Day

Wednesday 27th September was the day we had been waiting for all year...my MBE Investiture at Windsor Castle!

It was such a surprise when I found out last December that I had been recognised for Services to Disability Advocacy and Charity in West Sussex. I love my work, much of which started through my childhood hobbies such as art and craft, being outside in the fresh air and playing with friends. The best part of everything I do now is meeting so many special children and their families who inspire me!

As with any outing for a family with a person with additional needs, we had been planning and preparing since I received the date in August; getting clothes ready on hangers, hair rehearsals, finding a driver to take us, cleaning my wheelchair and the car, and making arrangements for all our animals to be looked after! I also had two wonderful facials and a manicure with my friend Lily who I met when she was seven at my Craft Club, and now runs a lovely accessible salon just opposite our house! There were lots of wonderings about what would happen when we got to Windsor Castle: would my wheelchair fit in the lift and would the hoist in the Changing Places toilet be working?

On the day we set off early, passing through Camberley and Bagshot which hold happy childhood memories of my first school days. We arrived in Windsor and it was great to see my brother George,

smartly dressed in his morning suit walking down the pavement towards us when we stopped in the street.



We had very kindly been offered a base by a friend of one of our Wheely Wonders families at her home inside the Castle – this made a huge difference to the whole experience! She was at the Castle gate ready to wave us through and once we were inside I really felt my special day had begun! Her home in Horseshoe Cloisters by St. George's Chapel felt very magical and full of history! She kindly served lovely refreshments for us so we were

able to relax a bit before getting ready and smartening up properly.



Next it was time to move up to the main castle where we joined others waiting to go inside. We were shown in by a warden who led us through the China Museum to the lift (I easily fitted in!!) which took us upstairs to the State Apartments. There was a quartet playing while

we were shown through to the first room and a special hook was pinned onto me, ready for the medal presentation later. We walked

through seven of the State rooms which had uniforms, weapons, royal furniture and wonderful masterpieces on the walls, before finally reaching the Waterloo Chamber with many other MBE winners and their guests. We had a long wait before we were given a briefing about what would happen during the actual





ceremony. It was mostly about turning to the left and right at certain points which made me nervous, but my cousin Sarah was able to reassure me before we got called forward by name to queue up through The Throne Room – the chandeliers were so bright and sparkly!

As we got closer to the front of the line, I was given more instructions and my parents and George and Sarah were sent into The Presence Chamber ahead of me; I could see a lot of golden light! As I edged forwards, I had my first glimpse of HRH The Princess Royal presenting a medal to the man before me and I raised my wheelchair seat

so I was at her eye level. Once he had finished, I was ushered forward and I turned to face Princess Anne. She stepped down from the dais to put the medal on me, then went back up to talk to me and I adjusted my height to be even taller! We had a short discussion about my Wellspring work combined with Disability Advocacy. I told her about Wheely Wonders days, and how much we all appreciate coming together. There was so much more that I could have discussed with her as I felt that she was genuinely interested – I especially would have loved to tell her how much confidence I gained through my childhood Riding for the Disabled sessions. I knew the conversation was over when she bent down to shake my hand and then I reversed slowly and turned to leave, joined by my family. It felt as if I had been in a dream and when I was asked what we talked about, I had to try hard to remember!

As we entered St George's Hall, rather suddenly I had the medal taken off and put in its box ready for the official photos. There were flashes all the way down

the huge Hall as other groups were having their pictures taken. Our session was great fun with a very friendly photographer who kept telling us to look at each other lovingly which made

us laugh! We took more of our own photographs outside in the Castle grounds and made a visit to the Changing Places loo which was very clean and spacious, but in our nervous state we couldn't work out how to use the hoist (we found out afterwards you have to pull it manually forward)!



In August I had booked a table for tea at The Castle Hotel just across the street, with another cousin coming to join us. When we arrived, I

had the most awesome surprise as lots of family and friends were there cheering me in.

For a couple of minutes I was completely overcome and found it difficult to speak! We were in a beautiful "garden room" with flowers and delicious colourful food. My niece and nephew made a speech and cousins had bought a personalised cake which made the day even more incredible! We set off for

home with so many vivid images in our minds, and there were lots of messages, more flowers and photos to look at before we went to bed very late!

I now want to go back and spend more time as a tourist at Windsor Castle, looking more closely at everything, without the nerves of the day! It really is a very special place to visit and I recommend it to everyone as a brilliant accessible day out full of history, beautiful views and walks with a real feel of a living castle community.



Lizzie Baily MBE

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# Southern Mobility Vehicles

Here at Southern Mobility Vehicles Ltd we are specialists in wheelchair accessible vehicles or WAVs as they are often known. We are here to advise you and guide you toward the best WAVs for your individual needs. We deal in vehicles of all sizes, from 2 to 16 seats plus a wheelchair user as well as multiple wheelchair user vehicles which could be suitable for care homes, schools, or charities.

We can also bespoke existing WAVs, so whatever your needs are, just ask and we can advise on how we can make the right vehicle work for your needs. All work is carried out by a certified conversion company to your build specification and we will all work together with you to achieve the ideal WAV.

All our wheelchair accessible vehicles are available to view at our business address near Chichester, please contact us for an appointment so we can devote our time specifically to your needs. We also offer free home demonstration appointments within distance limits.



If you are an absolute beginner or a seasoned expert, we welcome everyone; nothing is too much trouble, please just ask, we are here to help.

We know that the ability to travel makes a huge difference to the lives of wheelchair users and we have seen how they change lives. Remember too that WAVs can be driven by carers, friends, or family members, and in some cases wheelchair users are able to drive a WAV themselves. Whatever your needs, please call or come and see us, we are here to help.

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The next edition will be

**Paralympics**

If you would like to contribute any articles or letters to this edition, please send or e-mail to us by 31st March 2024

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Wellspring West Sussex has a child protection policy in operation and copies can be made available on request. Any disabled child or young person in West Sussex who expresses concerns about what may be happening to them will be encouraged to contact one of the nominated agencies for help. This policy is also available on the website [www.wellspringwestsussex.org.uk](http://www.wellspringwestsussex.org.uk)

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