

A message from our Chief Executive, Leila Ferguson

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I expect everyone has settled down after the election and has caught up with their sleep. Interesting times but whatever the outcome I think we all know that we will need to tighten our belts and continue to look for funding, not only to maintain but also to expand our services. Most of the services we run have grown in the last year and not all of them are self funding. We were lucky to get some LDDF (Learning Disability Development Funding) to subsidise our trips which has enabled us to offer them at a much reduced cost. A big thanks to Terry and Heather for running them and please be aware that, not only is it first come first served, but also all paperwork must be submitted at the same time as the payment in order to get a place. We have found that sometimes people's needs can change enormously and we aren't being told about it, i.e. someone could be on a different medication or have developed some problem and no one is letting us know. This means that we can't do our job as efficiently or safely as possible.

We are now registering as a Domiciliary Care Agency, our papers are in and we are waiting to hear that we are registered and can start providing high quality care to whoever wants it. This is fantastic news for us because this has been the one gap in our services and it is now being filled. We provide services like Link Up, Growing 4 All and Leisure Plus which are all fantastic and very well attended but tend to be premises based. The Domiciliary Care Agency means we can be much more flexible and provide qualified and caring staff to provide a huge range of different services to a wide range of people. We can provide personal care, accompany someone to the football or the cinema, provide one to one help for a wide variety of needs, all with our ethos of care and support. Please contact us for more details of the Domiciliary Care Agency or Heffernan House.

Finally, thank you to everyone who supports us in so many ways. Many of our thanks go onto the website but we always forget some people I am sure. I would also like to thank the various members of my family that get roped into activities, Ben who carries a collecting tin to every paintballing game and Josh who recently ran the Reading 10k and raised over £500. James also runs for us and comes to play for Gateway, so thanks family x! Thanks again to all the wonderful volunteers who support us in so many ways, running, attending activities, finding places for collecting tins, standing outside Sainsbury's and Tesco's in all weather (and organising it!). Without all of you our services would not be as good and we really appreciate you.



Leila Ferguson

We are always very grateful for all the donations and legacies we receive. Just a reminder that if cheques are made payable to West Berkshire Mencap rather than just Mencap then the money comes directly to us which benefits local people.

If you would like an electronic newsletter then please email to info@westberkshireremcap.org with new newsletter as the title.

Growing4all

It is the busy time of year when we are making up hanging baskets for our customers. We have a lot of return customers for our very popular baskets. The cost is £15.00 for a 14 inch basket and we would be happy to take your order.



If you are interested in a hanging basket then please contact Julie Walker on 01635 297200 or email reception@growing4all.org.uk



On 8th April clients at Growing4all marked the first anniversary of Danny Perrin's death by building a scarecrow. They enjoyed a cup of tea and doughnuts, something Danny was fond of, while sharing fond memories.

Link Up

The last few months have been busy at Link Up, everyone has worked very hard on the new line of work we do for a greeting card company and having mastered that job, we are now starting work for a new customer, who previously had the work completed in Canada but heard about Link Up last year and asked to send his work to us!

Also congratulations to Richard Mitchell, who has just won an award for "Determination" at the Learner Achievement awards - "Richard is a real success story at Link Up and has worked very hard to overcome obstacles in his way and we are all very proud of Richard and the award he has won".

We are looking at holding an event in July 2010 to celebrate our 15th year and will put more details in the next newsletter, if you have anything bottles or items suitable for the tombola, please contact us to donate them.



A big thank you to all of our supporters and members!

**Jane Hall
Manager**

Learning Disability Week

Reading Mencap are having an Open Information day on 21st June. If anyone is interested in going along we will be having a stand. It is open between 10am and 3pm and a buffet lunch is provided.

Royal Visit

On Tuesday 20th April HRH The Duke of Kent visited the Cottismore Garden Project and The Slater Centre as part of a wider visit to see the work of the Greenham Common Trust.

During his visit to Cottismore he was greeted by our President and Vice President and members of the Community Furniture Project who are working with West Berkshire Mencap on this joint project. His Royal Highness was given a guided tour of the project and shown examples of the work undertaken there. Julie Walker spoke to him about the therapeutic work done with our learners and David Bundy demonstrated how they transplant seedlings.



At The Slater Centre HRH was greeted by Paul Harris and given a tour of the building. During the tour he met the various charities to learn about their work. It was then onto Link-Up where he was met by Leila Ferguson who explained about the work that Link-up does. Whilst there he had the opportunity to see some of our service users carrying out tasks regularly undertaken at Link-Up. Georgina Fatcher, Tutor, explained how computers take a big part in the training of the learners with John Chorley giving a demonstration assisted by Chris Adams.

The Duke thanked Paul for a pleasant visit apologising that the visit had been so short due to other commitments.

Raceday at Newbury Racecourse - Friday, 5th March 2010

West Berkshire Mencap held its annual Race Day at Newbury Racecourse on Friday the 5th March and a great time was had by all. The event raised about £12,000 which is wonderful, particularly in the current financial climate. This was made possible by the fantastic support of the race sponsors, attendees and people who donated some amazing prizes.



A team of staff from Children's Services collected money in buckets around the racecourse, there were silent auctions, raffles and a great auction compered by the irrepressible Chris Boreham. All funds raised will go towards improving and expanding West Berkshire Mencap's excellent services including Heffernan House, the new supported living project. All the photos from the day can be seen on our website.

We have been asked to pass on information about the following which are all free but must be collected.

Buggy accommodates age 11 to small adult, photo on our website. Contact Susan Langley for more details on 01635 36362.

Thomas the tank engine canvas wardrobe. Contact Amanda Heisig for more details on 01635 278359

Two oriental cats both 3yrs old, the cats have been neutered. Contact Mark McDonagh for more information on 01635 524304

Fundraising



Car Boot Sales

A big thank you to everyone that donated items for us to sell at the car boot sales. The response has been fantastic and we have enough for now so will not require any more donations, at least for the time being. However, we do need volunteers to help at the boot sales, so if you can spare an hour or two on a Sunday morning please let us know.



Events

Firstly, a huge thank you to the Corn Exchange for inviting West Berkshire Mencap to collect on 28th March for both afternoon and evening performances of West End Voices. Also we would like to thank Emily Velvick, Sarah Williams and Laura Westall who gave up their time on a Sunday to collect. We raised a massive £215.02

Street Collection April 2010.

Our street collection this year was very successful raising over **£1600**. This was, once again, organised by Isobel Strang who did an excellent job. We would like to say a huge thank you to all our collectors who gave up their time and did such a fantastic job in Newbury, Hungerford and Thatcham.

Future Events

On Wednesday, **2nd June** from 10am – 1pm at the Mencap Centre we are having an **“Open Family Morning.”** This gives parents and carers a chance to have a look around The Centre. There will be refreshments on sale, toys set up in the hall and a craft activity going on in our new craft room for the children.

Also coming up West Berkshire Mencap are holding a **Children’s Nearly New Sale** on Saturday, **3rd July** from 11am – 1pm. We hope to get a range of stalls, already signed up are Mini IQ, Phoenix Cards and Small Print. If you are interested in having a stall please contact Jo Turner on 01635 569875. Alternatively, if you have any nearly new children’s clothes or toys that you could donate for us to sell we would love to hear from you.

On Sunday **27th June** Thatcham Town are holding their second **Family Fun Day** on Henwick field from 11am – 3pm. West Berkshire Mencap will be there with a cake stall and distributing lots of information about our services. So if you are planning on going please keep an eye out for us! As we are having a cake stall this does mean we will need lots of cakes to sell on the day, if you are happy to make or buy a cake to be sold, we would be very pleased to hear from you.



Looking further ahead, we are planning another **Quiz Night** on Friday, **15th October**.

Thanks to
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Call 01635 41464 or email us.

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