

LEARNING DISABILITY NEWS

Christmas 2023 Edition



As we approach Christmas and the New Year we would like to offer heartfelt thanks to everyone who has supported us in 2023. We also thank our staff and volunteers for their year round hard work and dedication to supporting our work. This support has made our year all the better. The Mencap Centre will be closed from Friday 22nd December, re-opening after the New Year Bank Holiday on Tuesday 2nd January 2024. We would like to take this opportunity to wish each and every one of you the merriest of merry Christmas and the happiest of happy New Years! We hope you enjoy this Christmas edition which looks back at the highlights of our year.

Highlights of 2023



We consider ourselves privileged to know so many incredible individuals who happen to have learning disabilities. Each day they seize life with unwavering enthusiasm, facing challenges head-on. Inspired by their resilience, we are pioneering pathways to unlock exciting work-like employment possibilities – whether through voluntary or paid roles. Our innovative enterprise vision is fast becoming reality, leading to meaningful connections and a sense of belonging. Join us in celebrating the boundless potential within our diverse community! We hope you enjoy the round-up of their events in 2023!

JANUARY



The Own2Feet Christmas Panto, postponed due to a wave of sickness, finally hit the stage early in the New Year and let me tell you—it was nothing short of spectacular! Pure brilliance radiated from every participant. Huge kudos to everyone involved! In the midst of this joy, we couldn't help but feel the absence of Jane, shown in the photo, who left for a new role in August.

Trustees
Jennifer Strevens [Chair]
Di Bernstein
Daniel Mar-Molinero
Heidi Oldrey
Hilary Linssen
Brian Strevens
Lisa Stead

Chief Executive Officer
Alexandra Iles
Senior Administrator
Sue Roberts
Finance Officer
Lorna Simpson
Activities Manager
Elly Iles

Day Service & Club Leaders
Marc Kibler
Cath Wigham
Liz Curtis
Pula Popat
Kelly Brackstone

And not forgetting our magnificent bunch of activities support staff, trustees and volunteers!

Website:
www.southamptonmencap.org

Tel: 023 8058 4088

The Bakers group is taking a break and will be back on Wednesday 3rd January.
Bakery Down the Lane is also now closed for 2 weeks and will be back on Thursday 4th January from 10am-3pm

Wishing everyone a very merry Christmas filled with happiness and a New Year filled with peace and contentment



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FEB/APR/MAY/AUG/OCT/DEC

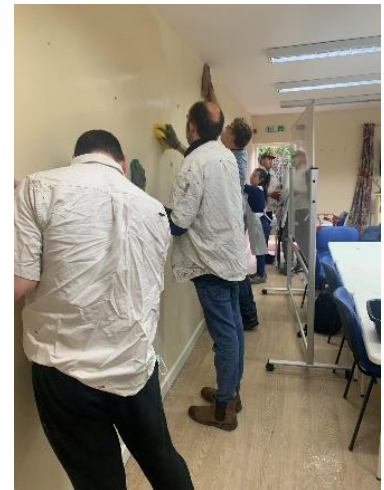


Children & young people enjoyed the **FairPlay Schemes** by making new friends during the school half terms and summer holidays. They tried their hand at a range of activities and gave us plenty of smiles along the way. We are enjoying having so many of them back in the building for our Christmas holiday scheme this week!

MAY

Mencap Garden & Maintenance Group is making waves! Since the beginning of

the year, this dedicated group, under vigilant supervision, has transformed 11 gardens. Their satisfied clients are so impressed that they've been generously donating to the organisation since May. But that's not all—the group has broadened its scope, taking on various tasks at the Mencap Centre, from painting to laying foam tiles for the new sensory room. Talk about hard work paying off!



JUNE

On a bright and sunny day in June we hosted our **65th AGM**, followed by a lively Summer Fun Open Day. The event, attended by parents, carers, and potential new service users, featured a special visit from the Lord Mayor, Councilor Valerie Laurent. The day included a BBQ, afternoon tea, and music by our wonderful DJ Tom. Celebrating the year's achievements. Day service members, staff, and volunteers showcased their

Enterprise work, offering visitors the chance to buy a variety of home-grown, home-baked, and home-crafted goods. The event was a success, thanks to the hard work of the team and the enthusiastic participation of everyone involved.

Did you get your **2024 Activities Calendar** yet? If not, get in touch with us pronto!



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JULY



Our exciting collaboration between Wednesday's **Bakers group** and the Coriander Lounge in Southampton began. This is rapidly evolving into a resounding success. This achievement is vividly illustrated by the response of delighted diners who receive one of our delicious cakes for their birthday celebrations. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the entire team at Coriander and their wonderful customers for their steadfast support of our enterprise initiatives. It's the collaborative spirit and encouragement like this that propel our efforts forward, making a positive impact on both our participants and the community at large. Thank you for being a vital part of our journey!

SEPTEMBER

Mencap Enterprises cranked up the excitement with the grand opening of **Bakery Down the Lane!** Offering mouth-watering home-baked delights at unbeatable prices every Thursday, from 10 am to 3 pm, this bakery bonanza is ready to tempt your taste buds. Swing by for a scrumptious treat to-go or bask in the vibrant vibes of their rainbow-themed coffee shop. Either way, you're in for a treat served with a grin that'll make your day! Support the sweetest spot in town – Bakery Down the Lane!



OCTOBER



The Mencap car has proved invaluable, replacing previously unreliable taxi arrangements for two individuals attending our services, as agreed with the Learning Disability team. Initially accommodating two passengers, we aspire to soon operate at full capacity, providing far more reliable transport to and from the Mencap Centre for up to five people.

If you like the sound of some of these for yourself or someone you know or are interested in any of our services, then we would love to hear from you.



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NOVEMBER

Own2Feet Activists Declare: Urgent Upgrade Needed for Lane to Mencap Centre! The Own2Feet Activism Group dropped a bombshell of truth! In a heartfelt letter, they spilt the beans on the sorry state of the lane to the Mencap Centre, holding nothing back on how it's impacting them. No games here! They hand-delivered copies to every City Councillor, making a bold plea for help. Unfit for purpose and a health hazard, they say. As regular users, they're not backing down on this one! The result? A fiery Q&A session with local councillors and a community showdown in the works for the New Year! Get ready for more action, because Own2Feet is turning up the heat!



DECEMBER

The Monday Craft Creations

arm of our enterprise churned hand produced an impressive stock of seasonal cards and gifts to meet every budget! From cards to keyrings and notebooks, the group promoted these to customers of the Bakery, visitors to the Mencap Centre, and through holding fund- raising events. The stalls held at Spitfire Lodge Churchill Retirement Living and the University of Southampton's Music Department Christmas Concert were both successful events thanks to the enthusiastic participation of everyone involved.

THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

Free Cake for Kids

Southampton We are grateful to the awesome volunteer bakers at Free Cake for Kids! They have been whipping up incredible birthday cakes for our members aged 5-18, making birthdays extra sweet. These fantastic creations have brought smiles to the kids, young people, and their families. You're making a real difference—keep spreading that joy!



Carers Network Meetings Open to anyone providing unpaid care for a sibling, son, daughter, or relative with learning disabilities of any age. Enjoy lunch, connect with others, and dive into focused discussions. Recent topics? Respite, mastering adult social care systems, and adding your voice to proposals that impact on you and your loved ones.



Look out for Carer Network dates in 2024 and don't miss out – mark your calendar!



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