

# Short breaks for disabled children



Newsletter - autumn 2010

● Holiday activities ● trips ● fun days ● drama ● sports ● art ● music ● youth clubs ● Paralympics and much more.

## Aiming High activities

These activities are for children and young people with physical or learning disabilities; hearing or visual impairments; autism, Asperger's Syndrome and those with complex health needs.

To access short breaks, please get in touch with organisations named in this newsletter or Medway Family Information Service by phone on **01634 335566**, by email at [familyinfo@medway.gov.uk](mailto:familyinfo@medway.gov.uk) or go to [www.aiminghighmedway.org](http://www.aiminghighmedway.org).



"I don't want to go home!"  
Girl with global development delay (aged nine)

"Before Bradfields' playscheme, we had only ever left our daughter at school. We are so grateful for all your help and support in giving us a break and providing her with all the fun and exciting opportunities that you have."  
Mother of a girl with global delay (aged 13)

## Aiming higher!

We are providing exciting and stimulating activities for more than 2,000 Medway children and young people with severe disabilities during 2010/11. This also provides an invaluable respite for their hard-pressed carers and gives them a chance to focus on siblings.



Medway Council's Portfolio Holder for Children's Social Care **Cllr David Wildey** said: "It's great to see the children and young people enjoying their summer break and getting the chance to have some fun. It means they can keep in contact with friends as well as meeting new people. The Aiming High programme allows children and young people with additional needs to enjoy a range of fun activities, clubs and breaks, giving families and carers the chance to recharge their batteries. "It's essential that families are aware of the services available to support them. This is why days like these are so important."





"Thank you so much, I have had a wonderful time."  
Boy with Cerebral Palsy (aged 19)

"Just thank you, it gives us such peace of mind sending our daughter to the playscheme."  
parents of a girl with Down's syndrome (aged 13)

"I love everyone at Bradfields."  
Girl with Down's Syndrome (aged 13)

"Do you want to come round to my house for dinner?"  
Boy with autism (aged 11)

## Bradfields' summer playscheme

**Bradfields' summer playscheme ran from 2 to 26 August. During this time we delivered 900 childcare places for disabled children and young people.**

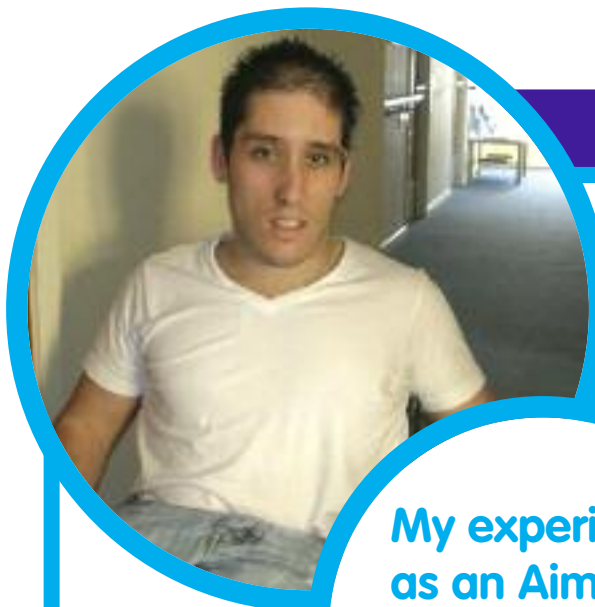
The four weeks was jam-packed with fun things to do including bike rides; go-karts; bouncy castle assault courses and slides; a giant water slide and visits from Farm to You and Jungle Jo with her exotic animal collection. We went to Lordswood Leisure Centre and took part in trampolining, playing on giant dance mats, stunt driving and a brilliant game of, I'm a kid, get me out of here! We also went on days out to Howletts Wild Animal Park and Kent Life.

We are now able to offer a Saturday club one Saturday a month, for eight to 25-year-olds. We hope to be able expand to offer provision from the age of four after Christmas. We also have a fantastic interactive play performance planned for Christmas and another fun-packed playscheme planned for February 2011.

By **Lesley Kedge**  
Aiming High Project Manager  
Phone: **01634 338395**  
or email [ryan.godden@medway.gov.uk](mailto:ryan.godden@medway.gov.uk)



# News from the kasbah (Kent Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus)



## My experience as an Aiming High volunteer and reporter

By Ross Briffitt

I am 24-years-old and I have Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus. I am a wheelchair user and I live in Rochester.

I was approached by Dean Bowman, who is working with KASBAH (Kent Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus), on the new Aiming High project, while I was taking part in life skills training sessions in the school holiday. I was asked to get involved in the project so I joined as a volunteer to share my skills (I have completed an independent living training scheme).

I started working on Mondays, supporting Dean with the daily activities that were planned. I found the project and my role very hands-on which gave me a sense of responsibility and worth. I am looking forward to the future and intend to return to the project at the next school break.

I recently went to the **Wednesday Squad learning disabilities youth group** that is held every Wednesday evening, 6.30 to 9pm at Parkwood Youth Club. I gathered information from young people on their views and opinions about the Wednesday squad and the service and activities on offer. The young people's opinions of the club activities were very different, dependent on their interests. I really enjoyed the experience, my role was to evaluate the service and I feel that my review was valued.



## What difference has Aiming High made to KASBAH?

Funding has enabled KASBAH to assist a new client group of younger members with more complex needs and provide a range of life skills which has increased the young group member's confidence, abilities and independence.

by **Emma Carver**, *Chief Officer*  
Phone **01474 536501** or email [ecarver@kasbah.org.uk](mailto:ecarver@kasbah.org.uk)



# New initiatives

Aiming High round two funding has been awarded to:

## Demelza Children's Hospice

Music therapy for children under five-years-old with life-limiting conditions and complementary therapy for mothers.

Email: [debbie.mcswiney@demelza.org.uk](mailto:debbie.mcswiney@demelza.org.uk)

## Medway Rotary Club/ Demelza Children's Hospice

Part-funding for a residential trip to Disneyland, Paris for children with life-limiting conditions.

Phone: 07703 495551,  
email: [rogerrobinson123@btinternet.com](mailto:rogerrobinson123@btinternet.com)

## Carers First

An additional 1,800 hours of one-to-one short break support.

Phone: Sue Ashburn on 01634 577340,  
email: [skmedwaycarers@aol.co.uk](mailto:skmedwaycarers@aol.co.uk)

## The Challenging Behaviour Foundation

Eight training workshops about managing the challenging behaviours of children with disabilities, for staff providing short breaks and respite care.

Phone: Gemma Honeyman on 01634 838739,  
email: [gemma@thecbf.org.uk](mailto:gemma@thecbf.org.uk)

## Wednesday Squad (Parkwood Youth Centre)

Project to increase independence and extend life skills using kitchen and sports equipment.

Phone: Dean Bowman on 01634 233846,  
email: [dbdbowman@googlemail.com](mailto:dbdbowman@googlemail.com)

## Avenues Trust (Community Support Services)

Work with individual 12 to 19-year-olds with learning disabilities and/or autism to develop life skills and provide opportunities.

## Brogdale CIC

Holiday activities such as jewellery, film-making, photography, beauty and woodwork for 14 to 19-year-olds at special schools.

Phone: Rebecca O'Neill on 01622 754252,  
email: [rebecca.oneill@individuallearning.co.uk](mailto:rebecca.oneill@individuallearning.co.uk)

## Abbey Court School

Residential trip to the Arethusa Centre.

## Parklands/Riding for Disabled Association

Horse riding for disabled children at The Nook, Sittingbourne.

## MAGIC (Medway Autism Group and Information Centre)

Extending an existing football project. Team Teach training for parents/carers to enhance family life.

Phone: Gayna Simmonds on 01634 326320,  
email: [medway-magic@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:medway-magic@blueyonder.co.uk)

## RAD (Royal Association for Deaf People)

Activities for 12 to 18-year-olds who are deaf/hard of hearing to develop skills and self-esteem.

Contact: Andy Taylor  
email: [andy.taylor@royaldeaf.org.uk](mailto:andy.taylor@royaldeaf.org.uk)

## Kent Association for the Blind



**Kent Association for the Blind**

KAB has secured Aiming High funding to deliver leisure activities for children and young people with sight loss. We have sighted volunteers to ensure that activities are inclusive and accessible.

During the summer break we organised four activities to get the scheme rolling:

- **Ten pin bowling.**
- **Trampolining at Jumpers Rebound Centre, Gillingham.**
- **A day trip to Dymchurch.**
- **We also planned a gliding trip but were unfortunately grounded by the weather.**

Nine more outings are planned, including a driving blind experience at Brands Hatch. Phone Alan Whetherly on **07958 078021** or KAB Medway on **01634 332929**, or email [alan.whetherly@medway.gov.uk](mailto:alan.whetherly@medway.gov.uk)

"We went to the beach to the arcades. The train ride was the best bit for me."  
Visually impaired boy (aged 11)

"My son and I were able to spend a lovely day together. It was quality time for us both on a day which he really enjoyed."  
Parent of an 11-year-old visually impaired boy.



### Smiley Steps

Conductive education for children aged six months to five-years-old. Free. Monday to Thursday, 10-4pm. New Saturday club under discussion.

**Cerebral Palsy Centre, Bradbury House, View Road, Cliffe Woods ME3 8UJ**

Phone Maureen Cook on **01634 220120**

### Me2 Mentors

Take young people to youth clubs.

13 to 19-years-old with a disability or additional needs. Phone Tracey McRobert on **01634 281841** or email [tracey@kent youth.org.uk](mailto:tracey@kent youth.org.uk)



© Office for Disability Issues

"Amelia has had a blast - she really enjoyed her time with you, you've all been MAGIC!"  
Parent of girl with autism

"Jack so enjoyed the activity week. He cant stop talking about it, thank you again and again."  
Parent of boy with autism



Harry and the snake

## It's been MAGIC!!

Medway Autism Group and Information Centre (MAGIC) has been very excited since receiving money from the Aiming High for Disabled Children project. Parents, staff and volunteers have been involved since the beginning and seen the progress the money has allowed MAGIC to make.

For the first time, we have been able to organise activity weeks, days and so much more. We have held a swimming party, bowling party and hosted a fun day, that was attended by more than 200 people, raising the profile of autism and disabled children's needs. The most amazing thing is seeing the positive impact on the children, young people and their parents. Aiming High has meant we can offer much more than we had hoped, especially giving parents much needed respite.

The capital funding has given MAGIC the chance to improve the building we work from and we are in negotiation to build a permanent base for us at Woodies in Rochester. MAGIC is proud to be part of this project, benefitting many children and young adults with Autism. Aiming High funding allows them to have new experiences and take part in new activities that they and their parents did not believe were possible.

By **Gayna Simmonds**  
Medway Autism Group and Information Centre  
Phone: **01634 326230**  
Email: **medway-magic@blueyonder.co.uk**



### Parklands Holiday Playschemes

For children over six-years-old with mild to severe learning disabilities.  
Oxford Road, Gillingham  
ME7 4BY  
Phone **01634 338500** or email **parklands@medway.gov.uk**

### Swingate School Saturday Club

For children with autism.  
Email Kristine Boon on **office@swingate.medway.sch.uk**

## Building for the future

Aiming High capital funds have meant that a range of groups have been able to adapt their premises, build extensions and buy much needed equipment to benefit severely disabled children can benefit.

These organisations include:

- Arethusa (equipment, including climbing, water sports.);
- Aut Even (extension to respite centre);
- Bradfields School (play provision);
- Cerebral Palsy Centre (sensory room equipment);
- Danecourt School respite centre (new accommodation);
- KASBAH (grant towards purchase of minibus);
- MAGIC (adaptations to Woodies Youth Centre);
- Parklands Resource Centre (extension + sensory equipment);
- Wednesday Squad (kitchen and sports equipment);
- Youth and Community (Rainham Park facilities).



## Medway Parent and Carers Forum

Aiming High is committed to raising levels of parent participation in the planning and development of the short breaks programme.

We have developed stronger links with the Medway Parent and Carers' Forum by providing office accommodation and involving parents in key decision-making forums.

Medway is one of 30 councils piloting these partnerships and through Together for Disabled Children, we are able to update the other councils involved.

Contact: Keith Clear  
Email: [medwaypcf@googlemail.com](mailto:medwaypcf@googlemail.com)

## Individual short breaks

**(Four hours or more; day or evening; weekends or overnight stays.)**

Trained short break carers are able to take a disabled child or young person out for social and leisure facilities like swimming or soft play spaces.

Individual fun sessions provide vital breaks for parents and carers. Families working with more than one child may prefer additional support to let the whole family enjoy days out together.

Many parents using the project for the first time feel like they are taking a huge step to entrust their child to another person. Following requests from parents, Carers First recently held an open day at the carers' centre in Gillingham, to give parents the opportunity to meet others in a similar situation, share experiences and learn what support may be available from other projects at the Medway Carers' Centre.

Parents asked if regular meetings could be arranged and had lots of ideas about more ways in which the project could support them and their family.

Since our first newsletter the number of families they are supporting has doubled.

This service is provided by a working partnership between Carers First and Crossroads Care. For more information, please contact:

- Sue Ashburn (Carers First)  
Phone: **01634 577340**  
Email: [skmedwaycarers@aol.co.uk](mailto:skmedwaycarers@aol.co.uk)
- Margaret Catlin (Crossroads Care)  
Phone: **01634 868885**  
Email: [Margaret.medwaycrossroads@btconnect.com](mailto:Margaret.medwaycrossroads@btconnect.com)



# Aiming High Paralympic sports taster day

10am to 4pm Thursday, 28 October  
Medway Park, Mill Road, Gillingham ME7 1HF

Children and young people, between 10 and 20-years-old, with a physical disability or visual impairment are invited to try out a range of exciting sports including **athletics, archery, goalball, boccia, sitting volleyball, judo, wheelchair basketball** and **wheelchair rugby**. Aiming High has bought 12 sports wheelchairs to make this event possible.

We hope that people who join us on 28 October will want to continue with Paralympic sports. Several Medway sports clubs will be available to give everyone the opportunity to join and maintain their sporting ambitions.



Paralympic Superstar and gold medallist **Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson** will present certificates to the children and young people. Parents and carers are welcome to join us at Medway Park at 2.30pm for the presentation.

To be involved please phone Mike Evans,  
Medway 2012 Sports Development Team on  
**01634 334352** or email **2012@medway.gov.uk**



## MAPS

(Mark's Activity Programme Service)

The Medway Aiming High for Disabled Children team are linking with MAPS (Mark's Activity Programme Service) for young people and adults with disabilities. MAPS is starting a new project for over 16s at the Parkwood Youth Centre every third Saturday in the month, starting on 15 January 2011, 6.30-9.30am.  
Phone: **01634 317431**, mobile: **07770 912437**  
Email: **markspurgeon61@hotmail.com**  
**www.mapsactivityprogrammes.co.uk**

## 2Live Theatre Workshops

Drama for disabled children and young people at Woodlands School.

**Contact:** Karen Yabani.

Email: **karen3.2livetheatre@yahoo.co.uk**



## More information:

For information on these and any other Aiming High-funded events in Medway, phone Medway Council's Family Information Service - **01634 335566**.  
**www.medwayfisd.com/kb5/medway/aiminghigh/about.page**

This information can be made available in other formats from **01634 333333**

If you have any questions about this leaflet and you want to speak to someone in your own language please phone **01634 335577**.

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