



down's syndrome oxford

Newsletter • March 2014

From the chair

As this is the last newsletter before the AGM, I would like to thank Sarah Stevenson for her work as Treasurer. Sarah is standing down, and we will be electing **a new Treasurer** at the AGM, so if anyone is interested in this role please contact Sarah or me for further details.



As always, quite a few DSO events have taken place – we had a very successful **Christmas Party** at the new venue of Exeter Hall in Kidlington, which was very well supported and enjoyed by everyone. We had a **Ceilidh night** for “grown ups” – not a huge number of people attended this, but those that did danced all night and had great fun.

You will have seen information about a whole range of **training** taking place, so I hope those that have attended already have found it useful, and you will pass on the word to schools where appropriate. A group of teenagers have been attending an ‘Accessing Life’ course run by Vik Ralfs, funded jointly by DSO and the Coventry Building Society.

I would also like to thank Michelle Blackstock, who has stepped down from her role as **New Parent Contact**. For those of us who first met Michelle when our babies were small we will always remember how comforting it was to meet someone to “hold our hand” at shared lunches, but she has now handed over the reins to Jo Crawford.

Jo, along with a few other parents with small children, will be able to attend the Early Development Groups, Stay and Play sessions at Abingdon, and is also a link with Rowena Pearce, Clinical Nurse at the John Radcliffe, who meets

all new families if they have a child born with DS in Oxfordshire. So thank you to Jo and others for taking on this role.

Elsa Gill is handing over the organising of events for **Primary Club** to Kelly Stacey. Elsa has done a great job in the last few years, but is very committed now to arranging our training programme, so we thank both Elsa and Kelly.

In fact, it's thanks to everyone who helps out and raises money for DSO, that we can continue to do all the fantastic things that you read about here. Every single contribution, in whatever way, is much appreciated.

Please feel free to attend committee meetings if you have ideas, or just want to hear what's going on in a bit more detail, we would love to see you. We hope to see many of you at the AGM on Monday 23rd June.

Katharine Horrocks

Next committee dates

Monday 17 March; Monday 12 May

At the Turnpike Inn, Yarnton, from 7.45pm

AGM – 23 June 2013

You are invited to the Down's Syndrome Oxford Annual General Meeting, which will take place on Monday 23 June at 7.45pm with the venue to be confirmed.

It's a valuable opportunity to meet the Committee and other parents, and find out the current situation of the charity. Please inform Katharine Horrocks prior to the meeting if you wish to stand for the positions of Chair, Secretary or Treasurer, which are elected that evening. Katharine's contact details are on the back cover.

A decorative banner at the top of the page featuring a string of black and white triangular bunting flags. Scattered around the flags are various party-themed icons: five-pointed stars of different sizes, circles, and wavy lines representing streamers.

DSO SUMMER PARTY

at Waterperry Shooting Ground.

Saturday 12th July 2014

From 12.00 Midday

**BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND
COLONEL CUSTARD**

Food? ★ Music? ★ Drinks?

(details still to be agreed)

Weather pending overnight camping



6-a-side football fundraiser - 11 May

This year's annual DSO football tournament is changing venues and refreshing its format, as organiser Niki Archer writes:

Join us on **Sunday 11 May, 10.30am kick-off**, at **Milton United's ground** for the DSO football fundraiser. **Programmes** are being made for the event so we need donations for team entries (£30) and a team name before the event, so the teams can all be arranged and placed in the programme. (Cheques can be sent and made payable to Down's Syndrome Oxford.) Alternatively you can enter on the day for £6 per person, though this means you will be placed in a team.

It's not just about the football though - the event is for the whole day! Waitrose Abingdon has offered to arrange a cake sale. There will also be an auction, Raffle, second hand sale, the club is opening the bar, and hot food and tuck shop. There will also be plenty of things to entertain the children. More activities are being arranged as the newsletter goes to print!

If you would like to enter a team please email me at niki.archer@yahoo.co.uk for more information.
Please help us to make this day a massive success!



Jo Crawford is the new New Parent Contact for DSO. Here's the information she is sending to mums and dads in Oxfordshire who have recently had a child with Down's Syndrome. And if you're a new parent reading this and haven't yet connected with Jo or anyone at DSO... we'd love to hear from you! You can contact Jo at info@dsoxford.org.uk or on 01865 341823.

Congratulations on the birth of your baby!

Hello, I'm Jo Crawford, the new parent contact for Down's Syndrome Oxford.

I live in south Oxfordshire with my husband Stuart and four daughters, Chloe 16, Amber 13, Freya 5 and Evie-Mae 2. Evie-Mae was born on 21 May 2011 and has Down's Syndrome.

Evie was diagnosed two days after birth. It was a time of mixed emotions; we loved her unconditionally but I admit I was a little scared of bringing up my precious little girl with additional needs. We were overwhelmed by the tests she had to have and all the professionals we met in those first few months. We were worried about her development and how she would fit in with our busy family.

As it happens Evie is a complete joy: she is funny, loving, determined and full of mischief. She attends a mainstream pre-school which, although took a little while, she is now joining in with the other children and enjoys singing and dressing up. She also attends a riding school for the disabled and enjoys swimming with the family.

We first visited the Stay and Play session with Evie when she was just a couple of months old and were immediately welcomed. We were able to ask questions to people who had "been in our shoes".

I would like to get in touch with you, for a chat on the phone or via email. I would also be very happy to meet with you: I can come to your home or you are more than welcome to come to mine now or in the future. My husband and my older girls would also be happy to meet or answer questions from you or any other member of your family.

I look forward to hearing from you and hope to see you soon. Jo.



Stay and play

Stay and Play runs every Wednesday alongside the EDG groups and also during the school holidays.

It is held at South Abingdon Children's Centre 9.30am-12pm. Everyone is welcome including siblings, friends and extended family.

Rowena Pearce, nurse specialist for complex needs will be attending on the 2nd April, 7th May and 4th June to answer any questions you have.

We now have a selection of **DVDs** and **specialist toddler cups** available to loan out to parents which will be available during the stay and play sessions.

Early Development Groups

We have welcomed several new families to our EDGs and more are due to join us after Easter.

The children continue to enjoy the activities planned and delivered by Colette and Sally as well as socialising with one another before and after their group at the Stay and Play sessions.

Children are usually able to start attending the groups at **around 15 months of age**, but it is extremely helpful to register your interest as soon as possible so that we can plan accordingly.

If you would like to register your child for these groups, please contact Netty Lings at edgs@dsoxford.org.uk

Baby gift bags

We are delighted to announce a new scheme to give all new parents a baby gift bag.

The bags include goodies such as the baby boardbook "My First Signs," a sensory toy, a leaflet about our charity and a welcome letter.

Alongside New Parent Contact, Jo Crawford, Community Paediatric Nurse, Rowena Pearce has kindly agreed to give out the bags when she undertakes each new baby's six-week check.

That way hope to reach *all* new parents and to let them know our charity is here to support them, if they need it.

We have also decided to extend the scheme to include all babies up to the age they start attending the Early Development Groups.

We have tried to give out as many bags as possible at various recent events including the Christmas party, however, if you are eligible for a bag and we



Sue Beckett with Jamie, and Elsa Gill

have missed you, we have a small store of them at the South Abingdon Children's Centre where we hold our weekly Early Development Groups and Stay and Play sessions.

All new parents are welcome to attend the drop in each Wednesday morning and if you make yourself known to Kelly Stacey or Jo Crawford they will be delighted to give you your gift bag.

Dancing the night away!

We've been to a few DSO events over the years, and have always been impressed with how well-supported they are.

Our friends knew we had a soft spot for a barn dance and we were excited to be able to attend what is probably our first one since having kids.

The exceptional thing about the Ceilidh, organised in January, was that everyone there was just as keen to join in. The huge Exeter Hall dance floor was full for every tune!

The band, Wantage's Pandemonium, displayed an impressive array of instruments and instrumentalists, including the melodica that reminded me of 'the Ood' in Doctor Who, melodeon, guitars, flute and whistles.

Ruth, the caller, solved every problem we presented her with, and frequently told us we were the best dance participants ever (that evening), which it was nice to believe.

Band member, Andrew's last dance has to be experienced to be believed, and, were it not for the rain outside, he hinted it would all have ended up a bit Pied Piper-esque. Safe indoors, it was a great finale!

Is it the incorrigible melodies, the aerobic workout or the mental challenge so late in the evening that makes English country dancing such a guilty pleasure?

Throw in the uncertainty as to whether the partners approaching you or even you yourself are dancing as a 'man' or a 'lady', a few stray size nines on the ends of happy, friendly people and steps for galloping up, and all the incentives for a return crowd are in place.

Can we do it again next year, please?

Ruth Smith, Godmother to Sim Lings (6)



Pre-school Club update



**Co-ordinator Helen Kingdon
writes:**

The preschoolers tried a new midweek playdate with Ziggy's Soft Play hire in Berinsfield. Although it ended up being a more intimate affair, we would definitely like to do it again, perhaps on a Saturday morning, so watch this space! Thank you to the Crawfords for organising it.

On 23 December, we trialled a pre-Christmas play at **Snakes & Ladders in Abingdon**. It was a huge success. Ten children with Down's Syndrome, their siblings and parents attended. It was the biggest turnout yet and a great way to run off some pre-Christmas excitement. We will be sure to return to there in 2014!

We're excited to be planning a trip to Peppa Pig World with the additional funds that were raised by Sarah and Dean Fonge. Other upcoming trips will include soft play and a trip to Beale Park!

To ensure you receive the email notifications, please ensure you are signed up to the mailing list by contacting website@dsoxford.org.uk



Above:
Amos Smith - full of joy

Right hand column from top to bottom:
Charlie Summers - on the ball
Reuben Gander - deep in thought
Gordon Reid, Jamie Beckett, Jack Fonge - in the pit
Jamie Beckett - after lunch

Primary Club update



Co-ordinator Elsa Gill writes:

A few weekends before Christmas the Primary Club was given the fantastic opportunity of visiting **Santa's Grotto at Millets Farm** near Abingdon.

The visit started with Santa's enthusiastic elves singing a festive song and attempting to stir up some audience participation... with mixed responses! The children then made some bags of magical reindeer food to take home and put out on Christmas Eve for Rudolph and his friends.

The excitement really started as the elves led us into Santa's very own living room, where the big man read a special Christmas Fairytale before posing for photos with each family group.

Next we were led into a room with floor-to-ceiling shelves crammed with toys and craft sets and



the children were invited to choose one gift each to take home. We finished the day in a private room with the children eating lunch. The day was particularly special because the Primary Club had almost exclusive use of the Grotto, it was lovely to see the children's reactions to meeting Father Christmas and there was also an accepted patience from families when waiting their turn.

Special thanks to Dean and Kelly Stacey. Dean funded the event using a work bonus and Kelly booked the event and organised it brilliantly!



From April, Elsa Gill will be stepping down as organiser of the Primary Club and we are pleased to announce that Kelly Stacey will be taking over the role.



Clockwise from top left:
Kaylah Ford on her own and with Santa & family; Jack Stevenson; Sim Lings

10+ Club update

Ruth and Dean Simmons write:



A very enjoyable night was had by all watching **Thriller live at the New Theatre Oxford** last November.



The theatre gave us 30 discounted tickets for the performance which were soon allocated. 10+ members and their siblings were paid for from DSO money and adults paid for themselves. We were allocated fantastic seats all near the front.

The show was excellent; very lively with a great atmosphere. The show started with songs from the early Michael Jackson years and then continued through his career. The dancing and singing was very energetic making it a very 'feel good' show.

I think most of us were up dancing in the second half (including some of the children who had been a bit reluctant in the first half)! We did take cameras but forgot that you are not allowed to use them in the theatre.

Thank you to all the DSO members who attended and we hope you all enjoyed it as much as we did. We look forward to the next 10+ Club event.

Accessing life

In January a small group of teenagers got together in Woodstock for the first of a four-part series on friendships and relationships.

This group has been able to be established courtesy of a grant from Coventry Building Society with the aim of giving the teenagers an opportunity to get together and talk about 'teenage stuff' in a safe supported environment *without* their parents!

Vik Ralphs from Ups and Downs in Bristol was chosen to facilitate the course, and before I go any further I must say what a fantastic job she did. Five teenagers in a room for an hour and a half, entertained, participating, forming friendships and having fun - brilliant. And extra special was that we as parents were in another room eating cake and chatting :-). Vik is very keen to involve parents in the planning, but wants us well out of the way for the actual group!

They have named their new group **Talkabout Club**, although the amount of noise and giggles coming from the room, I think it could have been the Shoutabout club. Either of which are far better than the name the adults came up with! They played games, chatted, got certificates for being cool and were all really positive about their morning together, and are very much looking forward to the next Talkabout Club.

By Colette Lloyd

18+ Club update

Back in November, the 18+ group met at **Jamie's Italian** for pre-show drinks before heading to the **New Theatre to watch Cabaret**.



Jamie's was a great place to meet, excellent atmosphere, very nice staff, a good start to the night all round.

We walked round to the Theatre together where the queues were gathering outside for the big show. We found our way to our seats amongst the bustle of the crowds, we were all very excited as we sat in anticipation of the show starting.

All went quiet as the lights went down and out came Will Young, the star of the show. It was a fantastic performance which every one of the group enjoyed immensely.

It's certainly not one for youngsters, it's very sexy, lots of strong emotions and complex relationships among the characters, not to mention the backdrop of the Nazi war machine!

We had a great night and would certainly recommend Cabaret to others for an exhilarating night out.

TV review: Growing Up Downs

In February, BBC Three broadcast a documentary following the actors of the Blue Apple Theatre in Winchester, who all have a learning disability.

We met Tommy, Katy, Lawrie, who have Down's Syndrome, and James, who may have Aspergers, taking on their biggest roles in a production of Shakespeare's Hamlet.

The documentary was narrated and filmed by Tommy's brother which gives it a more candid and personal account of the highs and lows the young actors go through.



Tommy (26), an experienced TV drama actor, takes the lead in this challenging tragedy, 22 year old Katy plays Ophelia and 19 year-old Lawrie takes on Claudius.

It becomes apparent very quickly that the three of them find it quite difficult to separate the storyline from real life: Lawrie wanting to change the ending so the people around him don't die; and the blossoming romance between Tommy and Katy becomes very difficult when Katy confuses Hamlet's abusive behaviour for Tommy.

James, 32, struggles to learn his lines as Polonius, which Lawrie in particular finds frustrating when James giggles to cover the gaff.

Emotions run high throughout, the actors feel so very deeply about everything that is happening around them, from the anger at each other for not getting lines right, the love between Tommy and Katy, the friendship between them all and the exhilaration from performance night.



But throughout it all they pull together, often sitting and discussing and problem-solving as a team, and create a successful tour, which gets good audiences and reviews.

It's an achievement for any theatre company, let alone one comprised of people with learning difficulties. It was refreshing to see a Down's Syndrome documentary that didn't just pile facts onto the viewer but let them see the actors for who they were.

As a mum of a three year-old with Down's Syndrome, I was interested to get a glimpse of how an adult with Down's sees and interacts with those around them. Not having much experience with older people with DS, I was surprised to learn that the actors had difficulty separating reality and fantasy, and every day experiences were very emotional to them.

I found that, watching it, my emotions followed theirs: I cried when Katy was sad, I smiled when they were happy - they drew me into their world and I realised that I do the same with Frankie every single day.

Review by Emma Bull, mother to Erin (4) and Frankie (3), who has Down's Syndrome.



Christmas Party

Exeter Hall was buzzing with excitement on Sunday 8th December as the DSO Christmas Party got under way.

The children were enthralled by Simon Says and his magic tricks and there was an impressive spread of food for us all to share.

Much to the delight of all the children, Father Christmas put in an appearance and had a present for each of them. Thank you to all who came to support this event.

Planning for this year's party will begin soon, so if you have any feedback or suggestions or if you would like to help with the organising, please contact Netty Lings at edgs@dsoxford.org.uk





Free Spirits

On Sunday 2 February, the 'Free Spirits' dance group performed live on stage at the Pegasus Theatre, Oxford, as part of the Tac-au-Tac dance school annual show.

Thomas Foulds (8yrs), Alexander Horrocks (8yrs), Owen Lane (7yrs), Rosie McMahon (9yrs), Lucy Robinson (7yrs) and Chloe Sanderson (8yrs) make up the **'Free Spirits'**.

They attend weekly classes at the Lake Street Community Centre in Oxford and the annual show provides an opportunity for them to perform in a proper theatre and a chance to show off their dance skills to their families and friends.

On show day, the 'Free Spirits' performed *The Storm*, an expressive theatrical dance based on the book by Kathy Henderson.

I'm sure I speak for all the parents when I say I was a little nervous as the group walked on stage.



The unpredictability of our children always make these types of events a little more interesting! But I needn't have worried; they didn't seem fazed by the 100+ people sitting in the audience, the loud music, the dramatic lighting etc., and their performance was fantastic.

They danced gracefully around the stage, reacting brilliantly to the music and mood of the performance. They knew exactly what they should be doing and when. They clearly enjoyed performing as a group and the chemistry between them was lovely to watch. As the performance came to an end I was an extremely proud mum, and with plenty of other proud families in the audience, our group definitely received the loudest cheers of the day!

Thomas, together with his sister Rachel, performed an equally impressive dance later in the show. Their dance group performed the energetic *Storm Monsters*.

By Lucy Sanderson



DSO Lottery – update

A big thank you!

We have had a great response for the DSO lottery and have now raised a total £1,605 for the charity since the lottery launched over a year ago.

It is always immense fun drawing the winning numbers with other DSO members. All current winners can be viewed on our web page under 'Support Us'.

We have been told that the process to register for the lottery seems very long-winded.

If you would like to join then simply set up a monthly payment to the DSO Lottery - account no 2978 6768 and sort code 30 80 45.

It's £5 for one ticket or £10 for two, and send an e-mail to lottery@dsoxford.org.uk We will then allocate your numbers.

Thank you to everyone who is supporting us.
Amanda Foulds & Lucy Sanderson



The winners...

October 2013

1st prize - £38.00
2nd prize - £22.80
3rd prize - £15.20

Elsa Gill
Sally Dubock
Andrew Partner

November 2013

1st prize - £38.00
2nd prize - £22.80
3rd prize - £15.20

C & J Dilnot
Sue Crisp
Ella Segaran

December 2013

1st prize - £38.00
2nd prize - £22.80
3rd prize - £15.20

Anne Churchill-Stone
Lucy & Mark Sanderson
Netty & Ben Lings

January 2014

1st prize - £36.00
2nd prize - £21.60
3rd prize - £14.40

Emily Robinson
Elsa Gill
Netty & Ben Lings

February 2014

1st prize - £37.00
2nd prize - £22.20
3rd prize - £14.80

Jo Sumner
Ruth & Nick Smith
Mary Robinson

Thank you for your support...

... to **Thames Valley Lodge for £850** after nominating DSO as its chosen charity. Pictured top right is Elsa and Amanda with Martin and Steven from the Henley Lodge at the Annual Provincial Charity Giving Evening at the Masonic Hall in Witney last November.

... to **Oxford Brookes University**, whose £300 cheque last October went a long way towards the costs for the Christmas Party. Pictured bottom right are Marion & Amber Simon, Katharine & Alexander Horrocks, and Jessica & Hannah Dubock.

... to **Peter & Thelma Lowden**, parents of a work colleague of Dean Stacey, who make wooden tombolas as a hobby and have donated a beautifully crafted one for DSO to use at future events - pictured below.



Training for parents, carers and professionals

DSO has sprung into action with a wide range of exciting training courses.

Below are details of forthcoming training courses, some of which still have places remaining and, on the next two pages, read about two of the courses which took place recently.

Supporting Social Development and Behaviour

Trainer: Gillian Bird, DSA

Sat 15th March, 1-4pm, 4-11yrs (VERY FEW PLACES REMAINING)

Venue: Sandhills CP School, Terrett Ave, Sandhills, Oxford OX3 8FN

Sat 29th March, 1-4pm, 11-16yrs

Venue: Sandhills CP School, Terrett Ave, Sandhills, Oxford OX3 8FN

Wed 4th June, within school hours, 4-11yrs (provisionally booked)

Venue tbc We will only run this mid-week slot if we have sufficient interest.

Aimed at parents, topics include: supporting friendships, changing difficult-to-manage behaviour and social understanding and social skills.

Cost: £10 per person

To book please send all participants names, address and email addresses with a cheque made payable to 'DSO' to Elsa Gill, 52 Downside Rd, Headington, Oxford OX3 8HR. Please also state which training day you wish to attend.

Down's Syndrome - Positive behaviour management in schools - various locations and dates

Suitable for school staff supporting children with Down's Syndrome including SENCos, teachers and TAs. Interactive sessions with questions and discussion on behaviour management strategies and how they apply to the child you support.

Free of charge.

Didcot

Wed 12th March, FULLY BOOKED

Venue: Ladygrove Park Primary School

Oxford

Wed 19th March, FULLY BOOKED

Venue: Sandhills Community Primary School

Bicester

Wed 19th March, FULLY BOOKED

Venue: Langford Village Community Primary School, Peregrine Way, Bicester OX26 6SX

Teaching children with Down's Syndrome to read - a guide for parents.

Wed 7th May, Evening session 7-9pm (Please note new date)

Trainer: Sandy Alton (DS and Complex Needs Service and DSA)

Venue: Casuals Lounge, Oxford City FC (Inside the newer building, where last year's AGM was held) Marsh Lane, Marston, Oxford OX3 0NQ

Advice on teaching your child to read including time to ask Sandy questions...What should I be doing at home? What reading scheme should my school be using? I've been word matching with my child for an eternity...how do I push things on?

Free of charge. Please book a place to attend.

Full information on all DSO training sessions is available on the DSO website in the 'training' section which can be found under 'Help and Advice'. This section is always kept up to date so you can check to see if sessions are fully booked.

If you do not receive DSO emails about training sessions and you would like to go to our website www.dsoxford.org.uk and register to receive emails.

For further information or to book a place please contact Elsa Gill - details on the back cover.

'Setting Out' training (1 March)

Elsa Gill writes:

This was a day-long course aimed at the parents and practitioners of babies and younger children and was given by Sue Madraszek from Symbol UK.



Sue has over 30 years' experience working with children with Down's syndrome as a Speech and Language Therapist. As one participant noted, *"Sue is an excellent presenter. She's been there, done it!"*.

The group had a lovely mix of newer and more experienced parents, as well as professionals such as a newly qualified OT, a SLT, some EYSENITs and several nursery staff... grandparents were also well represented. Sue shared key information about Down's Syndrome, trying to cover as many topics as she could but with an understandable slant towards communication.

One nice idea was that Sue encouraged each participant to write down questions they had on a post-it note to add to a board throughout the day and she answered the questions as she went along. Of course, each area could have taken up a full training day in its own right, the practical strategies to use at home seemed to be the most appreciated by parents and lots of ideas were also swapped during the refreshment breaks.

It was also interesting to hear about the work of Symbol UK. Sue mentioned the Co-worker course which our very own Colette Lloyd will be attending soon. Some of the feedback comments about the day included:

"Great training for parents and those professionals with limited experience of Down's Syndrome."

"I want to go and print and laminate things now!"

"10/10. Sue knows how to present. Well done"

"Useful learning strategies/activities to use with my child, it's helpful to be reassured some of what I am doing already is the right thing."

ICT for Down's Syndrome training (30 January)

Emily Robinson writes:

DSO requested this course after a recent survey of our parents. It was presented by the SEN-ICT-ACC team, Paul Bonsar & Cath Lysley, at The Wheatley Centre.

There was a good turnout of 13 parents with children of varying ages, although mainly those with primary aged or younger children. Apparently the older children know more than we do about ICT!

There was a range of parental knowledge as well as an array of technology being used. What was great to see is that most children have access to an ipad or similar tablet.

Paul and Cath had put together an agenda covering a wide range of ICT related topics:

- **10 tips for using a computer for developing language and literacy skills.**
- **Making a book using PowerPoint.**
- **Setting up Windows to make it as easy and visually stimulating for our children to use as possible.**
- **Useful Apps and websites**
- **iPad information and tips**
- **Clicker 6**

The session was interactive and contained plenty of discussion and idea sharing between parents. Everyone was given an opportunity to try out Clicker 6 or practise some of the other topics we had been shown, with the support and guidance from Paul and Cath.

We were advised that parents may attend the more comprehensive Clicker 6 course at no cost. *Please talk to Vikki Browne or Sandy Alton if you are interested.*



In particular, I found the ideas and discussion around using the computer most useful. My daughter Lucy has so far used the computer in a very limited capacity, mainly for accessing the CBeebies website!

It has become more obvious since September just how much she has learnt at school in Year 2, including how to navigate well with a mouse, something I thought she might never get; how to click on icons to open; how to turn the computer on and off and how to type.

I was particularly struck by the idea of creating books in PowerPoint for almost anything. So much so, that the weekend homework following the course was a PowerPoint book on 'Day and Night' in which Lucy inserted pictures, made up what she wanted to say, she typed it (spelling most of it right) and recorded herself saying the sentences, which were inserted into the presentation.

All of which was relatively easy and which she enjoyed immensely, anything to make the homework fun! The document was printed out (which she loves) and emailed to school so they could play it on the Smartboard, which made her very proud. I predict this may be the start of many.

We have found it particularly useful to purchase a lower case keyboard which also has larger key sizes and brightly coloured keys and although she manages a normal sized mouse, we were shown a small sized mouse, which she would find much easier due to her tiny hands.

Paul and Cath went through some very useful computer programmes, in particular for those children struggling with mouse control. Another parent had used these for their child and thoroughly recommended them.

The other aspect of the course I found especially useful was how to set up the computer to make it easier and safer for my child. This covered visual aspects such as:

- Changing the mouse pointer so it is a different shape and colour making it easier to see.
- Setting up a separate login area which has limited access to the computer programmes and applications (so she can't fiddle with the settings and stop everyone else from using it!).
- Creating desktop short cuts to files containing Lucy's work so she doesn't have to hunt for them.
- Putting all her favourite programmes and websites in easy access places.



What quickly became apparent during the course was that more information about ICT needs to be put on our DSO website for everyone to share. I have started on this already. Paul has very kindly given us electronic versions of the documentation from the course, which I have put on the website in the **Help & Advice** section, under ICT. You can download and print them out.

I have started to put information about useful or good apps and software. **If you have any suggestions please email them to website@dsoxford.org.uk**

The DSO Committee is also keen to know if there would be any further interest in running this course again, or running one focusing on older children. If you are interested, please contact Amanda Foulds or Elsa Gill.

Makaton training - info needed!

A popular topic requested by parents is Makaton training.

We are interested to know more specifically what parents (or schools) want? What sort of signs and at what sort of level?

If there is enough interest we can run several sessions covering different needs.

If interested, please email Elsa Gill, contact details are on the back page.

Bits and bobs

The Foundation for People with Learning Difficulties has a guide called *Thinking ahead - a planning guide for families* which may be of interest to our members, especially those with older children with Down's Syndrome. This guide has been produced in response to what people with learning disabilities, their parents and siblings have been asking for years: "What is going to happen in the future, and how can we shape it?"

The guide is available as a free download on the website learningdisabilities.org.uk or you can buy a copy for £10. There is also a report on the guide (Thinking Ahead report) which explores issues revolving around carers of people with learning disabilities, families of people with learning disabilities and future planning.

Child psychologist

Dr Natalie Briant, a friend of Emily Robinson's, has recently quit the NHS to set up her own private practice as a child psychologist. It can be hard to get referrals through the NHS for our children so, in case anyone wanted to go private, check out Natalie's details on her website at: <http://www.oxfordshirechildpsychology.co.uk>

Congratulations to Mark Barber, who was one of three finalists nominated for the Festival Favourite in this year's Oscar Bright Film Awards. His film *Wake Up In a Dream* is his own creation and was made in partnership with Oxford Film and Video Makers.

Thanks to FirstMove

A huge thank you to FirstMove Direct Marketing, based in High Wycombe, who decided to have some fun on Halloween last year, donated cakes and raised £315 for DSO. As you can see from the photo below, everyone made a real effort dressing up!



Walking Group

There is an opportunity to join a small group of people who go for walks regularly on the first Sunday of every month at 2pm from North Leigh.

They have specifically mentioned that they would like to make their walks accessible (although not for buggies or wheelchairs) and as such are designing them with pick up points for cars if necessary, and are happy to go at our pace, stopping regularly and they are not too long! In drier weather, they often finish with a campfire too.

For more details please contact Colette Lloyd 01993 883707 or dcclloyd@yahoo.co.uk

Cogmed - memory training research

If you have a child/children who is/are or if you are 12-20yrs old and have Down's Syndrome one of our members is planning on conducting some research on the effects of Cogmed later this year. It is a computer-based memory training program which normally costs approx £450 but would be free for participants. If you would be interested in receiving more information about this please contact Colette Lloyd on 01993 883707 or dcclloyd@yahoo.co.uk

Newlife

Almost 100 items of specialist equipment are now ready and waiting to be delivered to children in need, across the UK.

Newlife's pilot project called 'Newlifeable' launched in January offering a large selection of new and clinically refurbished, certified equipment, all available through a grant for 'priority delivery' at no cost. Equipment includes specialist seating, manual wheelchairs, buggies, walking frames and assisted living aids like height adjustable tables.

Stephen Morgan, Newlife's Head of Operations says, "We suspect these items will be very popular, so we would advise families and professionals to contact us as soon as possible to register interest in an item."

To view the current range of equipment and download the FAQs on the project, please visit www.newlifeable.co.uk

To register your interest in any of these items, just call Nicole Norris, on 01543 431465, Monday to Wednesday from 9.30 – 5pm.



Gift Aid declaration

Please tick appropriate response:

☐ I would like DSO to reclaim the tax on all donations I've made since April 2000 and all my future donations until further notice. I understand that I must pay an amount of income tax or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax DSO reclaims on my donation(s).

☐ I am not a UK taxpayer

I enclose my gift of £_____ (cheque/PO payable to Down's Syndrome Oxford)

OR

A regular gift of £_____ per month/quarter/year (delete as applicable)

Commencing on the ____ (day) ____ (month) ____ (year)

Name of bank: _____

Address of bank: _____

Postcode: _____

Current Account No: _____ Sort Code: __ - __ - __

Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Bank ref: _____ (completed by DSO)

Bank Instructions: please pay the above amount on the same day of every month/quarter/year (as indicated) thereafter to Lloyds TSB bank (30-94-04) for the account of Down's Syndrome Oxford (a/c 01154094).

Please return this slip to DSO, not your bank, c/o Treasurer DSO, Sarah Stevenson, 12 Green Close, Bicester, Oxfordshire, OX26 6QU

We will not share your information with any other organizations.

Your Name: _____

Your Address: _____

Postcode: _____



Fundraising resources

Resources which may be useful if you are organising a fundraising event include:

- Leaflets
- Posters
- Cardboard donation boxes
- Stickers
- Balloons
- T-shirts
- A display board
- Pull up DSO banner

(And coming soon, charity wristbands.)

Please contact Marion Simon if you need a supply of leaflets, donation boxes or stickers. (Marion's details are on the back cover.)

DSO emails

Do you receive DSO emails advertising future events and training courses?

If not you can go to the DSO website and register to receive them. If you think you are receiving too many emails about events not relevant, you can also log in and choose which category of email message you want to receive (eg pre-school or professional only.)

Donations (Nov 13 - Feb 14)

The following money has been given or raised for DSO in the last few months, for which we're extremely grateful.

Donations include:

£18.36	Phoenix Cards, Yvonne Voyce
£350	Elsevier (Dean Stacey) to pay for Santa's Grotto
£1,000	Mark and Rosemary Partner (grandparents to Katherine Partner) for Rosemary's 60th.
£317.94	First Move Direct Marketing
£3,479.60	Great Western
£850	Round Table Valley Lodge, Henley
£323	Sarah Fonge
£835	First Great Western
£1500	RPC group via Nicole Marsh
£33.04	Collection boxes Sarah and Emily (one at work, one in gym bar)
£300	Fugro Holdings Ltd
£347	Autologic Diagnostics
£530.58	Rob Brody Ironman competition
£100	Mr and Mrs Jones

A huge thanks as well to all those who give regularly by standing order. You can use the form on the previous page to send one-off or regular gifts.

Please remember to fill in a GIFT AID declaration for your donations wherever possible. There is no extra cost to you and the process is simple. It means that DSO receives an extra 28p for every £1 given to us by UK taxpayers.

New treasurer needed

After 5 years of dedicated service as DSO's Treasurer Sarah Stevenson has decided to step down from this role.

The charity is currently very active and a lot is going on financially. Therefore, this is an important role and we are looking for a new person to fill it. The Treasurer spends in total roughly 1 day a month on the role and about 6 hours a year getting the end-of-year accounts together.

Interested? Contact Katharine for more details.

Contact us

Chair

Katharine Horrocks chair@dsoxford.org.uk 01844 261424

Secretary

Marion Simon secretary@dsoxford.org.uk 01608 811781

Treasurer

Position vacant treasurer@dsoxford.org.uk

Assistant Treasurer

Emily Robinson info@dsoxford.org.uk 01869 347194

Training and Fundraising Opportunities

Elsa Gill fundraising@dsoxford.org.uk 01865 741216

DSO Lottery Organisers

Amanda Foulds/
Lucy Sanderson lottery@dsoxford.org.uk 01865 875832

Newsletter Editor, Database & Media Officer

Andrew Dubock media@dsoxford.org.uk 07747 018147

Website Manager

Matt & Emily Robinson website@dsoxford.org.uk 01869 347194

New Parent Contact

Jo Crawford info@dsoxford.org.uk 01865 341823

Pre-School Club Co-ordinator

Helen Kingdon preschool@dsoxford.org.uk 01491 200559

Primary Club Co-Ordinator

Kelly Stacey primary@dsoxford.org.uk 01235 510222

10+ Club Co-ordinator

Rachel Johnson 10plus@dsoxford.org.uk 01608 677861

18+ Club Co-ordinator (adults group)

Position vacant 18plus@dsoxford.org.uk

Early Development Group Administrator

Netty Lings edgs@dsoxford.org.uk 01993 852391

Early Development Group Leaders

Colette Lloyd (01993 883707) Sally Dubock (01235 847707)

Website: <http://www.dsoxford.org.uk>

General enquiries email address: info@dsoxford.org.uk

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/dsoxford>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/DownsOxford> @DownsOxford

With thanks again to First Move direct marketing in High Wycombe who very generously prints and mails our newsletter free-of-charge.



down's syndrome oxford

Registered charity number: 1103850



The deadline for the July 2014 issue of the newsletter is Monday 9 June. We welcome any text or photos about your child enjoying themselves – not necessarily at a DSO event. Please send material to the editor Andrew Dubock at media@dsoxford.org.uk