





# Link

NEWSLETTER SPRING 2011

**Editor's Note**

Welcome to our Easter Edition. Now the nights are lighter and Easter is coming we can look forward to planning the next Family Day. I am very excited about this years event. I hope many of you decide to join us again. This year is also The National Year of Communication where there will be a lot of events taking place. See inside for more information. Happy Easter to you all! See you at the Family Day in July!

*Nicki Turley*

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Don't forget to send your articles or any news that you would like to see in future issues to: [secretary@wdssg.org.uk](mailto:secretary@wdssg.org.uk)



LATEST NEWS

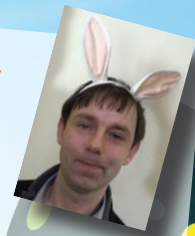
## Something Special Magazine launch

BBC Something Special magazine launches on 6th April 2011. Created especially for children with learning disabilities, it is based on the successful CBeebies TV programme Something Special starring Justin Fletcher MBE and his much loved alter-ego Mr Tumble. Something Special magazine is packed full of fun activities that are appealing and accessible to children with special needs, and features Makaton signing. The magazine team asked families who are fans of Something Special to help them develop the magazine, and have also consulted with professionals from SEN schools, The Makaton Charity and the National Autistic Society. Go to [www.makaton.org](http://www.makaton.org) for more information.



## From the Chair

Hi Fellow members. I am really excited this year as it's the National Year of Communication. The WDS Support Group is heavily campaigning for better communication for our children this year and supporting the Hello Campaign. We are also very excited to welcome Joy of Sound to our Family day this year, I do hope you can all come along to a fun and informative day for everyone. Finally, do take a look at our fundraising pages (p4), they are all free for you to use and could also save you money on your shopping. I look forward to seeing you all at the family day.



You should now have received your letters. Return your acceptance forms by 14th April

# Family Day

9th July 2011 10 - 4

Featuring entertainment from ...

This years event, although more 'low-key' than last year, should be very exciting and informative with a selection of workshops complemented by some entertainment for all ages. It is to be held on 9th July, 10am - 4pm at St. Peters Heritage Centre in Vauxhall.

## joy of sound

[www.joyofsound.net](http://www.joyofsound.net)



The inspiration for Joy Of Sound came from a chance meeting between JOS founder, William Longden, and Derek, a young man with profound and multiple learning difficulties.

Derek was trying to play a very battered guitar that was not really functional. William offered Derek his own guitar, while he played a wooden flute. Suddenly there was an intense and joyful musical connection that happened without words.

It was clear that Derek could share music given the opportunity and a viable instrument - he simply needed an instrument specially made to suit his unique requirements.

It was then that William realised that simply providing usable instruments and accessible workshops could create the opportunity for everybody and anybody to share in music making.

This experience became the inspiration for this ground-breaking project that enables people with multiple disabilities, carers, volunteer musicians and

artists, and all-comers, to make music together on an equal and inclusive basis, where there is a shared responsibility for success. This is fundamental to the JOS ethos.

JOS commissioned and had made a number of inclusively designed bespoke instruments, including Derek's guitar and wheelchair presentable marimba and zither. These provide access for people whose participation in playing music would otherwise be limited.

In May 2009 JOS held a day long event at St Peters Heritage Centre in Vauxhall to announce and celebrate the achievement of Registered Charity status.

JOS won the 2008 London Health Commission award for Mental-Health and Well-Being, and used some of that funding for staff and volunteer development

In 2009 JOS won the VolontEurope 'Active Citizens of Europe' Award, recognising the outstanding input that JOS has had from over 700 volunteers during it's first decade. Three of the JOS team visited Sarajevo to attend a conference and the award ceremony.



## Jugglers - Doug & Thom

### Doug Torrent: Contact Juggling

Veteran of stage performances, Doug is one of few pioneer maestros in the mysterious art of Contact Juggling. An expert in 3 to 5 Ball Juggling with complex tricks and a Ring Juggling specialist, with up to 4 contact balls in each hand, Doug stylishly engages crowds and leaves them wondering "how did he do it? is it magic?" A master of Object Manipulation, he is also well versed in the art of balance and equilibrium. A self taught Balloon Modeller, Doug enchants the young and old alike with his unique balloon sculptures.

### Thom Herzmark: Juggling & circus skills

A juggler and playworker who has performed for children in countries as diverse as Kyrgyzstan, Iraq, and Bangladesh, Thom has worked with young people for 7 years developing ways of making circus skills accessible to those with special needs. Thom will be entertaining us with a walkabout street performance; leading an inclusive beginners juggling workshop; teaching budding young circus performers how to juggle; providing an opportunity for everyone to have a go at a range of circus skills including diabolo, poi, clubs, scarfs and devils sticks! Learning how to throw, catch, balance or spin, not only improves co-ordination and teamwork, but can also be rewarding, relaxing and confidence building.

Volunteers needed to help on the Family Day! Please contact Vanessa Butt if you are interested.



# 2011 - The National Year of Communication

A 12 month focus on the critical importance of speech, language and communication in our lives.



**Hello** is a campaign to increase understanding of how important it is for children and young people to develop good communication skills.



The campaign is run by The Communication Trust, a coalition of over 35 leading voluntary sector organisations; in partnership with Jean Gross, the Government's Communication Champion. BT is sponsoring **Hello**, playing a leading role in the campaign. **Hello** is backed by the Department for Education and by Pearson Assessment.

In January, **Hello** was officially launched under the theme 'Don't take communication for granted'. You can look forward to a host of new and FREE **Hello** publications and materials to help you shout about your support for the campaign. Importantly, our publications can help you learn more about how to support children and young people with speech, language and communication needs.

The Communication Trust will be hosting regional events across the country for all those interested in improving children's communication skills. The day aims to provide national year local co-ordinators with vital information, resources and tools to support local planning for **Hello**.

These events will be a fantastic opportunity to share existing good practice within regions and you can also gain support from the campaign team or learn more about the Trust's consortium members. If you feel you someone would benefit from attending this day please contact Eve Wagg at [ewagg@thecomunicationtrust.org.uk](mailto:ewagg@thecomunicationtrust.org.uk) or call 0207 843 2519.

Please go to their website [www.hello.org.uk](http://www.hello.org.uk) which explains what **Hello** is about and why it is needed.

## Can you help us promote **Hello** and the impact of communication difficulties?

We need strong, compelling and emotive case studies of children, young people and families for both national and regional media. We have a real opportunity to raise awareness of this often 'hidden' difficulty and can only do this with real life stories.

Email [ismith@thecomunicationtrust.org.uk](mailto:ismith@thecomunicationtrust.org.uk) or call 020 7843 2519 to find out more.

**Don't Get Me Wrong** is the first publication to be produced for the national year of communication. This publication is for those who work with children and young people and have some understanding of speech, language and communication needs but would like to find out more. It contains examples of what speech, language and communication needs may look like and useful advice and information which you can use in your setting. To order your free copy go to the website below.



Throughout 2011 the **Hello** campaign will be developing a number of publications and resources for parents and carers and those who work with children and young people. Go to the website to register for regular updates.

## 'Ice-breaker' Discussion Groups

In the afternoon we will be running discussion groups where you will have the opportunity to get information or discuss your concerns on the categories on each table, and move round if you want to.

- These categories will be:
- Transition
  - WDS the basics
  - Low-tech communication
  - Communication aids/devices
  - Legal issues and benefits

Next to the venue is Vauxhall City Farm, which is an oasis in the heart of London, providing the local community and visitors from afar the opportunity to stay connected to nature and animals. Covering 1.5 acres of land, Vauxhall City Farm is home to over 80 animals, which provides a chance for Londoners to meet farm animals face to face from rare breed sheep and cows to animals from other regions of the world. You will all have an opportunity to have a tour round after lunch. **ENTRY IS FREE.**



## Schedule

- 10 - 10.30am - Registration  
Tea and Coffee  
A.G.M
- 10.50am - Joy of Sound
- 12 - 1pm - Lunch (bring your own)
- 1 - 2pm - Visit City Farm
- 2 - 3pm - Discussion Groups
- 3.30pm - Tea and Coffee  
Goodbyes

# Money Matters

NEWS

## Welfare Reform Bill U-turn?



### Something Special wins two BAFTAs

The 2010 British Academy of Film and

Television Awards (BAFTA) took place in November 2010. The Something Special team scooped two awards! The Producer Allan Johnston and Directors Helen O'Connell and Anna Perowne were winners in the Pre-School Live Action category for Something Special. Justin Fletcher was the winner of the Presenter category for Something Special – this is the second time Justin has won a BAFTA!

The Makaton Charity is delighted that the show's popularity is continuing to reach so many children and families and encourage communication in such a fun and engaging way.

In Government's Welfare Reform Bill the big policy is the Universal Credit – a major simplification to a horrendously complicated benefits system. This proposal has been one of the most vigorously-opposed, with charities and relatives warning that the measure would imprison residents within care homes.

The mobility funding helps disabled people to meet some of the extra costs when they travel. The government announced in October that it wanted to remove it for around 80,000 disabled people in residential care.

But a review was quietly announced, as David Cameron set out his welfare reform bill. It pushes back any implementation of the proposal to 2013. Some charities have responded with delight, interpreting it as the first step towards ditching an unpopular policy. But while the review is welcome, what's still not clear is whether it reflects a desire to drop the policy, or whether it is simply a way of securing extra time to implement the proposals smoothly.

Charities explain that the payment represents the difference between being institutionalised within the residential home, or being able to travel to see friends and relatives. They were so surprised at the proposal to remove the benefit that they questioned whether ministers had properly understood its importance. As their anxiety and anger was captured by the media, MPs began making publicised trips to care homes.

Iain Duncan Smith, the work and pensions secretary, had said: "We have listened. We are giving you the absolute guarantee that nobody will lose the funds for mobility in care homes that are needed for their mobility."

The government maintains that the DLA payment is a double-payment, stressing that the cost of transport for care home residents should be met by care homes, which are paid to provide transport by local authorities. Now that officials are more familiar with how the system works in practice, they understand better that many care homes are not providing that transport because they can't afford to, which is why the DLA money is so vital. With local authority budgets squeezed, they are unlikely to be able to be more generous over the next few years.

The government has admitted it needs more time to address the patchy nature of provision from local authorities and care homes, but appears still committed to its goal of removing this benefit, albeit in the (now slightly longer) long term.

Charities can congratulate themselves on securing a softening of the policy, but they cannot abandon their campaign yet. If they want to push the government into a full U-turn they will need to use the review period to impress on ministers the callousness of any measure that ends up confining care home residents inside their homes.



These are the links for all the fundraising sites we are currently signed up to. Take a look, it all helps!

- [www.everyclick.com/wdssg](http://www.everyclick.com/wdssg)
- [www.justgiving.com/WDS-SG](http://www.justgiving.com/WDS-SG)
- [www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/wdssg](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/wdssg)
- [donations.ebay.co.uk/charity/web.uk/charity](http://donations.ebay.co.uk/charity/web.uk/charity)

Affiliated to Contact a Family and Rare Diseases UK

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