



Welcome to the first issue of the ASDF Newsletter.

Please consider this a 'trial run' as it is my first time as an editor and also the first time ASDF have had a newsletter. The idea is every month a newsletter will be produced including reviews of places people have been, up and coming events, stories by members and some interesting news articles. If you have anything you wish to contribute, please contact me (Munchkin) using the contact information at the bottom of the newsletter.

Secret Santa

Please have all your Secret Santa requests in by December 1st 2008. You can submit a request by sending a PM to Munchkin including your name, address (including post code) and any likes or dislikes you may have.

Lego Land Meet

Earlier in the month a few members took a trip to Lego Land which proved a very nice day out.

Lego Land have become slightly more strict about the types of disability and the proof of disability you need to obtain an exit pass but we all had letters of diagnosis and had no problems what so ever.

It was a good day out and we managed to get on all the rides we wanted to (using the exit pass to line jump when needed).

A few of us also got a good deal at the local Travel Lodge and stayed overnight. This proved to be a good idea as it gave us more time to get ready and no long car journey home after visiting the park. The Travel Lodge were very accommodating to our needs. We had no problems getting extra bedding and even borrowing plates and cutlery from the bar to sat our take-a-ways from.

ASD Hints and Tip

- An egg timer can work well as a count down to either the beginning or end of an activity.
- For people who do not like the feel of new clothes, soak them in a cool bath with a small amount of fabric softener for a few hours then wash as normal. This makes them a bit softer and gets rid of that 'shop smell'.
- Always buy two of any favourite toys or clothes just in case one ends up needing to be binned.

Art-ism!

At the age of 2 my son "A" was dx with ASD and I was told he was on the severe end of the spectrum. "A" was non verbal, never cuddled me, was very distant and struggled so much with life. I felt like my world had stopped spinning.

7 years on, I now have the most beautiful, cuddly, clever wee boy and he is even starting to speak. Yes we do still have some meltdowns and difficulties, but when I think of how he used to be, I am over the

moon at how much he has come on.

"A" is very fortunate and has met and worked with some of the most wonderful people ever. His special needs school is second to none and his music therapist has now managed to teach him how to play piano. I did have to fight for some of the services but fortunately my fight has never been as tough as some of the fights I read on ASDf or hear about in my support group.

One of the big things that was missing in my son's life was the ability to access leisure activities and groups. I felt that all his spare time was spent in front of a computer or hanging around with his Mum and Dad.

Myself and two other Mums decided if there wasn't a group out there for our kids, then we would create one ourselves.

And so.....

Artism was born.

Artism has now been running for one year. We are an art group run for 6 children on the spectrum. We take a very holistic approach and invite parents/carers to stay and siblings are more than welcome. All our funding so far has come from charity nights, local churches and local businesses.

It's such great fun and "A" loves it to bits. A really nice spin off to it all, is the people who help us out along the way. We have a retired art teacher who helps us think up new and exciting projects. We have three primary teachers who volunteer each week and some student (when they are not too hung-over on a Saturday morning), come along and help out and give us all a good laugh too. I remember when we were starting up lots of ASDf members were giving me some advice. GOM your advice was think of the amount of people you think you need to run the group and double it. We laughed... We have doubled the number and then some..

We're like one big extended family. I would recommend it to any one.

Submitted by Bercol1

You know there is autism in the family when...

So starts one of my favourite threads on ASDf and it goes on to give so many different examples of what autism is like to live alongside from the parents and carers' perspective. Some small accommodations are easily made, others are life-changingly huge.

Waking for the third time at 5.30am to find toothpaste smeared over the tiny mosaic tiles that once fashionably lined our shower we decided to hide the tube, at first in the cupboard beneath the sink, then in an increasingly bizarre series of hidey-holes, the current one being inside a walking boot at the bottom of my wardrobe.

The large-scale changes I don't much think about any more. The largest for me was to step away from a well-paid position on the realisation that money couldn't buy what my son needed; his mum. Nine years into a one-year break shows what a sensible decision that was for us. And as parents and carers we all continue to work hard changing and adjusting, sometimes conceding to an autistic world, sometimes encouraging participation in a neurotypical life.

But in the wider world nobody knows what efforts have already been made to get our children ready to do something simple like play in the park, and it's outside of the home that we are most aware of our different life. Barriers, prejudice, exclusion combine to create an expectation to conform. This is heightened when a child doesn't look any different.

Imagine my surprise, then, when my local authority has decided that all play facilities in the borough were going to be made fully accessible, so there was no need to provide specialist play. Social prejudices don't exist, are a figment of our imaginations and should our children choose to lie down in

the middle of the park car park in protest at having to go home, it's because we as parents have insufficient skills to deal with their poor behaviour.

Being denied the choice of specialist play when needed is something I'm finding totally enraging. It's bubbling under the surface waiting to come up and why I'm finding it enraging is that it's a basic denial of prejudice from what are supposed to be professionals commissioning services for disabled children.

So whilst I'm seething and going to meetings and writing letters to challenge this, would you kindly not judge me when my teeth turn yellow? ['What do you mean, turn?' interjects my daughter.] It's only when I'm halfway to the next meeting that I remember the flaming toothpaste.

Submitted by Call Me Jaded

Many thanks to those who have contributed this month with the stories, hints and tips.

Please keep them coming. We are also after interesting and important news articles on medication, education, social care, alternative therapies and much more. If you spot something then please submit it to the Newsletter.

The next issue will be out on December 1st 2008. It would be nice to have a section on surviving Christmas with some useful hints and tips so send them all my way.

Editor - Munchkin
We are on the Web

Visit us at www.asdfriendly.org

Email Editor: 360Munchkin@gmail.com



Anyone wishing to contribute a story or an idea should contact the editor via the email address above or via the PM system on the forum