



Solihull Life Opportunities Newsletter February 2009



Issue 29

Happy New Year



to all SoLO members, staff, volunteers, parents and carers and supporters, and it really is a very Happy New Year for us.

You will have read, in the papers, at the end of last year that our offices were broken into, money and equipment stolen as well as a lot of damage done. However, the outcome of this horrible episode has been amazing. We have had donations from various organisations including West Bromwich Building Society, Shirley Lions, Intec Micros Ltd and also a number of very lovely individuals have sent in donations as well as so many messages of support that we were overwhelmed. In addition to all this, Asda paid for all the food at our Disco which went ahead and was a really lovely event with over 200 people attending.

So we start the New Year with a more secure office and the knowledge that there are far more good hearted people in the world than bad. We also have some exciting plans for 2009 including a Member's Ball and an abseil in May, and look forward to meeting up with you all during the year.

I hope that you enjoy this newsletter, particularly the articles that have been written by our SURG reporters.

Janet Down, General Manager



Happy New Year!



SoLO would like to thank companies and individuals for their donations following the office break in.

Thank you to



who donated the food we had at the disco.



Plans for 2009 include a Members' Ball, abseil and articles by SURG.

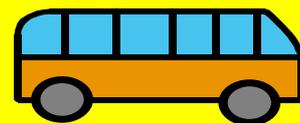
SoLO is now officially on the road with a wonderful new minibus. What is special about our minibus?

1. It was bought with monies that were raised by a group of young people with learning disabilities. David Magee, Kirsty Lawrence, Ryan Ensor, Ian McKenna, Neil Derwent and Neal Joblin all put together a bid to the Youth Opportunities Fund and then David, Kirsty and Ryan presented to their funding panel.
2. It is to the young people's exact specification and David Magee designed the paintwork.
3. It is available for all of the SoLO groups that work with children and young people to use, and can be hired out by other groups that work with children and young people.

How good is that!!!!



SoLO now has its own minibus! A group of young people from SoLO put in the winning funding bid and David Magee designed the bus!



2009 At A Glance

Trustee Meetings

21 January
11 February
18 March
20 April
18 May
10 June
6 July
16 September
12 October
9 November
9 December

Service User Reference Group

Executive Group

7 January
11 March
15 July
11 November

Newsletter Group

14 January
13 May
16 September

Website Group

13 May
16 September

Social

25 February
25 March
29 April
27 May
30 September

The SoLO Members Ball will be held on Friday 19 June at the St John Hotel in Solihull.

Tickets are £25 each.



If you want to come you need to give your Project Leader a £10 deposit by the end of February.

Training

Induction to SoLO - 27 January & 23 September - 7.00 to 9.00pm

New to the organisation - volunteer or staff member - make sure you are booked on!

Physical Intervention - 24 & 25 January - 9.00am to 4.00pm

Selected staff only

Person Centred Approach - 3 February

For anyone interested in learning how to make sure that our members are at the centre of all we do.

Augmented Signing Communication - 23 February - 7.00 to 9.00pm

Volunteer or staff member working with people with communication challenges? This might help you!

Vulnerable Adults - 26 March & 20 October - 7.00 to 9.00pm

Particularly for those volunteers or staff working with our adult members.

Epilepsy Awareness - 28 April - 7.00 to 9.00pm

A vital course for all staff and volunteers working within SoLO

Autism Awareness - 20 May - 7.00 to 9.00pm

Another very important course for all staff and volunteers

Summer Scheme Induction - 24 & 25 July - 9.00am to 4.00pm

Core training for all staff working in the summer, very useful for any volunteers involved.

DISCOs

North – 5 March

South – 17 December

Specials

Fundraising Concert in Dorridge - 27 February

Abseil - Date to be confirmed

Staff Team Days 2.30 to 6.00 pm

4 April - Active Involvement

3 October - Person Centred Planning and Disability Awareness

SoLO Members' Ball



If you ladies want to dress up in a glamorous dress, high shoes and tiara (black tie and suits for the men), now is your chance! SoLO are organising a Members' Ball at the end of Learning Disability Week (Friday 19 June) at St. John's Hotel, Solihull with live music, excellent food and entertainment all for just £25 a ticket. Carers tickets are £20

SoLO members get the first chance to get a ticket and will need to either give your Project Leader a £10 deposit (which we won't be able to return, if you don't attend) by the end of February, or send it into the office. The rest of the money will have to be paid by the end of April, but we can organise easy payments. Unfortunately, we cannot provide transport and there is an age restriction of 18+ only (no children)

If you are not a member of SoLO – tickets will be available from 1 March.

We have had loads of interest – so make sure you book your tickets!

Out & About



Ian & Michelle interview the Ivy Leaf committee

Ivy Leaf - The Night Owls Nest

Iain and Michelle interviewed the committee members of the Ivy Leaf who support the Night Owl project

Barry Emmett is the president, Brian Grayland, the Chairman. Maureen Winters, the treasurer, along with Steve Wigmore, the finance officer who oversees the finances and booking of rooms.

The Ivy Leaf is open all week and runs evening events ranging from ballroom dancing to private parties. It also has snooker tables and television so people can watch football, and it has a darts team.

As well as SOLO, there are lots of other local groups who use the Ivy Leaf such as, Monday Night Pensioners, the Fishing Club and even local politicians!

Barry, the president stated "we would like to be known as a club that welcomes everyone locally. Currently on a Saturday evening we have a 'Free and Easy sing along' night, there is no charge for this (apart from the 50p entry to the club and your drinks for the evening) It is a brilliant night and is proving to be really popular. It runs from 8.30-12.00pm". You do not have to be a member to use the club, just come along and sign in.

If you would like to join the club or find out what is going on in the week, or book a function room, or volunteer your services to set up The Ivy Leaf Website please phone 0121 743 3549 Monday to Friday from 8.30-11.30am or email ivy-leaf@hotmail.co.uk

So what are you waiting for, come along or ring Maureen for more information. She is waiting for your call.



Carla Bakewell A Cut Above the rest



Carla Bakewell is a Project Leader on one of SoLO's projects and has been with SoLO since February 2008.

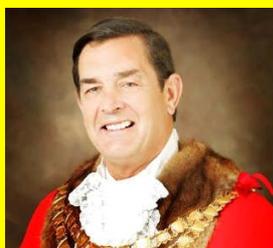
Carla is a qualified Barber, having 8 years experience of cutting boys and men's hair and would like to offer this service at Solo projects, or at the member's homes.

Carla is charging £7 per cut, and will be donating £2 of this to Solo.

If you would like to take advantage of this exciting offer please contact Carla direct on mobile 07983 424543 or email her on gingercw_@hotmail.com



The SoLO Christmas Disco was great! David Bell, The Mayor of Solihull came!



Christmas Disco

Over 200 people got together to celebrate Christmas with SoLO. The Disco looked as though it might not happen due to thieves stealing the admission money. However, it was a brilliant evening through the kindness of individuals and businesses who stepped in to make sure it happened.

The Mayor of Solihull, David Bell, spent some time with us and had a great time dancing with the members and managed to speak to nearly everyone in the room!

A number of our members entertained us with karaoke and there was dancing until late!

Carers Information

As a carer of a person with a learning disability, you are very important. Not only do you give 24 hours a day, 7 days a week care and attention, but you are the person who will be constant through the life of your son or daughter.

At SoLO, we try to support you by providing you good quality respite from your caring responsibilities by giving a first class leisure experience to your son or daughter. But, did you know, that there are lots of schemes now that you might be able to benefit from as well?

Direct Payments

Solihull Care Trust are piloting a scheme for the use of direct payments until March 2009.

The really good news is that there will be no need for financial assessments for carers services.

The assessment will be done purely on the need, which usually means those who are providing extensive support to a disabled person.

So, what does it mean to you?

The scheme is there to support carers. First, you will receive an assessment of your care needs (which isn't too daunting, and can be carried out by one of the support workers from the Solihull Carers Centre) And it is your opportunity to let them know what your support needs are. Once this is done, you might be eligible for one payment from each of the following schemes:

- **Household Maintenance** – help with decorating, major DIY projects, household maintenance and gardening payments range **from £150 to £250**.
- **Personal Development** – you could get **between £200 & £300** to pay for things like driving lessons, adult education or complementary therapy.
- **Domestic Support** – if you provide a substantial level of care, do not get more than 2 days of respite from care a week and not more than 14 nights respite in six months, you could be eligible to **help around the house**.
- **Leisure Interests** – payment of **up to £200** to help carers pursue interests and activities outside of their caring role

If this scheme is successful – it could continue after 31st March.

If you are interested – then call Solihull Carers Centre on 0121-788-1143

Let us know how you get on – we could report on it in the next newsletter!

(Note: all figures quoted are a rough guide)



Solihull Care Trust are piloting a scheme for the use of Direct Payments.

Carers needs are assessed. They could get money towards household maintenance, domestic support or money to help carers do leisure activities in their spare time outside of their caring role.

If you are interested call Solihull Carers Centre on 0121 788 1143

Mind Your Back

Did you know that you can learn safe lifting practices which will not only help look after you, your back, but will also increase the independence and dignity of the person you care for?



The Family Care Trust are currently offering training in lifting and handling.

There is a small cost, but If we have enough people interested in a course, we might be able to negotiate a short training specifically geared at the needs of parents and carers who look after children (particularly teenagers) or adults who require manual handling at a reduced rate.

If you are interested – please speak to Janet Down

Carers Information



Linda Carpenter is employed by the Solihull Carer's centre as a Project Worker (Carers of adults with learning disabilities). Linda started her post in October 2008, and is very excited about what she hopes to achieve in the next 2 years. Linda works Monday to Wednesday. Linda's role is to enable parents/carer's to have a voice in Solihull.

The Carers Forum is an opportunity for parents and carers to come together to exchange view/opinions, to meet other carer's, and listen to guest speakers on relevant issues concerning them.

You can contact Linda on 0121 788 1143, or by email at lindacarpenter@solihullcarers.org if you want to book your place at the Carers forum.

Linda would like to meet you at:

The Fordbridge Centre, Nineacres Drive - 29 January 7.00 to 9.00pm

Guest Speaker Catherine Nolan - Head of Commissioning for Learning Disabilities. Refreshments will be provided.

The Hub, Touchwood, Solihull - 12 February 10.30am to 12.30pm

Guest Speaker Gary Morgan - Economic Development Officer, Solihull Council. Lunch will be provided

The Hub, Touchwood, Solihull - 26 February 7.00 to 9.00pm

Guest Speaker Gary Morgan - Economic Development Officer, Solihull Council.

Gary wants to raise the awareness of the supported employment programme and update on progress to date. Gary also wants to ask carer's about the availability of appropriate learning, training, employment, and support/provision and put in place actions that specifically address any issues raised.

Refreshments provided



*Linda Carpenter
being interviewed
by SURG
Reporter Iain*

Summer Holiday Activities

We are now able to confirm that we have funding for some aspects of the holiday activities programme for children and we will be committing our reserves to deliver the rest.

We are, therefore planning the following dates:

Play scheme for children with severe learning disabilities aged 5-13 years of age:

27 to 31 July & 3 to 7 August & 10 to 14 August

Specialist play for children with profound and multiple learning disabilities aged 14+:

27 to 31 July & 3 to 7 August & 10 to 14 August

Specialist play for children aged 8-13 years with moderate learning disabilities:

29 & 30 July & 3, 7, 13, 14, 17, 19, 21, 24, & 26 August

Golf half days for children aged 8-13 years with moderate learning disabilities:

4, 11, 18, & 25 August

Inclusive play for children aged 5 – 13 years with learning disabilities:

27 to 31 July & 3 to 7 July & 10 to 14 July & 17 to 21 July

Integrated activities for children aged 14+ years with moderate and severe learning disabilities:

27 to 31 July & 3, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25 & 26 August

We are hoping to be able to offer each family between 5 – 7 days of respite. This year we have designed some of the programmes to be more flexible to enable children to come for a half day - subject to demand.

If your child has already attended in the past and is still within the age range, you will be receiving details shortly. If your child has not attended in the past, but you would like him or her to attend, please contact Vicki, Lorraine or Cookie and we will make sure that the information is sent out to you.

Fundraising

WIN-WIN for SoLO with TLC Lottery.



Did you know that you can help SoLO by playing the TLC Lottery for as little as £1 a week! If you nominate SoLO as your chosen charity, not only do you help the three owner charities but SoLO as well!

How it works...

Sign up to the TLC Lottery and nominate SoLO as your chosen charity, for every £1 entry, SoLO will receive 45p. The rest of your entry (i.e. 55p) stays with the three owner charities:

- Acorns Children's Hospice
- Birmingham St Mary's Hospice
- Birmingham Focus on Blindness

We would like to thank those of you who are already playing TLC Lottery and support us in this way, we currently receive around £55 each month (£659 per year) on a regular basis – which is great!

However, if more people join, we can increase this amount even more and be sure of a regular sizeable income for SoLO.

Have a look at the enclosed leaflet and sign up today – it's very easy and everyone's a winner!

Got some time, enthusiasm and a few good ideas?

Why not join our fundraising group who, this year, will be supporting a concert, abseil and another event at the end of the year (still to be decided!)

It is great fun, very rewarding and supports the work of SoLO in a huge way.

If you are interested, contact Vicki Hill at the office

Shop online, save money & support SoLO.

Many people are enjoying the bargains to be had by shopping over the internet. If that's you, then you can now shop online safely and support SoLO at the same time.

How it works...

Go to our website at www.solihullsolo.co.uk, click on the **Fundraising** link on the left and then click on. **easyfundraising** .org.uk This will take you to their website and off you go. Shop till you drop.

SoLO get a percentage of whatever you spend - between 2% & 10% - and **it won't cost you a penny!**

Over 600 well known brand names support this scheme - many of the top names like Tesco, Amazon, John Lewis, WH Smith, Marks & Spencer, Boots, Virgin, Lego and hundreds more.

There is also special offers that you won't find anywhere else.

So, now you can shop online through our website, save money and raise funds for SoLO.



You could support SoLO by signing up to play the TLC Lottery. See the enclosed leaflet.



If you would like to join our Fundraising Group or have an idea for raising money please call Vicki on 0121 788 3469.



You can shop online safely and help SoLO - and it won't cost you any extra.

Contact Solihull Life Opportunities on **0121 788 3469**

or Email info@solihullsolo.co.uk

or visit www.solihullsolo.co.uk