



Congratulations To Vicki and Paul Our first SoLO wedding!

Vicki Horton (nee Hill – our Children’s Projects Manager) married Paul Horton (who started in SoLO as a volunteer, now Assistant Project Leader at Teen Open Door) on Thursday 19th February. Vicki recruited Paul as a volunteer in 2006. Little did he know what he was being recruited to!

The SoLO staff turned out in force, and helped liven up the day! Congratulations to both Vicki and Paul!



**Vicki Hill and Paul Horton got married on 19th February!
They both work for SoLO and it is the first SoLO
Wedding. Congratulations to both of you!**

Handmade Burger Company Gives Back!

If you are a fan of hamburgers and want to support SoLO at the same time, now is your chance!

The Handmade Burger Company (based in Touchwood, opposite Cineworld) are supporting 10 charities (including SoLO) and if you go into their restaurant you can vote for SoLO – we are at the top of the list on the voting slips – why not make us top of the list to get the funding (it could be as much as £10,000!)



**Vote for SoLO at the Handmade Burger Company in
Touchwood by Cineworld! We could win as much as
£10,000!**

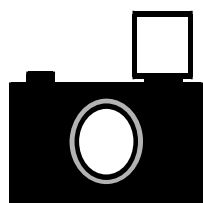


Sorry, we forgot to say thanks!

Dan While and Loren Russell-Ahern are now taking some wonderful photos for us and should have been credited in the last issue.



Dan used to be a member at Teen Open Door and now volunteers on Open Door and Loren is studying Art and photography and is supporting Dan to be our roving photographer. Well done guys – the photos are terrific.



**Dan While and Loren Russell-Ahern are volunteer
photographers. They took all the lovely photos in the last
newsletter and in this one. They will be visiting projects
soon to take more photos. Thank you Dan and Loren!**

Now We Are ... www.solihullsolo.org

To reflect the fact that we are a charity and not a business and make our website easier to update, we’ve changed it and its address. Our email addresses will change too. Just change the **.co.uk** at the end of the current addresses to **.org**. But don’t panic, the old ones will still work for a little while.



Corey Hope Gets Signed Up!

By Michelle Prowitt

Corey was scouted by the West Bromwich special football team, when playing football with Get Active.

Corey's main position tends to be a striker but he can play in any position on the pitch stating that he "loves playing football matches with the West Bromwich team but does not like losing matches... fortunately this does not happen very often!"

Corey's dreams for the future are to play for England, Chelsea or Birmingham.



Well done to Corey Hope. Corey was chosen to play for West Bromwich Special Football Team!

Sing For SoLO by Ian Doherty

On the 27th of February I was invited to Sing for SoLO. The event was held at Dorridge Methodist Church and its purpose was to raise money for SoLO. Although the Church choir was there (along with one member who bought his own accordion), Drumtastic and Reynolds cross School was there, I was particularly surprised to find members of my old school (Hazel Oak) were on the list of performers. Mind you, they were even more surprised to see me when I met some of the girls from Hazel Oak backstage!



I enjoyed the event (especially Hazel Oak's two bands and Reynolds Crosses version of ABBA) and I am certain that everyone else did as well. The Event raised over £1000 for SoLO and thanks should go to everyone who contributed, in particular Jan Prior who did most of the organising. Since Sing For SoLO will be back next year I will close with this line: *"Live Aid, you've got yourselves some competition"*.

Sing for SoLO was held at Dorridge Methodist Church and they raised money for SoLO. Thank you to everyone who took part.



Member's Ball Will Celebrate Volunteers!



On Friday 19th June, our members will be putting on their best clothes, glamping up for the night and spending a star studded evening at the St. John's Hotel for their first SoLO Ball.

The SURG group, who have organised the event, wanted to use the night to celebrate the work that our volunteers do to support the members – so Oscars it is! One volunteer, from each of our projects, will receive an Oscar on behalf of their group to thank them for the wonderful work that they do.

The night will have all the elements of an Oscar celebration - red carpet, paparazzi, Jazz band, entertainment, drinks reception and dancing til late! If you have missed out this year (the event has sold out) and would like to have come – let us know – we might run another next year!

On Friday 19th June its SoLO's first ever Members Ball at the St Johns Hotel. We will also celebrate the work our volunteers do to support the members. The theme for the Ball is the Oscars.

Our Members Plan the Summer!



The summer planning was well on the way, with a group of young people with learning disability aged from 8 years on the case! Our planning group, ably supported by Lynn Humphreys and a group of workers from the summer activities team met during March every Saturday. They worked really hard to devise a marvellous programme of things for our young members to do during the summer. This work was funded through a Government Initiative called DCatch. Watch out for the report in the next newsletter.

Parents Email Forum

Did you know that we have an email parents forum? Would you like to join it?

If so please send your email to l.humphreys@solihullsolo.org and we will add your details to the forum and pass them (unless otherwise stated) to Linda Carpenter (Learning Disability co-ordinator for the Carers Forum) who will invite you to the local forums for carers.



If you would like to join an email forum for parents and carers, send an email to l.humphreys@solihullsolo.org who will ask Linda Carpenter at the Carers Forum to add you.

Tell Us Your Story

At SoLO we are really interested in what Parents and carers have to say, what they would like to share and so would like to invite you to nominate yourselves to appear in the next issue of our Newsletter.

The SURG newsletter subgroup, and Dan and Loren (SoLO's photographers) will arrange to come and meet with you to carry out the interview and take some photographs... so what are you waiting for please give Lynn a ring on 0121 788 3469 or email her at l.humphreys@solihullsolo.org



We would like to have a page in the newsletter for parents and carers. If you would like to share something with other parents and carers please ring Lynn on 0121 788 3469 or email l.humphreys@solihullsolo.org

Correction - Direct Payment Scheme

Apologies to the many parents and carers of **children** under the age of 18 with a learning disability who were misinformed, in our last newsletter, about the Direct Payment Pilot Scheme for carers. Unfortunately, we were not told that this scheme had an age limit, so inadvertently passed on incomplete information.

To take part in the Direct Payment Pilot Scheme you must be aged 18+.



Volunteers Needed – Urgently!

We have three projects in the North of the borough which are desperately short of volunteers. All of these schemes offer children and adults with a learning disability who live in the Fordbridge, Smithswood, Castle Bromwich area an opportunity to meet up with their friends during the week. Without volunteer support, these projects can't expand and, in one case may have to close!

Teen Open Door – meets on a Tuesday from 3.30 to 7.30pm at Merstone School.

They need volunteers to support young people with severe learning disabilities to have a fun night!

Thursday Crew – meets on a Thursday from 6.30 to 9.00pm at the British Legion, Chelmsley Wood. They need volunteers to meet up with the learning disabled adults at the club and take part in activities which are great fun!

Icebreakers – meets monthly on a Wednesday night for about 4 hours – they need volunteers who can drive to give a lift to a person with a learning disability and then share the evening with the rest of the group – which could be having a drink in the pub, bowling or even ice-skating!

If you are free and fit the bill, contact Cookie on 0121 788 3469 or email cookie@solihullsolo.org

YOUR HELP WILL MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE!

Changes in SoLO

At SoLO we are constantly looking to develop and improve on what we do. So, as a response to the changing needs of our members, we have now changed some of the ways we are delivering our services.



Janet Down – has now become Chief Executive Officer which means that she can focus more on the strategic direction of the organisation, the all important fundraising, partnership working with our statutory funders and the really vital task of developing our adult services.

Janet has a new job title. She is now the Chief Executive of SoLO. Janet will be working hard on fundraising and developing SoLO's adult services.



Deb Jones – joins us as the Children's Manager with specific responsibility for the ever growing children's team, as well as project management for a number of the children's projects. Deb has experience of managing teams of people, as well as direct experience of working with children with special needs. We are delighted to have Deb on the team.

Welcome to Deb Jones! Deb is the Children's Services Manager and also manages some of the Children's Projects.



Cookie – has now taken on responsibility for a new approach to volunteering – The Volunteer Pathway. SoLO has always been very good at attracting, recruiting and placing volunteers, and is building on a strong tradition of supporting volunteering. Cookie is now supporting the team to make sure that the pathway from contacting our organisation to starting on project is as effective and efficient as possible. She is already making great strides and has been elected as the Vice Chair of the borough wide, all agency Volunteer Management Forum!

Cookie is developing a Pathway for SoLO Volunteers. Cookie is very good at getting volunteers to join SoLO. She is so good that she is also the Vice Chair of the Volunteer Manager's Forum.

The new structure is designed to maximise the opportunities for members and ensure that people with learning disabilities, living in our area, get the best out of life!

Exciting Job Opportunities with SoLO

Do you have experience of working with children with special needs and looking for a new challenge?

Transitional Support Worker based at Meriden Adventure Playground in Chelmsley Wood. Working hours are Thursday term times 3.00 to 6.30pm. You will be supporting a team of play workers facilitating involvement of children with special needs. Pay £7.56 per hour.

Project Leader for Get Active which runs every other Saturday from 9.00am to 1.00 pm enabling a group of young people aged 14+ to access sporting activities. Term time position, £9.45 per hour.

If you are interested, please contact Cookie on 0121 788 3469 or email cookie@solihullsolo.org

The deadline for applications is 1 July 2009

Swine Flu Advice

Although it seems to have gone quiet on swine flu, we just wanted to reinforce some advice to ensure we all keep safe:

- If you feel unwell and have flu like symptoms, do not come into the project.
- If you notice that someone is unwell, contact parents for advice
- The best advice is for the person who seems ill to go home

If you have a cold, please follow the government guidelines:

Catch it – use a tissue when you cough or sneeze

Bin it – put the tissue in the bin

Kill it – wash you hands

If you have a cold

- Use a tissue
- Put it in the bin
- Wash your hands