



e-newsletter: February 2010

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Thank you for your continued support,

Sarah-Jane Critchley
AET Project Head

Tell a friend...

Is there someone you think would be interested to hear about the AET? Please forward this newsletter to them and ask them to send us their details so we can keep them up to date.

1. AET Teen Website – ‘The Den’

Winner of website naming competition announced

Alex Devlin has been chosen as the winner of the competition to name the new AET website for teenagers. Alex’s entry ‘The Den’ was selected by the AET Steering Group as the winning name.

'The Den' will be an exciting hub of information, advice, films, games and trusted links for teenagers on the autism spectrum and their siblings and friends. It is due to launch in a couple of months and will be hosted as part of the main AET website, so watch this space for more information.

Alex, who has been presented with an AET goodie bag for his winning entry, lives and works in Kent. He is a Specialist Teacher supporting children and young people (4 – 19 years) with difficulties in communication and interaction, mostly students on the autism spectrum who attend mainstream schools. He is particularly passionate about promoting better links between parents and professionals from the education and health services to enhance the level of support being offered.

2. New Resources

New AET Case Studies now available

The Case Studies section of the AET website has launched, presenting in depth case studies which highlight areas of good practice and initiatives that have worked well in autism education. The subjects of the first three case studies to go live are:

- ✿ The Science of Rhythm drumming programme from Nottingham City Council,
- ✿ Leeds Library and Information Services roll out of the Boardmaker picture communication software
- ✿ The Puzzle Centre, a specialist early years centre for children on the autism spectrum.

Case studies are now available to view at:

<http://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/Good-practice/Case%20studies.aspx>

We understand that if you are doing great things with young people on the spectrum, you are unlikely to have the time to write them down, so we interview you and write it up for you. Are you doing something you are proud of? Please give us a call so we can share what you have learnt!

3. Help Needed!

Call for young people to take part in survey - My Way!

The First News My Way! Campaign has been launched to raise awareness of the different ways children and young people learn and the importance of allowing them to learn in a way which is right for them. One in five school-aged children need extra help due to a learning difficulty, which may include being on the autism spectrum. My Way! would like to get children and young people's views on their school and how they like to learn, so please encourage any young people you know to take part in the survey at <http://www.firstnews.co.uk/surveys/>. All entrants are in with the chance of winning £300 in vouchers of their choice.

The First News My Way! Campaign was launched at 10 Downing Street on 6th January by the Prime Minister's wife Sarah Brown and Henry Winkler, best known for his role as The Fonz in TV show Happy Days and as the author of the Hank Zipzer stories. AET Youth Council representatives Sam Travers, Helen Wood and Project Head Sarah-Jane Critchley attended the launch. More about the campaign and a You Tube video clip of

the launch can be seen at the 10 Downing Street website:
<http://www.number10.gov.uk/Page22003>

AET and CSP survey local authorities to offer support to improve autism service planning and commissioning

The AET is working with the Commissioning Support Programme (CSP) to improve the commissioning of services for children and young people on the autism spectrum. All local authorities in England have been contacted with information about how the AET and CSP can help the commissioning process and have been asked to fill in a questionnaire to identify whether or not support may be helpful.

Penny Richardson, SEN and Children's Services Consultant at the AET who is coordinating the survey, said; "It is important we build a clearer picture of the current ways in which local authorities plan and commission services for children and young people with autism. We know there are really great examples of good practice out there and we want to be able to share those with other local authorities who may be looking for support."

She continues. "The key to effective and relevant service commissioning is a clear understanding of the impact of autism on the development of individualised arrangements. We are offering a range of free practical advice and support options to local authorities and the questionnaire is the best way for us to identify gaps in knowledge and judge where we may be able to help."

The questionnaire and a letter to commissioners are both available to download from the AET website. Penny Richardson can also be contacted by email at penny.richardson1@ntlworld.com.

4. Events

AET Events Update

AET events on the subject of 'Transitions' have been a great success, with over 250 delegates attending the national conference in London on 28th January.

The feedback from delegates attending the events has been very positive, with comments such as:

'Relevant and informative - much needed content for families as well as professionals'

'Thought provoking and practical'

'Informative – it is evident that positive attitudes and support can ensure children can achieve and enjoy their experiences in education'

'A breath of fresh air!'

Special guest at the upcoming road show in Hull on 25th February will be Diana Johnson, MP for Hull North and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). She will provide the keynote speech, covering her involvement with autism education through the Aiming High for Disabled Children Programme and her work at the DCSF, as well as giving delegates a local perspective.

Places for all remaining roadshows are now fully booked, however the AET plans to run another series of events from this autumn in new locations across the country.

The Wessex Autistic Society Conference 2010: Inclusive Education and Autism – Perspective and Practice

10th March 2010 - Carrington House Hotel, Bournemouth, BH1 3QQ

The conference will examine national strategy, individual experiences, good practice and adapting the school environment for children with autism in mainstream settings. It features a personal perspective from by Dean Beadle, an adult with Asperger's syndrome, followed by Professor Rita Jordan from the University of Birmingham Autism Centre for Education and Research, as well as a number of interactive practical workshops.

Conference fees: £50 for parents, TWAS members, people with autism and £95 for professionals. Bookings can be made at: <http://www.twas.org.uk/index.php?plDref=195-Autism-Conference-2010>

The Puzzle Centre Conference 2010: 'Autism in the Early Years – what is good practice?'

2nd July 2010 – Horwood House, Milton Keynes

The conference will discuss early intervention for young children with autism by examining leading research, national strategy and good practice within both mainstream and specialist pre-school provision. The keynote speaker is Professor Tony Charman, from the Institute of Education, who will provide an overview of conclusions from recent research into early intervention.

To book a place download the [brochure and booking form](#) which includes further details and return it by email or post. Early booking is encouraged to avoid disappointment, as places are limited.

Sara Lyons, an AET Steering Group Member, will 'Walk for Autism' from Dover to Lands End starting on World Autism Awareness Day

Sara lives in Cornwall with her husband Andrew. She is a qualified teacher with over 10 years experience in mainstream primary schools and further education. In 2003, Sara was diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome and understands on a very personal level the daily struggles this entails. Combined with her teaching experience, Sara has a rare view of the complexities of autism spectrum disorders and is therefore able to offer advice and support to people with the condition as well as those who work with them.

Starting on 2nd April - World Autism Awareness Day - Sara has pledged to walk from Dover to Lands End. It is her intention to help raise awareness of autism and raise funds to support the Lifeworks 'Breaking the Barrier' events, which introduce youngsters with autism and learning disabilities to surfing. Sara plans to walk around 15 miles each day over 50 days and aims to arrive at Lands End on 21st May. She hopes that you may be able to join her there or along the way.

To find out more about ways you can support Sara, please view her leaflet here: [Sara Lyons 'Walk for Autism'](#)

5. New Publications

Please see attached a full list of recent autism related publications, which you may find of interest.

6. Have Your Say

We are always keen to hear your thoughts and suggestions for the AET. Please visit the AET website and fill in the online form to tell us about your experiences of autism education. We want to hear from parents, young people with autism and professionals working in the autism education field.

Visit [Have Your Say](#) on the AET website.

7. Further information

We hope you would like to continue receiving the AET e-newsletter. However, if you do not wish to receive these updates in future please email info@autismeducationtrust.org.uk with the word 'unsubscribe' in the subject line. If you have received this newsletter via a third party and would like to be added to the regular mailing list please email the address above to subscribe.

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