

News...

Autumn/Winter 2009

'Aspergers4Herts News', edition #2 has arrived!!

Amazing to think that in November it will be our first anniversary. Our AGM will be held in January and it would be great to meet the members that have joined us throughout the year at this meeting; we welcome all of you to join us. Full details of this meeting will be posted /emailed nearer the time.

Teen Activity Events

We have had the last of our three teen taster events and they have been such a success that we have decided to extend them for a little while longer. We're currently awaiting the outcome of funding bids which are necessary for us to secure funds to continue the teen events throughout the coming year. Although we set out a schedule of events for the teens, they're now confident enough to tell us what they really want to do, and we're really pleased to see some friendships developing already.



“ The bell-boating was great to watch as it involved strong team work in order to get the raft around the lake ”

The first event was on a sweltering hot day back in June (yes there were a few hot days this summer!) and the ten teenagers had to climb the ski slopes... that sounds glamorous but alas it was the man-made slope at Welwyn Garden City... sorry where were we, oh yes... climbed the 'dry' ski slopes with giant rubber rings dragged behind them! Once at the top they sat in their ring (bit like a dingy), held the handle of the ring next to them and launched themselves off the top of the slope. The kids were exhausted by the end of the session but all seemed to really enjoy the day. Since this event the group have been bell-boating at Fairland's Valley Lakes as well as Rock Climbing. The bell-boating was great to watch as it involved strong team work in order to get the raft around the lake; apart from the odd splashes everyone managed to stay dry for the duration of the event!



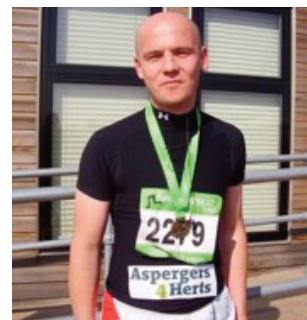
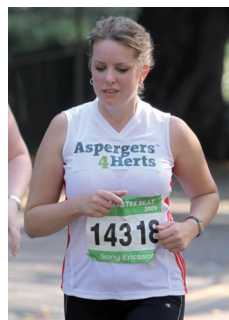
“ The challenge of going out of your comfort zone and trying something new, is really good for inspiring confidence ”

If you are interested in your teen attending one of our events in the future they are open to any 13-19 year old with Asperger Syndrome. Just drop us a line with your details if you're interested in joining the group: info@aspergers4herts.org.



Run to the beat

Thanks to **Zoe Day** and **Lee Butterfield** who raised an amazing £1,400.00 between them by running the 'Run to the Beat' half marathon in aid of Aspergers 4 Herts. The marathon started and ended at London's O2 arena taking in Greenwich and Woolwich. Various bands played and artists sang along the 13 mile route. The scorching hot day did not add to their running comfort so an amazing achievement from both of them!



Making a 'splash'

June saw our first publicity event at the annual festivities of **Stevenage Day**. For those of you not familiar with the event, there was a huge array of stalls all set around a display arena. Audiences were entertained by dance troops, bands and dog agility trials, and were able to participate in fair-ground rides, bouncy castles and hot dogs – not always a winning combination! The event also provided an area for local charities to promote their causes... so Aspergers4Herts seized the opportunity to introduce itself to the good folk of Stevenage.



“ We really felt that the day was worthwhile in increasing awareness of the charity ”

To attract attention to our stand we had games such as 'hook-a-duck' for the little ones, and 'splat-a-rat' for those looking for something a bit grittier! We also sold an array of knitted items; bags, toys and novelties, all made by a couple of our supporters. Several members of A4H were on hand to help with setting-up, manning the stall and clearing away. It was a hot and exhausting day, but it was great to have a presence at such a large public event.

We were approached by quite a number of people on the day; some because they knew someone or had a relative with Asperger Syndrome and wanted to support us, and others because they themselves were parents or grandparents of teenagers with AS and had a need for help and support. We really felt that the day was worthwhile in increasing awareness of the charity and we raised £199 in to the bargain! Our thanks to **Teresa Roffey** for all her hard work making the knitted items sold on the stand and all the others who worked so hard on the day. If you know of any other publicity opportunities, please do let us know; and if you have need of a 'splat-a-rat' drainpipe – only one careful owner, we have just the job!

Members...Join us and help us help you!

We currently have around 70 members made up of 33 families. Some people have searched us out as they have a child that may wish to join the teen group, some have emailed for help and some people just need someone to talk to. Even if you feel we have nothing to offer you at the moment, please let us have your details by going to www.aspergers4herts.org/contact.html As we grow there will slowly be more and more available, it is important for the charity to prove there is a need and member statistics can help us do this. Please note your details are private to Aspergers 4Herts and will not be passed on to any third party.

Fundraising Team update

Huge thanks to our fund raising committee, **Margaret Phillips, Zoe Day, Lee Butterfield** and **Fran Landau**, together with France, they meet monthly and have been fundamental in all the fundraising activities.

Details of fund raising events we are holding are on our website in the 'Information' section. There are 5k walks/runs, 10k runs and a half marathon for the more discerning runners. Or if you would like to do your own event for Aspergers 4 Herts, just drop us a line and we can talk about how we can help you to achieve it. Our next event is the Greenwich Park 5k Santa run (or walk if you prefer!). Entry to this run is £20 which includes your Santa Suit and the registration pack. All you have to do is raise a minimum of £100

Spreading the word

Asperger Syndrome has been in the spotlight recently, with a few features in the local and national media:

- East Anglia News screened a three part series on AS
- 'Radio Five Live' run an hour long discussion in October, plus some documentaries
- The BBC screened a six part fictional drama called 'All The Small Things', which followed the lives and ambitions of a church choir. The programme frequently featured a young band, the main singer of which, 'Kyle', was a gifted musician who was highly intelligent but had some difficulty with interaction and social skills. He was very enigmatic, logical, obsessive and literal. Despite his naivety he had a lot of wisdom, and this made his character gently amusing and endearing. It was great viewing and I would recommend watching it on repeat.

It's really encouraging to see more about the condition being depicted in such a positive way; let's hope there is more to come!

Lending Library

We have had donations of several books that will form our lending library, the details of which will be displayed on the website. If you have any books on AS or ASD you have finished with and would like to donate for the benefit of other members please drop us an email and we will arrange collection.

Special 'Thank you' for donations...

Thank you so much for the kind financial donations from:

Richard Manning – Personal donation

Angie Tansley – Personal donation

Knutsford Road OAP Social Club (Royston) – Holding a garden party to raise funds for A4H

SFB Charity – Running a raffle at their 60's night to raise funds for A4H.

Website - 3rd release

We started out with just a holding page, but now we're on to our third release which is much improved, as promised in our last news letter. However it's still very much in its infancy and there is a long way to go to get to the all encompassing 'one-stop-shop' of information for Asperger's in Herts. We are anticipating the launch of the new web site in June 2010, again, dependent on funding applications. We are currently in talks about design ideas and have other fund raising activities towards this project. But we are very aware that the website is for you and we would really welcome your thoughts on what you want to see there.

Please drop us a line at info@aspergers4herts.org