

FAMILIES FOR AUTISM

...supporting autism in our community



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Spring Newsletter

Families for Autism 70s & 80s Time Tunnel Disco

On Saturday 6th May, some of our families dug out their neon leg warmers, and enjoyed the Families for Autism Time Tunnel Disco. It was an evening of 70's & 80's tunes, with some fun outfits, and some fabulous dancing.

See what some of the parents said about the evening below;

"This was a new venture for FFA, but I think it turned out in the end to be probably one of the most relaxed and fun things that has been put on for families with children and young people on the autism spectrum."



"Discos are things that families find hard when you have a child / young person with ASD, but it is always worth trying new things, especially as they get older."

The Chill Out Area was described as "a 'safe space' for those people who felt they needed it but without it excluding them from the atmosphere of the disco."



"The staff at the Cumberland were lovely, and helped us with access to the hotel, and with Adam's wheel chair and brought Adam a jug of water over to our table and was lovely with him."



"DJ Nigel was great, playing requests when asked, and interacting well with the crowd."

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Special Points of interest:

- Time Tunnel Disco
- Charity Shop

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Fruit and Nut Sponsored Walk

On a very cold, but beautiful sunny winter's day in January, a group of approximately 20 people took part in the "Fruit and Nut" sponsored walk. The walk had been organised by Helen McCabe from HOME marketing and The Body Club on behalf of FFA. After a fitness check, where we had our body mass index and hydration levels noted and a healthy snack kindly donated by Tesco's, we all put on a "fruit" or "nut" t-shirt and set off from the Seaside Community Hub. We walked all along the seafront to Holywell and back, taking in the glorious views and appreciating the exercise. Back at the Community Hub, we had a very informative talk from one of the fitness coaches about diet, lifestyle and staying healthy. Thank you to everyone who helped to organise this event and to all who walked. Over £200 was raised for FFA which is very much appreciated.



New Year Meal

On Saturday 4th February eleven of us met at The Arlington Arms and enjoyed a three course set meal for our annual get together.

We hired a separate room for this event, which had been decorated with some fairy lights to help us still feel festive! The evening went well and all had an enjoyable time. It was especially lovely to meet some new members too.



Families for Autism Shop

Our new charity shop opened in November 2016, marking an important moment for the charity and the work that it does. It was open for business during the period leading up to Christmas, before its official opening in January 2017. This event took place on the 20th January 2017. The patron of Families for Autism, Caroline Ansell, M.P. for Eastbourne and Willingdon was invited to cut the ribbon on this occasion. We were very pleased to welcome Mrs Ansell along with other guests who have a connection with Families for Autism, whether through voluntary work or other involvement.

The shop has so far been a success, and we are encouraged that it is hopefully becoming more widely known. It has the advantage that it offers a wide range of items for sale. These include men's, women's and children's clothing, small electrical items, picture frames, paintings and even the occasional lawnmower, in the best condition, of course! It is worth coming into the shop in person to see the variety of items available, and remember that however much you spend, you as the customer are contributing to the much-valued work that Families for Autism does in Eastbourne and the wider area, such youth clubs, support groups and job clubs for those on the ASD spectrum. If you can please spread the word about the shop to family and friends. It is also worth keeping a lookout on places like Facebook to see what bargains are available. You never know there might just be something that you have been looking for, so keep your eyes peeled!

The shop is also where the office for the charity is based, so very often you are likely to see Mark Jones here during the week along with volunteers who look after the counter and help to keep the shop in tip-top condition.

If you are able or willing to volunteer a morning or afternoon, or know someone who might be, please bear this mind. As a starting point, please do come and have a look at the shop and you will find it a quietly pleasant, yet welcoming environment. Remember that it is here to help towards the very important work of Families for Autism.



Coming Soon.. Families for Autism Summer Fair 2017

The Families Committee are proud to bring you a sizzling Summer Fair on Saturday 17th June, which promises to be loads of fun, with a range of stalls and activities for everyone. We hope that the new venue, Community Wise on Ocklynge Road, will be busy and buzzing with families from 12.00 noon when the doors open; right through until 4.00pm when all the burgers are eaten. Inside the hall, you will be able to enjoy the stalls, purchase raffle tickets to win some fabulous prizes, try your luck at the tombola, browse the wonderful bric a brac, and even get your face painted. We will also have delicious cakes available, plus refreshments to keep you going. Outside you will be able to try your luck at hook a duck, and other entertaining games.

I can't wait. All we need now is a little bit of sunshine!





Families for Autism & Hailsham Pavilion

Once a month, Families for Autism and Hailsham Pavilion Cinema, host an Autism Friendly Screening of a recent film suitable for children or young people. All family members are welcome to come and enjoy the film. Films start at 10.30am, with doors opening from 10.00am. Tickets are £5 each [cash only] and can be purchased on the door. These are private showings especially adapted to ensure that they are suitable for our needs. For example, we ask for lighting and sound to be adjusted and request that there are no adverts or trailers. Look out for information about the next Autism Friendly film coming soon!

Families for Autism & My Skate World

On the first Sunday of each month, Families for Autism and My Skate World hold an Autism Friendly Skating Session, from 11.45 am to 1.45pm. My Skate World is an indoor skating venue, where you can come along and try out skating in a safe and friendly environment; and the whole warehouse is just for FFA to use. The cost is £5.00 for those who would like to hire skates or £4.00 if you want to bring your own skates. Entry costs include helmets and padding for everyone taking part. Please note that if you don't want to skate, but just want to watch, then entry is free. There is a snack bar open for refreshments during the session; as well as snooker tables and games machines for anyone interested in something different. The sessions are a great opportunity to meet other families and to make new friendships. My Skate World is based at Unit 5, 16a Maple Road, Eastbourne, BN23 6NY.





The Big Futures Show

On Wednesday 22nd March, a handful of us helped to man the FFA awareness stand at the Big Futures Show, which was taking place at the Winter Gardens. We set up in the disability zone end, which was the first time the zone had been included. We handed out leaflets and offered advice. It was great to chat to such a variety of people. There were over 100 stands! And all primarily providing information and guidance to school years 9 - 11 pupils. We also had teachers and family members seeking advice and asking questions too, which was brilliant. The day was a great success and we look forward to next year's show.



Diary Dates

- Saturday 17th June - FFA Summer Fair
- Sunday 26th June - FFA Autism Friendly Cinema Screening - Beauty and the Beast
- Sunday 2nd July - FFA Autism Friendly Skating session at My Skate World
- Saturday 29th & Sunday 30th July - Eastbourne Hot Air Balloon Festival
- Saturday 29th July - FFA Awareness Day at Eastbourne Arndale Centre



Introducing the Families Committee

The FC (Families committee) is represented by a group of individuals working on a voluntary basis on behalf of FFA (Families for Autism Ltd), and by members of staff. The committee aim to meet once a month working through a meeting agenda.

What is the purpose of the committee?

To effectively work as part of a team alongside FFA employees as detailed below:

1. Plan and co-ordinate all annual fundraising and sponsored events for the charity.
2. To help out at fundraising activities, sponsored events, networking or promotional awareness days or any other event where permitted.
3. To work with the families supported by FFA and provide to the charities management committee any constructive ideas or policies that could help benefit the organisation.
4. To set up and run regular coffee mornings for parents or carers should they be required.
5. Agree event venues and dates for the charities social networking gender groups, including the possible attendance of such events.
6. Co ordinate children and young people's Christmas activities at both clubs and summer outings.
7. Subject to individual's availability, to volunteer at any support services or the charity shop.
8. Where possible help to promote awareness of the charity through word of mouth and via any social media platforms.
9. Help grow and increase support of membership into the FC.

We would love your help!

The committee is looking for new members, so if you have an interest in joining the committee, or would like to help as a volunteer at any of our fundraising events please email Mark Jones at mark.jones@familiesforautism.com. Your contribution would be valued, so please consider the possibility of joining.



www.familiesforautism.com

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