Who’s Who?

Hello! My name is Kate Turner and I’m a relatively new member of the SDCS committee, joining in 2018. My son Ray was diagnosed with a severe sensori-neural hearing loss roughly a year after birth, and after wearing hearing aids for over two years with little progress, he was finally fitted with his first cochlear implant in May 2017. We started attending family group back in January 2015, and we rarely missed one up until Ray and his twin brother Jim left due to starting school in July 2018. It was one of the highlights of our week, as the support on offer, along with being able to connect with other parents of children with a hearing loss, while the boys played was invaluable.

Like other members on the committee, our whole family have been lucky enough to directly benefit from the work of SDCS, through family group, family nights, visits to Park Hall Farm and even a mom’s night out. For a relatively small charity, it helps fund some fantastic resources and events that make a real difference to so many children and families throughout our county. My aim as a committee member is to hopefully help the charity continue with its fantastic work.

Audiology update

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) have released new guidance related to cochlear implants for children. Under the new guidance children should be considered for assessment under the following hearing loss criteria:

Severe to profound deafness is defined as hearing sounds only that are louder than 80dBHL (pure tone audiometric threshold equal to or greater than 80dBHL) at 2 or more frequencies (500Hz, 1,000Hz, 2,000Hz, 3,000Hz and 4,000Hz) bilaterally without acoustic hearing aids. Adequate benefit from acoustic hearing aids is defined for this guidance as:

- For Children: speech, language and listening skills appropriate to age, developmental stage and cognitive ability.

This change in criteria may result in many of the children and young people we support falling within the new adjusted criteria. At our recent Children’s Hearing Services Working Group (CHSWG) meeting this was discussed and an agreed way forward was developed.

When CYP come for their regular hearing aid reviews if they ‘fall’ within the new criteria this will be discussed with the carers and if they wish to consider a referral to a CI centre this will be discussed through an appointment with an ENT Consultant. If in light of this new guidance families wish to discuss this with ENT before any hearing aid review please contact your Teacher of the Deaf who will organise an appointment to discuss with an ENT consultant.
**Service Review**

Over the autumn term 2019, the two Local Authorities will be working alongside SIS to develop an action plan from our recent service review in order to address the recommendations in the report and the priorities of the Local Authorities. Once this has been developed any proposed changes to SIS will be shared with all stakeholders. Until that point the service is continuing on an ‘as is’ basis from September 2019.

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**Deaf Awareness Week**

Following a successful fundraising event last year, Milbrook Primary have chosen to hold an annual cake sale as part of Deaf Awareness week. Once again Eisa and Emily helped organise the fundraising event and thoroughly enjoyed selling the cakes on behalf of the charity. This year they raised just over £250! Thank you to all the staff and pupils at Milbrook Primary.

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**NDCS Event, Journey to Independence, 28 October-1 November 2019**

Address: Bell Heath Outdoor Elements, Quantry Lane, Belbroughton, Worcestershire, DY9 9UU

This exciting event is for deaf young people aged 14–18. The young people will get to make some new friends, build confidence with a week involving a mix of transition type sessions to help young people become more independent, such as first aid and cooking along with some outdoor activities. Our friendly team of staff will look after them and help support them to have a great experience.

Contact: sally.mcnamara@ndcs.org.uk

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**Bowling Night a Hit with Families**

Among the most important activities funded by the SDCS are the family orientated social gatherings, such as our occasional visits to AMF Bowling in Shrewsbury. It has been a while since our last outing to this venue, so our visit in April was most welcome. Bowling is a great leveller, accessible to people of all ages and abilities, and often the least expected person will come out on top at the end of the game. It was great to see so many families meeting and mixing while having fun at the same time. It is so important for the deaf youngsters to interact with each other, as well as with their hearing siblings and friends. Events such as this provide opportunities to build new friendships and rekindle old ones. It is equally important for parents to get the opportunity to share experiences and provide support to each other. As a family, all of this was all true for us on the night. My son had the opportunity to meet up with a friend he had first encountered on an SDCS funded outdoor pursuits course, to find out that they were now both passionate mountain bikers. During the evening they had ample opportunity to exchange biking stories, while the adults also had a chance to catch up and share experiences since we last met. The game was fun and despite all of us being competitive we had one runaway winner. In the end though the game was incidental to the social interaction and the overall enjoyment of the event. Looking around at the other lanes this appeared to be the experience of all the other families who attended. The next opportunity for families to get together again will be the Family Fun Day on Sunday 22nd September, and I hope that many of you will be able to come along to this.
**Book signing with Julia Donaldson**

Effie met Julia Donaldson, author of The Gruffalo, at a book signing at Button and Bear bookshop in Shrewsbury. She was there to celebrate independent book shops. Julia’s husband was there and he was playing the guitar and singing songs whilst Julia signed books. Effie was a little shy but she showed Julia her implants and Julia showed Effie her hearing aids. Effie said she really liked Freddy and the Fairy because it rhymed and the fairy had hearing aids. They looked at the fairy in the book together to see her hearing aids. Julia also told Effie about other books such as ‘What the Jackdaw Saw’ which uses sign. Julia sang a song about the Gruffalo with her husband and Effie stood at the front and did the actions with her. Julia kindly signed a copy of Freddy and the Fairy for Effie too. A very special day.

**Condover secondary activity day**

15 young people joined together at Condover Hall in Shrewsbury on what turned out to be the hottest day of the year so far! The young people thoroughly enjoyed themselves as they enthusiastically faced some difficult challenges, including a high rope aerial trek and zip wire. Thankfully the afternoon was spent on the lake, canoeing where they all had the chance to cool off, with many of the children jumping in! It was lovely to see new friendships made with others who share the same challenges along with some young people catching up with old friends that have been made at previous events. A good day was had by all.

**Primary art and craft day**

It was lovely to spend time with the children who attended the Primary Day. They thoroughly enjoyed the day, playing co-operative games, creating a 3 dimensional town and making the most beautiful bowls out of clay. The children worked extremely hard and were very proud of their efforts. The day was hugely important in enabling the children to spend time together, getting to know each other as hearing aid wearers.
We thought it would be nice to catch up with a few young people who have previously appeared in the SIS newsletter to see what they are doing now:

**Weronika Wrobel**

Weronika is studying at Huddersfield University doing an Interior Design course. She has just finished her second year and is now back in Telford living with her parents and working part time over the holidays. Weronika starts her third year in September and is looking forward to graduating, finding a full time job and travelling.

**Katie Laffey**

After successfully completing her A levels, Katie went on to the University of Bath to study Health and Exercise Science and has now just finished her second year. Katie is starting a year’s placement working for a charity, Access Sport, in September and will then complete her final year at University in 2020/21.

Katie has continued her passion for sport, representing the University in BUCS hockey and playing volleyball for fun in her spare time.

In the summer of 2018, Katie was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes, and is now insulin dependent. She thought she wouldn’t be able to continue her studies, but has now made it through her 2nd year and is looking forward to the summer break to adjust to her change in health in stress free conditions.

**Toni Riley**

Toni went to 6th form after school and studied A Level English literature and language. Toni then went back for a further two years, gaining a BTEC in Biology. After leaving college Toni went to Nottingham Trent and studied for a Bachelor’s degree in Biology, graduating in 2016. Since qualifying Toni has had three jobs, Milk Recording, Lab Technician and is now working as Technical Support for a company called SciQuip, who sell lab equipment. Toni is currently in Germany on a training course and is soon off to China for further training. Toni now lives with her boyfriend in a house they purchased together in 2017 and are the proud owners of a bearded collie and three cats!

**Sunil Bhakar**

Sunil has just achieved a First Class Degree in Human Biology and Biochemistry. This is the most incredible result and a testimony to Sunil’s huge efforts to overcome his linguistic challenges.

Sunil almost gave up at A Level when everything just got too much for him, when he felt it just couldn’t be done!

Sunil has a life threatening heart condition and a profound hearing loss. He is looking to work in the field of the technical aspects of cardiology. An amazing achievement!
McKenzie Brown

McKenzie went through an extremely challenging time 18 months ago when the hearing in both his ears deteriorated rapidly and he was referred for cochlear implants aged 12. McKenzie had to undergo bilateral eardrum repairs before he could have the surgery and was unable to hear anything at all for several months. McKenzie’s implants were switched on in May of last year and since then he has worked hard to get used to his new way of hearing, which wasn’t easy for him at first. However, he persevered and has made fantastic progress. There has been a marked improvement in his progress at school and this has culminated in his English teacher contacting home recently to say that McKenzie is now top of the class! We are all extremely proud of McKenzie for the resilience and determination he has shown through such a difficult time and now know that he has the ability to succeed in whatever he sets his mind to. Well done, McKenzie!

Antonia Hassall

Antonia was presented with a Progress in art award at Telford Priory School. Antonia is now looking forward to starting a Health and Social Care course at Telford College. Well done Antonia!

Rhian O’Toole

Rhian is in her second year at Telford College, where she has been very successful. She has embraced all aspects of college life: she enjoys the learning and has established positive friendships and working relationships with staff. She has worked hard to assimilate the high level of technical and specialised vocabulary required on the course, particularly the anatomy and physiology aspects, and has also had to combat the communication challenges of working with clients during treatments - she is profoundly deaf and wears two speech processors - but has managed this due to her friendly personality and the ability to engage others to put them at their ease. She is just about to complete Level 3 Beauty Therapy, having already passed Level 2, which means she is qualified in a range of massage and facial therapies, enabling her to work in local salons, resulting in a recent job offer. However she has decided to continue her studies with a two year Level 3 Health and Social Care course this September, as she wants to pursue a career in healthcare. She is an excellent role model and mentor for younger students and a wonderful example of what a determined attitude and a friendly smile can achieve!

Deepak Bhakar

Deepak has just completed his first year, studying Business Management at Keele University. He is now enjoying having some time over the summer to spend at the gym. Well done Deepak!
Maisie Jones
Maisie recently represented her school in the Telford Schools Cross Country, being placed 40th the 32nd out of around 140 runners. Maisie has also competed in a local girl’s football league, who got through to the finals. Maisie plays in a team of girls one year above where she is and so does very well. Well done Maisie!

Elliott Williams
Elliott has been enjoying being part of a local performing arts group called Fusion Film and Stage School. Elliott attends weekly classes on a Saturday and has so far performed in a pantomime and has appeared in a short film as part of the Fusion Film Festival, where parents and children were invited to watch the entries on the big screen at Cineworld Telford. Elliott really enjoys the classes and it has given him a real confidence boost.

Zach Hatch
Zach has recently achieved his 100m swimming badge. Zach is very proud of this achievement. Well done Zach!

Eric Smith
Eric loves football, training and playing in matches with Bashchurch Juniors. At the end of season presentation Eric was awarded the ‘Best Defender Award’. Eric had a successful residential trip to Condover Hall with school, this was a challenge for Eric but he loved it and can’t wait to go again.

Sion Smith
Sion’s continued commitment to his downhill mountain biking has resulted in him being signed into the JRTF Racing Team. They commented that “We have watched Sion and chatted with him and think he’s an awesome fit to our family ethos”. Sion will be racing Pearce and Gravity Event races as well as dig projects with the team. Sion has also recently been chosen as a prefect at Lakelands Academy.

Keon Gaughan
This is what inclusion is all about! Keon at his end of Y11 Prom at Ercall Wood.
Congratulations Keon – you look like you are having an amazing time!
Summer 2019

As you know we try to offer support throughout the school year if required. This summer we will be operating our usual policy.

There will always be a Teacher of the Deaf on duty for any emergencies through our office number. Any hearing aid problems can be directed to Mark our technician and if he is not available the Teacher of the Deaf on duty. It is also a good time for school age children to have new ear mould impressions taken at the hospital for the new school year.

Our main focus for any home visits during the break time is for newly fitted children. For any other early years’ children the individual Teacher of the Deaf will discuss any visits that may be required.

I hope you appreciate that the team need a rest over the break and hence the need to keep visits to a minimum.

Graham Groves

What is the Local Offer?

The Local Offer gives children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities and their families information about what support services the local authority think will be available in their local area. Every local authority is responsible for writing a Local Offer and making sure it is available for everyone to see.

The Telford local offer can be found at www.telfordsend.org.uk

The Shropshire local offer can be found at http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/local-offer/