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From Me2 U

Newsletter February 2011

2010 was a triumphant year for the Me2 Club. The success of our three residential "Weekends Away" trips was beyond expectation and we hope to raise funds to continue them this year. We've also had great interest and participation from local activity leaders in our Disability Inclusion Training sessions (spaces still available!) With all of our planned developments in 2011 we are poised for another remarkable year.

Christmas Party

Making his way from the North Pole, Father Christmas presented 50 children with wonderful gifts at the Me2 Club Christmas Party on 11th Dec. Between unwrapping presents, being entertained by the clown and noshing on party food, everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves. A big "Thank You!" goes out to Father Christmas, volunteers, parents and committee members and of course all our young people for their help in making another memorable party!

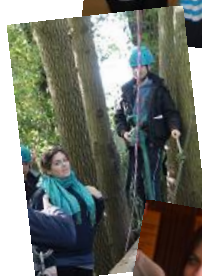


Dates for the diary:

- **21st February** - Advanced Communication Training for Volunteers. More inside.
- **Sunday 20th March** - Reading Half Marathon. Come and support your Me2 Club runners!
- **15th May 2011** - Super hero 5km fun run

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Spotlight Match: Camilla and Toby



Camilla has been supporting Toby for over 18 months, first in Beavers and now Cubs. They have also gone on a Me2 Club "Weekend Away" trip.

"I wanted to get involved so that another child could look back and have fond memories, just like I do. The Me2 Club matched me with Toby. I help him to focus on activities, socialise with other children, help him with any activity he might struggle with and explain activities to him simply. There is nothing more rewarding in life than seeing Toby progress week to week at Cubs.

The weekend away was a fantastic opportunity to bond with Toby in an environment outside of Cubs. It gave me the experience of caring for someone for an extended period of time, it gave Toby a sense of independence from his family, and it gave his parents a weekend off! Toby found a hidden talent in archery and was one of the best! I enjoyed seeing his enthusiasm and perseverance over the weekend. Toby loved the weekend and said that the camp fire was one of the best things he had ever done, he also asked if he could come back next year. It was an enriching experience and helped me to appreciate that there is more to life than shopping and the x-factor!

Being involved with the Me2 Club has given me a more rounded view of society today and its attitudes towards those with a disability. Society is making progress in accepting everyone, and I'm just trying to do my part to ensure this continues."

Camilla has been involved in this years Lion's International Young Ambassador Award. This recognises young people who are actively involved in their community. She has, so far, won the local and regional levels, through giving presentations about her community involvement (including Me2!). She has nominated us as her chosen charity so has also helped raise funds towards continuing our "Weekends Away" program. With the UK national level being held in Birmingham in February, we wish her the best of luck!

Me2 Club Funding Events

Santas to Superheros!

With snow covering London, the Santa Fun Run was unfortunately cancelled. A big thank you to the volunteer runners who held cake sales, found sponsors and even passed collection tins around the office, and have donated these funds to us anyway!



Most of our Santa Fun Runners transferred their run to the Super Hero Fun Run on the **15th May 2011 in Regents Park.**

More Super Hero Fun Run places are available (FREE superhero suit provided!) Please contact Amy if you

want to **be a Superhero** for the Me2 Club.

Amy's Training Blog

"There are now less than 8 weeks until the Reading half marathon and the prospect of running 13.1 miles seems rather daunting! When I signed up for the race back in September, over 6 months before the race, anything seemed possible - I begun training with lots of energy and enthusiasm and even felt like I was beginning to enjoy my gentle jogs. I gradually increased my distance and managed my longest ever run of 5 miles (8km). I have since however taken a rather backwards step in my preparations and have been recovering from groin strain and flu (what a lovely combination!) and have not managed to clock up many miles. Now on the road to recovery I am re-planning my training with renewed determination! I am hoping to show that it's possible to go from jogging a 5km fun run to running a half marathon - and all you need is a great cause to make all the hard work seem worth while! Thank you to those of you who have already supported us - your donations to the Me2 Club are what is going to make this all seem worth it!"

We now have a team of people running for the Me2 Club - thanks to you all. You can support Amy at www.justgiving.com/Amy-Sam-Gary (or search the site for Me2 Club to sponsor any of our other runners!)

Welcome to some of our newest Committee Members

Hi, my name is Paul Knott and I am a new committee member. I'm married to Liz and we have 2 sons, Adam and Ben. Adam is 12 years old and has autism. The first thing that I'd like to say is a very big THANKYOU!!! to Me2, for doing such wonderful work. Adam has a volunteer, Sean, who is 17 and according to Adam is "cool". Every Wednesday they attend Bulmershe Youth Club and not only does this allow Adam to attend an activity that he would otherwise not have done so, but also gives the rest of the family some peace and quiet!

As a family we have attended 3 volunteer induction sessions to talk with the volunteers and answer any of their questions from a parents perspective. It was via these sessions that I



was asked whether I would like to join the committee. I was more than happy to join, as if some small way I can contribute to the success of the Me2 Club, it makes it all worthwhile. I even helped out in the kitchen at the Christmas party, which was fun!

I've always lived in Reading and have worked in the Financial Services Sector all of my working life. I'm happy to try anything once and don't mind making a fool of myself!

Hello, my name is Lynn Palfrey and I have recently joined the Me2 Club committee. It is great to have been invited to join the committee as I have had the privilege of working with several Me2



Club volunteers over the past few years with the Beaver Colony I lead. The volunteers have enabled several children to access the full Beaver programme, which I believe has benefited them and the rest of the colony.

My day job is being a community pharmacist, which occupies me for 3 days each week. Out of work I have a family of 3 teenage children, a husband and 2 small white cats to look after. I work with children and teenagers at my local church, swim in an attempt to keep/get fit and grow fruit and vegetables on an allotment (when the weather is nice)!

We are always looking for new committee members - don't wait to be asked - if you'd be interested in getting involved, or just want to know more, please get in touch with Emily.

Some volunteers & children in action!



Inclusion Training for Activity Leaders

Last year Emily delivered many inclusion training workshops to activity leaders. These were received extremely well. AS the funding is coming to an end, the last of these sessions are being held over the next few months. We are currently fundraising to continue this project so fingers more they'll be more workshops on offer later in the year.

- **Supporting Behaviour Difficulties** (2- 4pm Wed 2nd March – please note new date)
- **Autism** (1- 3pm 2nd Feb or 6.30-8.30pm 10th May)
- **Adapting Activities and Inclusion** (10-12.30 Sat 26th March)
- **Communication** (6-8pm Mon 18th April – please note new date)

If you are interested in attending any of these sessions, or know anyone who might be, please contact Emily at info@me2club.org.uk to book a space. Get in fast while they are still available!

More Me2 Club News

Communication Training for Volunteers

A part of our **volunteer development training** we are offering a workshop in communication. The training will be delivered by a Speech and Language Therapist and will be more in depth and cover additional topics to the communication section in your induction training. It's a chance to develop your skills and meet other volunteers, it is especially useful if you support a non-verbal child or someone that uses makaton. There are limited spaces available on this course so places will be allocated on a first come first served basis. If you would be like to come along please get in touch with Amy at amy@me2club.org.uk.

Date: Monday 21st February (during half term) Time: 10am - 1pm Venue: Wokingham

Me2 Club Goes to Japan

We are excited to let you know that Emily has been invited to represent the Me2 Club at the 'Young Core Leaders of Civil Society Groups Development Programme' in Japan. She will go for 2 weeks in February and, along with other delegates from the UK, as well as Germany, New Zealand and Japan be involved in a range of activities organised by the Japanese government. During her stay she'll be part of an information sharing and learning forum on the management of charities (in Tokyo), and visit Japanese disability organisations in Miyagi Prefecture (north of Tokyo). This is a great opportunity for the Me2 Club and a welcome recognition of the good practices we have established. They'll be lots more information about Emily's trip our next newsletter!



Walk for Me2 Club

If you fancy a 5 or 10 mile stroll through the countryside, you can sign up for the Royal British Legion Poppy walk on 8th May. Families are welcome and registration is from 9-10am at Harwell RBL Club (near Didcot) where the walk starts and finishes. There will be a BBQ, bar and live music back at Harwell for everyone to enjoy. All sponsorship money you raise will be split equally between the Royal British Legion and the Me2 Club. Contact us for more info.



FREE Engine Magazines

We have received a large donation of 'Old Glory' train/engine magazines (www.oldglory.co.uk). If anyone would be interested in giving some of them a good home, please come by the office and collect as many as you'd like.



THANK YOU

A massive thank you to all of the following:



Students, **Elsbeth Wilson** and **Marie Hoseele**, from **Leighton Park School** in Reading who organised a dance show based on Aesop's Fables and raised £298.51 in ticket and programme sales.



Wokingham Lions Club



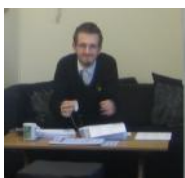
Wokingham Lions Club for their for their continued support of Camilla in her preparation for all levels of the Lion's International Young Ambassador Award. Also for their generous donation of £250.



BG Group for selecting us as one of three local charities to benefit from their Community Involvement scheme, from which we received £865



Mattel Charity Team at Maidenhead for helping Santa with his toys for the Christmas party.



A special thank you to Me2 Club member **Joe Ledbetter** who volunteered his time after school to help us with some jobs in the office. He also was a big help in setting up, clearing away, and handing out food and drinks at the Christmas Party. Thanks Joe!