



Registered Charitable Company
Charity No. 1140812
Company No. 7557636

From Me2 U

Newsletter Spring 2011

Welcome to our Spring Newsletter. We have been busy training and matching up new volunteers, fundraising and planning our summer trip, loads more news and information can be found inside!

Me2 Club Summer Trip - 16th July 2011

All of our young people and their families and volunteers are invited on our summer trip. Come along for fun, games and a picnic. The sensory room will be available, with a "parents session" scheduled too!

Date: **Saturday 16th July 10am - 3:30pm**

Location: **Thames Valley Adventure Playground (www.tvap.co.uk)**

An **invite is enclosed** with this newsletter. Please return the reply slip as soon as possible. Last year was a huge success and it would be great to see lots of you there again!

Contact Details:

Me2Club
1a Park House
17 Headley Road
Woodley, Berkshire
RG5 4JB

info@me2club.org.uk

0118 969 6369

07821858852

www.me2club.org.uk

Fundraising Running

We have literally been running around in an effort to raise funds to continue the work of the Me2 Club! With volunteers and staff giving their time to training routines and raising donations to support them in the Reading Half Marathon, the Paris Marathon and other endurance activities, we can't thank them enough. Look inside for a full look at each run and pictures of our runners in action!

Contents:

Fundraising Events
*Reading Half Marathon, Paris
Marathon, Combe Gibbet, Newbury
Duathlon*

What Parents say about Me2
Survey Feedback

Volunteering
*Recruitments needs, Next Training,
Past Volunteer's Experience*

Japan Feature
Emily's Japan trip

Me2 Club News
*Incorporation, Committee Changes,
Library*

Other News

The Queen's Award Nomination



We are really pleased to announce that the Me2 Club has been nominated for The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, the highest award given to volunteer groups across the UK for outstanding work done in their local communities. It is such an achievement to be nominated for this prestigious award! We had a great evening at the ceremony for nominees held at the end of March.

Thank you to Polly and Janine who came to represent the children we work with and the volunteers who support us. The finalists and winners will be announced in June 2011, so wish us luck!



Dates for the diary:

- **Saturday 16th July 2011** - Summer Trip (see above).
- **2nd August (day) & 9th August (eve) 2011** - Volunteer Training session (both). Contact Amy at amy@me2club.org.uk to book a spot.

Please do not reproduce any of the photographs that appear in this publication without permission. Thank you.

Me2 Club Running to Raise Funds!

Reading Half Marathon

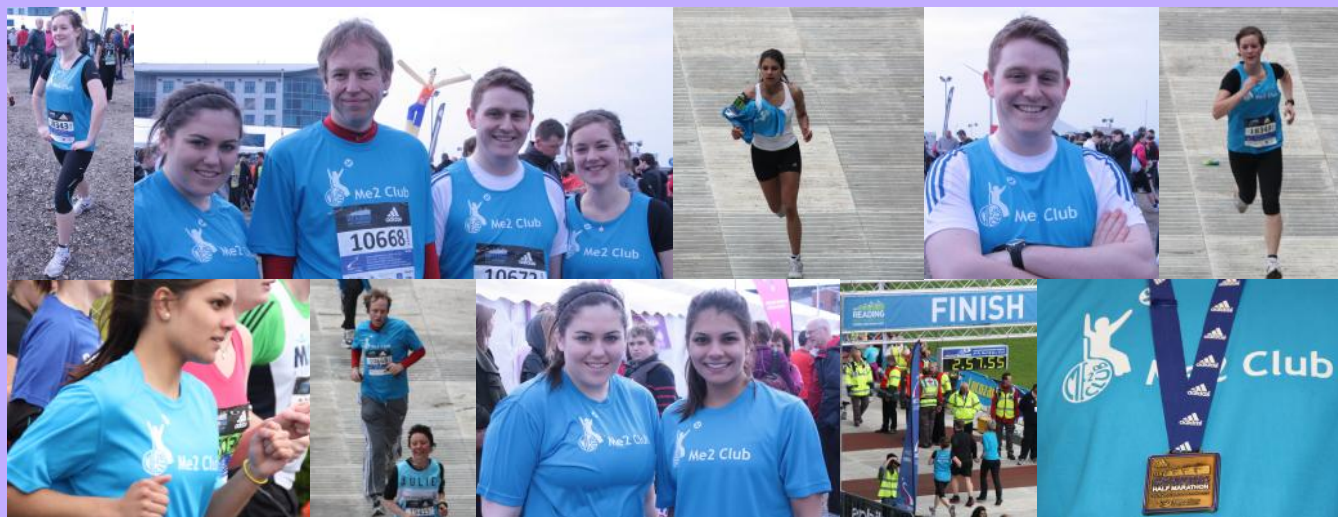
On the 27th March 4 volunteers and 1 staff member stretched their legs across 13.1 miles of Reading asphalt, all in the name of the Me2 Club! To best express the atmosphere, commitment and experience of running a half marathon, here are a couple of personal accounts of the run from two of our runners:

'Training for the Half-Marathon was tiring, stressful and painful and the amount of times that I wanted to give up was innumerable, but I'm so pleased that I stuck with it. I'm not a sporty person by any stretch of the imagination so I hope that by doing the race I have proved that if you set your mind to something then you can do anything. Doing the half-marathon taught me that having a strong mentality and strength of character will pull you through tough situations and challenges and when things are looking down you just need to pull yourself up again and move forward. It's certainly been an experience I won't forget!

Raising the money seemed like it would be another huge challenge, but once I explained what I was doing and why I was doing it, donations began to flood in from my friends. In addition I wrote letters and emails to local organisations and public figure heads and asked them for sponsorship too. I tried to get the message out about the half-marathon through posters up around school, a notice in the school newsletter, lots and lots of emails and word of mouth. When I started the half-marathon I had decided that £1000 seemed to be a fair price for my months and months of suffering, and I certainly didn't want to raise any less than that.

Finishing the race was a huge achievement and knowing that I'd raised over £1000 for the Me2 Club made the experience even more fantastic. I'd definitely recommend doing the half-marathon, the feeling when you cross the finish line makes it all worth it.' - Camilla

Our Runners in Action!



'I'm not sure any amount of training would have prepared me for the experience of a half marathon – it was exhilarating, exciting, challenging and exhausting – all in equal measures! There was a brilliant atmosphere and the support from spectators was fabulous (and much needed). By mile 9 the finish couldn't come quick enough but there were still 4 miles to go!! It was at this point I had to think hard about why I was putting myself through this and what a difference all the money we would raise would make to the work of the Me2 Club. I pushed on along the seemingly never ending stretch of the A33, to finally end up at the stadium for the finish. It was a brilliant feeling coming into the stadium and being cheered on by everyone for the final few metres and realising that I'd made it!!

Well done to all the other runners running for the Me2 Club!' - Amy

More Running News

Paris Marathon

Running 13.1 miles in Reading just wasn't enough for one Me2 Club volunteer! Among 32,092 runners, Gary Edwards started the 35th edition of the Paris Marathon from the Champs Elysees battling one of the hottest days of the year with steamy temperatures around 25C. Running a scenic route that included most of the city's highlights including the Louvre, the Place de la Bastille and the Eiffel Tower, he has helped to raise even more funds for the Me2 Club, finishing in 5 hours and 12 mins. Go Gary!!!



Combe Gibbet 2011 Run

One of our supporters, Ken Chamberlain, a teacher at the Forest School, took up this challenging course, a 16.1 mile long distance cross country race, on the 3rd April. He finished 65th out of 156 racers in a time of 2:07:42 – 7:56 mins per mile – excellent times considering the undulations of this cross country course and successfully raised £169 for Me2. Thank you!



Newbury Duathlon

Bethany, another young Me2 Club fundraiser, raised over £120 running and biking 25k. Thanks!

Thank You Runners & Supporters!

Thank you so much to all of the runners, those that supported them with words of encouragement and those who have generously donated. The Me2 Club runners have raised an amazing total of over **£2500**, a huge boost to Me2 in these difficult fundraising times! If you've not donated yet, the justgiving page is still active so there's still chance to sponsor them online! Visit www.justgiving.com/me2club.

What Parents say about Me2

In March we surveyed our families to see what they thought about our services and give us some feedback on developing any areas any further. We had some brilliant responses and this is what they had to say...

'It gives her the ability to socialise with other children her own age without Mum tagging along - it gives her greater independence and helps her to integrate more with the other children. Having Mum around all the time just isn't cool!'



'The Me2 Club really makes a difference and as parents we are very lucky to have it.'

'Keep up the fantastic work, it makes such a difference to all of us.'



'It is incredibly well organised. I don't have to worry about a thing. their volunteers are well trained and they are very thorough in finding out about a child's needs. This means I am happy to hand my child over into their care.'



'It gives my child the chance to take part in a mainstream activity that he couldn't do otherwise.'



'Everyone is made welcome.'

'It gives children with additional needs the chance to join in with activities in a way that isn't obvious to the other children and parents involved. A young helper isn't obviously there to support a child which makes acceptance of a child to the group much easier.'

'Wonderful support given by such lovely volunteers.'

Me2 Club goes International

The Me2 Club has always been committed to best practice, so when Emily, our project coordinator, was invited on a trip to Japan as part of the Young Core Leaders of Civil Society Development Project (hosted by the Japanese Cabinet office) we were all for it.



Going Global!

through residential home managers to paralympic games officials) who visited a range of services for people with disabilities in the Miyagi area (north of Tokyo). The group had opportunities to meet staff, and users, and have discussions about how organisations were run, activities offered etc.



Emily's Host Family



Along with delegates from the UK, Germany, New Zealand, and of course Japan Emily first participated in a 3 day NPO (not for profit organisations) management forum in Tokyo. The forum focused on Project management and looked



Work & Presentations

at sharing skills and knowledge to develop all involved, particularly leaders of Japanese organisations as the voluntary sector is newly developing in Japan. Emily worked closely with an international group looking at setting up new projects, and the project management needed to make these as successful as possible.



Inclusive Dance Group

Within the management forum, there were also opportunities to share cultural experiences (UK 'shared' the hokey cokey) and build networks which, hopefully, will continue to benefit all involved.

In the 2nd week Emily was part of the Disability Delegation Local Programme; 12 international participants (from mental health campaigners,

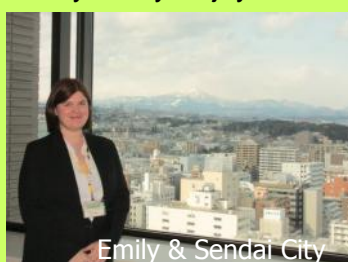
Organisations visited included a school, residential settings, vocational settings and self help groups. It was interesting to see the range of activities on offer, and nice to see that the majority of them were very person centred and supporting people with disabilities to be part of their communities. As part of this local programme Emily also had the fantastic experience of spending a night with a local family (who used one of the services) and taking part in family life.



Meeting Residential Home Members

The schedule of the 2 weeks: visits, speeches, presentations to the cabinet office and lots of discussions was full, and days were often long, however there were a few opportunities to also look at the sights of Tokyo, and eat some delicious food!

Emily really enjoyed everything about the 2 weeks, the trip was a valuable experience, not only in learning about how a different culture approaches disability, and volunteering, but also in gaining a wider perspective of the charity sector as a whole, in the UK and internationally.



Emily & Sendai City

Japan Earthquake

The area Emily visited in the 2nd week of her trip (Sendai City and Miyagi Prefecture), was the area of Japan hardest hit by the earthquake and tsunami. Emily has heard from the family she stayed with and they are all fine. It is thought that all the families and projects involved in the trip survived the disaster, although the impact has obviously been huge on all in the region.



NPO Management Forum Participants

Me2 Club News

Recruitment Help!

6th formers, could you help us? We would love to do a volunteer recruitment assembly at your school to help bring in much needed volunteers. Could you talk to your head of year/form teacher and organise a time for us to come in to talk to year 12's about volunteering with Me2 Club? Contact Amy, amy@me2club.org.uk to schedule an assembly. Your help is really needed and greatly appreciated!

New Volunteer Training

We have lots of volunteers leaving over the summer so need lots of new volunteers to get involved! Our next training will be held on:

**Tuesday 2nd August 10am – 4:30pm
& Tuesday 9th August, 5.00pm—9pm**

If you know of anyone who would be interested in volunteering please pass the information on. Thank you!

Volunteer's Story

Volunteering with the Me2 Club is a hugely rewarding experience, Abi tells us of her time volunteering:



'When I began my volunteering I was very interested and nervous about whom I would be placed with. My training prepared me with the knowledge I needed of how to act in certain situations and what the expectations other people had of me in my role. Meeting Jade was really nice, because I realised that we had a lot of similar interests. I went to Ballet with her every week and really enjoyed the time we spent together. I found Jade to be a really exciting and interesting person. It was really nice to see that Jade really perceived me as her friend and that she was happy.

Being placed with Jade is one of the best things to happen to me. For anyone wanting to be part of the Me2Club, it is one of the most rewarding things I have ever done with my time and completely enjoyable. If I could have continued my work with Jade I would have loved to!' - Abigail

Incorporation

From the 1st April 2011, the Me2 Club organisational status has changed to a Registered Charitable Company limited by guarantee. All of our activities and operations will stay the same, but will have some changes in our governance and reporting. We have a new charity number and a company number:

Charity Number: 1140812.
Company Number: 7557636.

Changes in Me2 Club Committee

After many years of hard work and support for the Me2 Club, Lucy Skye has stepped down as Chair, as she has moved away from the area. Thank you Lucy for all that you have done!

Lucy's leaving has meant a reshuffle of committee positions. Interim officers, are now in place, who along with the other committee members will keep everything running smoothly until our next AGM. They are: Bev Mitchell, Chair; Sarah Mellor, Co-Chair; Kim Russell, Secretary and John Turner, Treasurer

The next AGM will be held in the autumn, where elections will be held for all officer positions. If you'd like to join our friendly committee and be involved in overseeing to work of Me2, please contact Emily.

Did you know there is a Me2 Club Library?

Why not take advantage of some reading this summer? With over 40 books in our office, the Me2 Club provides a great resource of materials to loan out to our volunteers, parents and activity leaders. We have novels, workbooks and children's books that support the work we do with children. Our reference books cover various topics including; autism, aspergers, epilepsy, inclusive games, etc. The children's books support raising awareness of disability with individuals or within groups, while the novels give a greater awareness of some issues faced...and more. So if you are interested in learning more about a specific disability, how to communicate with children, or create more inclusive activities for your group, these books can help. All you need to do to access this wealth of information is to pop into the Me2 Club (call us first to make sure we are here) during office hours, look through our resources and sign-out the ones you want to borrow. All we ask is that the books be treated kindly and returned in a timely fashion. Hope to see you in our Me2 Club Library soon!



More News

Think Local, Give Local

Great new way to donate to the Me2 Club as part of The Berkshire Community Foundation (BCF) campaign to 'Think Local, Give Local'! (This campaign encourages people to give to small charities working in their community.) To donate to Me2, follow the 'Ways to Give' section or go directly to this link <http://localgiving.com/charity/me2club>. Encourage your friends and family to 'Think Local, Give Local' too, as a little bit can go a long way!



Keep in touch with Me2 Club

Did you know that you can keep up to date with Me2 Club on Facebook and Twitter?

To add us as a 'friend' on Facebook look for Emily Radford at email address info@me2club.org.uk or join our group Me2 Club Wokingham. You can also follow us on Twitter @me2club. Hope to see you online soon!



The Autism Show - London



Don't miss the largest ever event exclusively dedicated to autism, taking on the 24th – 25th June at ExCeL London.

At The Autism Show you will find hundreds of new insights, ideas and inspirations to help you support an individual on the autism spectrum in education or the wider public sector. Also, find more face to face guidance, information, products and services on autism than can be found anywhere else in the UK, thus making it essential for all those working with individuals on the spectrum.

Book your ticket today and save 25% off the door price. Once inside the event all content is entirely free to access. Visit us online at www.autismshow.co.uk, call 020 8882 0629, or email us info@autismshow.co.uk

Pangbourne, Theale and District Lions Club Donation

The Me2 Club was really pleased to receive a very generous donation from the Lions Club. While we are outside of their general area, they have been impressed with our work and happy to support us. Thank you Pangbourne & Theale Lions!



Social Club Charity Night for Me2

Earley Home Guard Social Club is running a charity night to help raise funds for Me2. Go along and join in the fun (disco and raffle) on 18th July from 7:30-11:30pm, contact Jo (one of our mums!) for tickets (£5) and information: 07769 271 527



Holiday Activities for AS Children

Heathermount school is running a Short Breaks Programme for young people on the Autistic Spectrum during the holiday periods. They have half day or whole day activities.

More information can be found on the school website at www.school-portal.co.uk, click on Heathermount, The Learning Centre. Once in the website Click on 'Our School' then 'Short Breaks'

Free Training Course for Parents

Parents Participating Confidently - "Effective Communication with Professionals"

What you can Learn:

- What is meant by 'Participation' and how you can feel fully involved
- What specific activities might improve your involvement
- How to identify the barriers that might make taking part difficult
- New communication skills to enable you to feel confident when expressing your views
- Tips and strategies for coping with difficult situations.

Date: 9th, 16th & 23rd June 2011 (3 Sessions)

Time: 9.30 to 12.30 pm

Venue: Brambles Neighbourhood Office
Budes Gardens
Wokingham
RG40 1PX

Contact: Phil Cullimore 0118 9088233
Parent.partnership@wokingham.gov.uk