

PACEsetter

Summer 2008



Parent And Community Education from CANDL

Now we are in South London !!!

As you all know, our 'Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities' Programme has proved to be very successful in Hackney. One of our aims over the past year has been to expand into south London; it has proved to be quite difficult, but finally, we are there!

Back in the summer of 2007, the Grove Centre Church in Sydenham contacted me. They had made a successful bid for some money to run 'family' courses, and had run a very effective series of sessions with Relate, looking at personal relationships. They now wanted to extend this to cover parenting. The minister Brenda and I met and decided that we would aim to begin the Programme in October. Unfortunately we did not have enough people interested to make it a viable Programme at that point, but we did not give up!

Towards the end of October I was contacted by the Learning Mentor at Elliot Bank Primary School in Sydenham, who had seen our original publicity, and who was interested in offering the Programme to some of the parents at the school. We met, and decided to give it another go – the church was still willing to host the sessions, and the school was very enthusiastic. In January 2008 another local school decided that it too was

interested, and so we held a joint coffee morning to introduce the Programme to parents. Enough parents said that they were interested to make it viable, and so we began on February 27th – we were finally there! Since then, the Programme has run very successfully with an average attendance of 10, and we will be holding our award ceremony on June 9th at the Grove Centre Church.

But that's not all! In May we began working with two more schools in Lewisham; these Programmes have been paid for by a partnership made up of 3 Housing Associations and the Lewisham Extended Schools service. It's early days yet, but the Programmes have begun well at Kender Primary School in New Cross, and Gordonbrock School in Ladywell. Interestingly, this partnership also contacted us as a result of the publicity we had put out for the original Programme in Sydenham.

I think we have learned a lot from this experience. We have learned that things don't happen overnight, and that sometimes you have to keep going and keep hoping. Publicity is crucial, but even more crucial is the building up of relationships within a community – once you have that, then the rest, hopefully, will follow!

Goodbye and hello!

This will be the final PACEsetter edited by Margaret Collins, who is leaving CANDL at the end of July to lead a life of leisure (!) in retirement. Margaret has been at CANDL for 6 years, and during that time has worked with over 150 parents. The enormous success of our PACE work has been built on Margaret's tireless enthusiasm and professionalism and her inspirational leadership. I am sure you will join the CANDL team and Barnardo's in wishing her a really happy retirement. In September we're holding a celebration of our Big Lottery funded PACE work, and will use the opportunity to say a proper farewell to Margaret— invitations will emerge over the summer. Longstanding CANDL Project Worker Gill Kanga is to take over the coordination of PACE.



Simon Vincent

CANDL Children's Services Manager



BELIEVE IN CHILDREN

Aargh..... and Hooray...the things that bother us, and the things that cheer us up!

Aargh.....



At a recent SFSC session the discussion turned to children's parties. One of the parents had been to buy 'Thomas' serviettes, paper plates, etc, and when she reached the till, the bill came to nearly £60! Needless to say, she put them back and went in search of cheaper party bits! It made us all think, and I looked up a few statistics!



If you have 3 children, live in London and spend the average amount each year (£282 believe it or not!) on each child's birthday party you will have spent over £10,000 by the time your youngest is 16. Just think what else you could do with that money! Parties can become very competitive, and many parents agonise over what to do. Perhaps it's time a few parents stood up to be counted, refusing to get caught up in all the hype.

So... don't spend what you can't afford! Get together with another parent or parents, and buy paper plates in bulk from your local pound shop, and then have fun with your children decorating them with felt tips, or pictures cut out from magazines. Have a 'white' theme, with white plates, serviettes, and balloons, and buy a plain cake which you (and your children) can ice and decorate yourselves.

A children's party needn't be an expensive hassle – with a bit of imagination and a 'little help from your friends', you may even enjoy it!

And Hooray.....

Our bank of parents who are now facilitators is growing! As I write this article, Karon Woollett, who enjoyed the Programme as a parent in 2005 is facilitating at the King's Family Centre, and Sally Masango, who also participated in 2005 is working at Kender Primary School in New Cross. This is Karon's third Programme, and Sally's fourth, and they are now helping others to gain their accreditation. Gill (from CANDL) is working alongside Karon, Nakisha Nicholls is working with Sally, and Patience Baptiste is working with Margaret in south London. (I know this sounds complicated—I hope you are still with me!).



Nakisha is originally from Liverpool, and was sponsored to undertake the training for SFSC by the Nia Project in Hackney; their parenting worker then left to have twins, and sadly the Project was unable to run a Programme at which Nakisha could gain accreditation. As Nakisha had participated in one of our programmes as a parent, we offered to train her. Patience is a mother and grandmother, originally from Ghana, and is hoping to specialise in working with African families, once she is accredited.

We thank all our facilitators for their hard work and dedication; we couldn't run the Programmes without them!



Bouncy Castles - a warning!

Let's have a bouncy castle! How many parents have said this when trying to think of a way to celebrate a special occasion such as a birthday? A recent court case made us stop and think here at CANDL, and we wanted to pass the information on to you all.

Sam Harris, now 13, of Spalding, Lincolnshire, suffered a broken skull when a 15-year-old kicked his head at a party in Strood, Kent, in 2005. His parents sued the family who had hired the bouncy castle, and a High Court judge ruled that they had not provided enough supervision. Sam's parents were awarded a sum which is rumoured to be in the region of £1million. Fortunately the family were insured but they are, I think, the exception — how many of us think about insurance in the hectic run-up to a party?

"Supervision of children playing on bouncy castles or other inflatables is "absolutely vital" to ensure their safety," an industry spokesman has said. Also vital, it would appear, is insurance to protect yourself in the unlikely event of an accident. Most large organisations have public liability insurance, but families do not, so it is worth checking with the company from which you hire your castle as they will be able to point you in the right direction.

Remember the old saying

better safe than sorry!

Finance guidance for new mothers

Every new mother is to receive guidance about money from this summer, under a scheme run by the UK finance watchdog. The Financial Services Authority will distribute packs giving information on topics such as budgeting, benefits and childcare options. The FSA thinks some families could save themselves hundreds of pounds by using the guides, which are being rolled out UK-wide after successful trials.

Midwives will pass them on in the early stages of pregnancy.

The Parent's Guide to Money (PGM) also addresses topics such as maternity leave and how to save through Child Trust Funds.

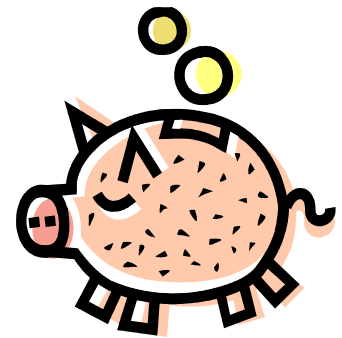
Chris Pond, from the FSA, said: "We want people to have real confidence in dealing with their finances and not feel a bit anxious and stressed, especially at a time when a new baby arrives."

Sally Russell from the parenting website netmums.com told BBC News 24 there were a lot of good aspects to the guide

She said: "There are lots of things to consider which you don't think about until you've had the baby - that's what I liked about the pack - it allows you to think about the issues in advance, which is good.

"It encourages people to talk together and work things out together."

The FSA says the guides will be distributed to new parents-to-be in England from the summer and will be extended across the UK in 2009.



(Taken from the BBC website)

Didn't we do well??

August is a landmark month for CANDL as our PACE initiative becomes independent of Lottery funding. In 2002, we were awarded a grant from the then National Lottery Community Fund enabling us to appoint a family worker. In 2004 we began running the 'Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities' Programme for parents, and in 2005 we were awarded a further grant by the Big Lottery to continue the work.

To date we have worked with over 170 families, in 8 different venues, and we could fill a whole PACEsetter with their stories. If you haven't seen our 'Stories from PACE' booklet contact us, and we will send one to you—or you can download it from our website. Parents from 45 different cultures and ethnicities, from Spain to Trinidad, and Yemen to Kosovo have laughed and sometimes cried together, have realised that they all face similar challenges, and have made long-lasting friendships. We have seen young and old(er!), men and women, parents, grandparents, youth workers, carers, childminders, nursery nurses, social workers and ministers of religion all coming together to try to do the best they can for the children, young people and families in their care. We have seen a group of young women blossom as they



think together about the choices that they have to make in life, and we have seen a group of parents successfully tackle what is perhaps the hardest thing of all to do as a parent—talk about sex with their children. And the work will go on. SFSC will continue, and it is hoped to run another 'You Me Us and Them' Programme for young people, and another Speakeasy (talking about sex) course for parents. It has been a privilege for me to learn alongside you all, and I wish you and CANDL the best of luck in the future!

The very first SFSC Programme in 2004

Margaret

PACEsetter

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 **Barnardo's**
BELIEVE IN CHILDREN

