



June 2008

Surrey Scouts Special Needs Team Newsletter Issue 5

What are Special Needs?

Special Needs is a term used in clinical diagnostic and functional development to describe individuals who require assistance for disabilities such as medical, mental, or psychological issues.

Quote from a parent from a school forum (<http://forums.ukgovernors.org.uk>)

"First to declare my interest - I am a parent of a child with a statement of special educational needs.

Parents whose children have special needs - particularly those with a diagnosis - might spend some time initially in grief, disbelief or in being unable to accept the situation. This can be a particularly painful time when emotions are all over the place and needs you to be very sensitive of their feelings".

It is not surprising that when Special Needs are mentioned, everyone automatically thinks of the 'Big ones'; Downs Syndrome, Autism, Dyslexia etc. So we have some leaders who understandably think, 'we cannot deal with that sort of thing' and shy away. But really they are probably already dealing with young people with special needs; Asthma, allergies, sight and hearing impairments – things we may not be aware of but take for granted. The young person may wear glasses, but are you aware of what they can and cannot see? Did you ask?

As part of CASCADE, we introduce the subject of the joining procedure with the opening statement, "Parents do not always tell the truth" and then we justify that with, 'Why don't they?' I think the above statement from the parent says it all. It must be devastating for parents to be told their child has a condition that now requires some 'special' considerations. It can be the start of a very hard uphill struggle. Everything they will need, will have to be applied and fought for, endless meetings with professionals and appeals, so, why should getting their child in to scouts be any different? The difference is that we are willing, wherever possible to take the young person with SN and yes, we do have to ask questions and these will be painful for some parents to answer. So we must understand the resistance of parents to impart this vital information to us. Some would also argue it is on a 'Need to know basis' and why should we have to know, we are not teachers or medical professionals, it's only Cubs/Scouts. The approach should therefore be made in a sensitive and positive way so that the parent can see we are looking at ways we can offer a place, rather than for excuses why not. If after meetings with the parents and child, group leaders and an audit of your HQ you are unable to offer a place, hopefully the parents will understand and accept that we have 'done our best'.

Whatever your experience and length of service, CASCADE is a good starting point to learn about SN Awareness and to share your experiences with others. We never stop learning or want to stop learning.

Jan Richardson County Leader Special Needs



June 2008

Thank you to Woking Lions



On the 18th March 2008 I went with Alex Hovden, seen here panning for gold, to visit Woking Lions and talk to them about the Jamboree as a thank you for their kind donation towards the cost of him attending the event. Alex gave a 20 minute talk in which he was able to explain just what the event had meant to him. The talk obviously went down well as at its conclusion those present kept him talking for a further 20 minutes with questions about the event. Well done Alex.

Peter Hills ACC SN

CASCADE 2008

Sunday 19th October 2008

9am to 5pm at 1st Claygate HQ

An informative training day covering Special Needs in Scouting (*Module 36*) part of Valuing Diversity (*Module 7*) and Challenging Behaviour (*Module 15*), suitable for anyone with relevant need or interest. A number of special needs topics will be presented and discussed and there will be the opportunity to learn new skills to take back to your Groups or Districts. Lunch Included.

To book a place and receive more information, please Send your details and a cheque for £7.50 payable to Surrey County Scout Council, to Peter Hills ACC (SN) 24 Busdens Lane, Milford, Godalming, Surrey GU8 5JR. Telephone 01483 429986 or email specialneeds@surrey-scouts.org.uk

What's on Offer?

We cover Special Needs in Scouting across the complete age range from Beaver Scouts to the Scout Fellowship. We can offer the following services;

- Advice on the joining procedure for people with Special Needs
- Group / Section Talks on Special Needs
- Sign Language / Communication Evenings for all sections
- Module D 'Kids Behaving Badly' and Module F 'Special People' input for Young Leaders
- CASCADE – Leader Training days for those who would like to learn more.
- OR an evening tailor-made to meet your requirements.

The Team

The Special Needs Team is a County rather than a District resource. This means you can call on any member of the team for advice and guidance.

To contact the team please email

specialneeds@surrey-scouts.org.uk or telephone 01483 429986.