



PACSO Newsletter Spring 2018



Welcome to the Spring edition of the PACSO newsletter. Here you can find out about what has been happening at PACSO, and what we are looking forward to this spring. Our theme in this newsletter is **siblings**.

We hope you had a fantastic Christmas break. At PACSO, we enjoyed two playdays at Fordwater school for children and young people aged 5-19. Our amazing play team (above) did a brilliant job – thank you!

Christmas was celebrated early in our afterschool clubs. We also had

Christmas activities, movies, and shopping trips. It was great to see so many families at our Christmas party. The holidays were rounded off with a PACSO family trip to Chichester Festival Theatre to see *Beauty and the Beast* on New Year's Eve.



Many of you kindly contributed to our Christmas fundraising campaign, too, raising £400. Our Justgiving site is always open if you'd like to donate. Do let us know, too, if you fancy doing some fundraising of your own! Our February newsletter will focus on fundraising – we'd love to hear from you what you've done or got planned this year.

Focus on Little PACSO: our free friendly support group each week in Chichester and Bognor Regis for parent carers with a child aged 0-5 with a disability or special educational need.

What are PACSO up to this Spring?

PACSO Pop Ups

Sunday 11th February and Saturday 10th March.

Saturday Club (am and pm Fordwater school) 20th Jan.; 17th February and 17th March.

12th-16th Feb. Half Term trips.

C.Y.E. Family Fun Day: Monday 7th May. Save the date!

To access PACSO Clubs and activities you must be a PACSO member. It's free to join! See our website Pacso.org.uk for more details. Please note that all clubs and activities must be pre-booked.

Please pass this newsletter onto friends, your school or workplace to help spread the word about PACSO.

What makes PACSO so special.... is that we include siblings in the fun.

Siblings who have a brother or sister with disabilities, we believe, are very special people, too. Among charities for children with disabilities PACSO is unique in that all our Play Schemes and family days are open to siblings of children with SEN or disabilities.

You might not know that many of our PACSO volunteers are siblings themselves. This gives them a unique insight into the support needed for children and young people with disabilities; and importantly, how much fun they can be!

Two recent articles, one online, and the other in Germany, have highlighted how many positives, and some negatives, there are to being a sibling. You might have seen on Facebook Hayley Belozis's new blog which presents the stories of siblings of people who have Down's syndrome (the link is on the sibling blog on our website).

One writer, Katie Du Toit, sister to Ella, writes *"I always find it hard when people ask me about life with a sibling who has Down's syndrome, as honestly I don't know any different. I was 3 when Ella was born so I don't really remember life before her. I can tell you I would never change it."*



Katie says, *"I also think that she has made a lot of people a lot kinder and more compassionate. She touches everyone that she meets and that is a very special skill to have."*

Becky Edwards, one of our PACSO trustees, contributes to 'M' magazine in Germany. Here is an extract from an article: **"You are a Part of Me!"**, kindly translated by Rebecca Sleven, and published in full on the sibling blog at pacso.org.uk.

You are a part of me!

Twins Saskia and Janina Heese and their brother Malte are sitting in their parents' conservatory. Janina was born with an undetected malformation in her brain, causing seizures. *"We work together, as a team"*, says Malte. *"She's a part of me,"* says Saskia, stroking Janina's hand. *"We're identical twins...if Janina is not feeling well, then I feel sick too!"*

Like Saskia and Malte, almost 3 million children are growing up with disabled or chronically ill siblings in Germany. Journalist Ilse Achilles writes, *"The non-disabled siblings always have to look after themselves and their needs have to come second...."*. But is this what makes siblings so special? *"Each of us helps the other"*, says Andrea. *"The children are already jumping in to help too – it's the only life we know"*.

Our 'Developing Resilience' course at the University of Chichester focused this month on 'having those difficult conversations with children with disabilities and their siblings'. Our next one is on Monday 19 March. Thank you to Becky Edwards for coordinating this valuable space to learn from and support each other.



CALLING ALL WRITERS AND CO-EDITORS!

We would love future PACSO Newsletters to have an input from our PACSO Members. If you are a young person who attends PACSO or PACSO Plus events, and you or your family would be interested in working with us on an interview or piece of writing on a subject that affects you, we'd love to hear from you! This could be something you've done at school or college, an issue that you feel strongly about, or something you'd like to share.

Please also get in touch with your fundraising stories (and photos!).

Email:

sarah.webster@pacso.org.uk for any comments or contributions to the next newsletter.