



Europe's Children Our Concern asbl *Supporting children and young people with learning difficulties*

Under the Patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Mathilde

"Together we do make a difference"

Annual Report (June 2009-June 2010)

Introduction

ECOC is a voluntary organization and registered charity, founded in 1993 in Brussels. It is run by a core group of volunteers and reliant on membership fees, donations and fund raising activities to provide operating income.

ECOC's members come from many different countries; its working language is English, using translation and interpretation services where available and appropriate.

Workshops

In response to demand and interest shown by our Members, we were able to organise the following workshops over the past year

Veerle Waelkens

Meta-linguistics: The development of meta-linguistic skills and importance of these for general development

Dr Laurent Viktoer

How to treat ADHD with and without medication – the various approaches to dealing with patients, including some that do not uniquely concern ADHD patients but also associated disorders.

Eimaer O'Loughlin

Sensory integration and the child.

Prof.Dr. Karen Spruyt

Understanding the importance of sleep and how it impacts performance, behavior and well being in a developing child.

Dr. David Willows

Fragments - modern family life and it's complications.

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Fund Raising

Yet again, our annual carol singing raised tremendous awareness of the work undertaken by ECOC. The monies raised by this event have helped us to organize many of the events we hosted this year. Our thanks go to Carol Humphrey, one of our core volunteers, for organizing this very worthwhile event.

As an organization run by volunteers, ECOC is supported through income generated by Membership, donations and fund raising events. We are extremely grateful for all those individuals and organization who gave so generously of their time and money last year.

New Home

ECOC moved into new premises at the beginning of this calendar year. Since moving in, we have hosted many of our events and workshops in this excellent venue.

New Mission

The new mission statement for ECOC, which was accepted at last year's AGM, has continued to guide ECOC in all our endeavours:

To promote opportunities in order that young people and children with any form of learning challenge are included, respected and supported by the teaching process in mainstream education.

ECOC Crisis Line transfers to CHS

ECOC recognizes that parents, teachers and children may need support "out of office hours" To ensure that anyone in immediate need has a number to call, we would remind you that ECOC has teamed up with CHS (community help service) to provide a 24/7 emergency service. CHS Help Line 24 (02 648 40 14) offer an anonymous and confidential 24 hour English language crisis, support and general information service.

ECOC Core Team

It was with deep sadness this year we suffered the loss of our core team member Laura Steenson. Laura died on 22nd April 2010. She was only 29 years young. Our thoughts and prayers go to her family and friends. We, at ECOC, certainly miss her positive energy, her hard working spirit and her cheery presence.

Patricia Vandenplas, after many years of actively supporting ECOC has decided to step down from her core team involvement. She has kindly offered her expertise and experience on a "consultancy basis" to assist the core team for which we are most grateful. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Patricia for her past and continued commitment to ECOC.

Sarah Venter will step down as Membership Secretary this year. Sarah and her husband will relocate to Australia this year and we wish them every happiness and success with their new exciting adventure down under. We would like to thank Sarah for all her hard work as Membership Secretary as well as her support to the core team. Sarah's tasks will temporarily be managed by the core team of volunteers whilst we redefine this role to support the changing needs of ECOC and recruit a volunteer with appropriate skills.

ECOC Website

Improving our credentials is now at a critical point. In order to convince organizations of the value we provide, we needed to better showcase what we do. Our shop window, our website, has undergone many improvements this year, including full disclosure of our finances and operating costs to ensure complete transparency.

ECOC Library

Moving to our new premises this year allowed us to establish a physical Library. Our thanks go to Ken Inglis, an ECOC volunteer who has done a fantastic job in putting this back together again and cross checking all the books against records, adding items, designing a new lending form and bringing the whole project back to life again after a period in storage during the close of Treasure Trove's old location and the completion of our new home. Further investment is planned in the coming year to add new titles of interest

Partnership with Expatica Belgium

Sharing a home and with personnel in common, ECOC has greatly benefitted from both the reach and community of Expatica Belgium. Advertisement space was secured in the new issue of the Expat Survival Guide to Belgium. 20,000 Copies have been printed, with distribution including Communes, International Schools, International Companies and Waterstones. ECOC was also represented in the Expatica "I am not a Tourist" fair. In addition, Expatica have already implemented a voluntary fund raising initiative whereby speakers, who take part in Expatica's "Meet The Expert" workshops donate part of their fee to ECOC.

Royal Patronage

ECOC had been fortunate to have been granted a time limited patronage by Her Royal Highness Princess Mathilde. The patronage will conclude at the end of this calendar year. ECOC is currently looking at appointing a new patron but is greatly appreciative of the support offered by her Royal Highness.

Children Who Learn Differently Our Appeal

This year, ECOC has launched an appeal, founded on the premise that every child and young person in Belgium, regardless of race, gender, income or geography, should be supported to realise their potential in mainstream education. Events are in the planning stages to promote this appeal to raise awareness and visibility.

ECOC Facts and Figures

Income and Expenditure: Income = 8,486.90 – Expenditure = 9,041.48 (-554.58) Note: our accounting system runs January to December and our report June to June. This can make our accounts look worse than the reality. Our actual bank account has a figure close to 4,000 euro in the positive.

Chair: Richard Chalks Corriette

Treasurer: Matt Schlarb

Membership Secretary: Sarah Venter (retiring)

Core Group: Carol Humphrey, Patricia Thomson

Membership: 39 Active members of which 6 are Schools.

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