



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 can make a difference”

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ECOC Newsletter No. 71 – October 2008

If you have news that you would like us to pass on, or if you would like us to publicise an event or mention a resource that you have found useful, please send us the details: ecoc@ecoc.be.

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ECOC Updates **– our volunteer team**

As with so many volunteer organizations in Brussels, ECOC often has to say goodbye to valued volunteers as they return to their home country. This month we say farewell to **Penny Steel**, who has edited this newsletter for the past three years. Penny is returning to the United Kingdom. She says: “I am going to carry on teaching children with dyslexia and I will probably be working with Barrington Stoke*, a publishing company that specialises in exciting and interesting books for those who find reading difficult – trying to spread good practice for the benefit of children who learn differently!”

* To find out more about this publisher, see www.barringtonstoke.co.uk

At our AGM in June, Rainer von Leoprechting, president, and Maria Doyle, membership secretary, both stood down from their positions and were replaced by Richard “Chalks” Corriette and Sarah Bailie respectively. Matt Schlarb took on the role of treasurer, previously handled by Rainer.

With a background in logistics and transportation – 21 years with DHL – a degree in hotel and catering management – from Thames Valley University in the UK – and a strong belief that by working together we really can create a “brilliant world” **Chalks** brings an array of talents to the role of president. He’s an active networker on the Brussels scene and has recently taken on the job of community development for Expatica (www.expatica.com). His own company, “Extraordinary Moments in Time” offers a range of services.

Chalks arrived in Brussels in 1990 for a 3-year posting, but then fell in love with the place and decided to stay. Like so many of the city’s residents, Chalks’ life has been influenced by a rich diversity of cultures. His origins are the West Indies (Dominica) and he’s lived in the UK, Sardinia, Bahrain, the Netherlands and Belgium. What attracted him to ECOC? “I got involved because I am dyslexic, and

so is my 10-year-old son. We have firsthand experience of what it is like to have a learning style that is different - it never gets in the way of delivering, just makes it a little more challenging! This is an important aspect to share with others in a similar situation: learning differences are an explanation and should never be used as an excuse."

Matt is an American and has been living in Brussels for about two years. He's an analyst for an investment company which, as he says, "probably explains why I am treasurer."

Why did he choose ECOC for his volunteer activities? "I joined because I thought it was such a wonderful opportunity to help not only children, but also to be a resource to their parents and educators about how to get the most out of the children's education. My mother is a teacher, and I know the struggles that children, parents and teachers go through on a daily basis to try to create the best learning environment. ECOC can help facilitate this process. The organisation also attracted me because it had such a large geographical reach and was not solely focused on Brussels or Belgium. I am excited to help the group grow and continue to be a valuable resource that aids in the education of children throughout Europe."

Sarah is from South Africa and works in structured finance. She and her husband came to Brussels three years ago with the intention of travelling in Europe and experiencing the different ways of life. Why ECOC? "In South Africa I was involved in a programme that gave assistance to previously disadvantaged people at university level. In Europe, the educational problems are different and I was interested in continuing to support programmes or charities whose aim is to improve the educational system. ECOC fitted the bill. What is more it is an organisation that is enthusiastically looking for volunteers."

- Our Events

****All Kinds of Minds: Recognizing & Reaching Children with Learning Difficulties, AD/HD and Related Conditions Conference – Wednesday October 8.** Sponsored by ADHD-Belgium and ECOC and funded by the King Baudouin Foundation, the "All Kinds of Minds" conference takes place at the MAI Conference Centre, 40 rue Washington, Ixelles (1050 Brussels). It runs from 08:45 to 17:00.

Speakers include Steve Chinn, Sari Solden and Dr Ellen Littman. Cordula Neuhaus has had to withdraw because of illness.

Steve Chinn runs training courses for teachers across the UK and internationally and lectures on learning difficulties in mathematics. His books include *"The Trouble with Maths"* and *"Dealing with Dyscalculia: Sum Hope 2."* **Sari Solden** is a psychotherapist in private practice in the USA and has worked with girls and women with ADHD for twenty years. Her books include *"Women with Attention Deficit Disorder and Journeys Through Adulthood."* **Dr Ellen Littman** is a clinical psychologist, licensed in New York State, who focuses on the high IQ ADHD population and specializes in women's and girls' issues.

Reservations: adhdbelgium@gmail.com or ecoc@ecoc.be. €40 for members of ADHD Family Resources or ECOC. €60 for non-members. A certificate of participation will be provided.

****Whisky Nosing and Tasting Fundraising Event: Friday September 5**

"In terms of enjoyment and conviviality – a thoroughly good evening"

Patricia Vandenplas, ECOC volunteer and the event's organiser, writes:

"Our whisky tasting expert was Malcolm J Andrews, member of the Brussels Lions Club and "Ambassador" for several whisky producers. Passionate about his subject and very knowledgeable about both the history of Scotland and whisky making, our presenter regaled us with anecdotes and jokes as he gave us an interesting history lesson and explained the processes involved in the actual distilling of whisky. We were presented with six varieties to "nose and taste" with a commentary made on each one, no doubt frustrating somewhat the enthusiasts amongst us who were raring to get on with the "nosing and tasting"!

When the actual tasting was over everyone had questions to ask and our expert was warmly congratulated on his presentation which left us all with much to think about when we next set about buying whisky, either for ourselves or as gifts for others. It only remained for us to put the clubhouse back to rights and wash the glasses, which was done rapidly and efficiently by the little team which suddenly emerged from guests and friends.”

**** ADHD/AS coach training certificate programme.** Interested in becoming a specialised ADHD/AS coach? Dianne Zaccheo returns to Brussels to offer this six-session (Fridays and Saturdays) programme for teachers and other professionals. The programme begins on Friday October 17 and runs through to Saturday March 28 and is limited to ten participants. Venue is the International School of Brussels in Watermael-Boitsfort (Brussels 1170). For full information contact Joanne Norris, adhdresources@gmail.com. Tel: 0494 17 74 03. This is an initiative of ADHD Family Resources, Brussels, in partnership with ECOC.

News

Two fundraising events for worthwhile causes coming up in the Brussels area this month:

- Community Help Service: A Musical Evening.

Thursday October 23 at 19:00 at the residence of the British Ambassador to the EU.

A programme of flute and piano music played by the Duo Milonga, followed by drinks and canapés.

Reservations: email chs@chsbelgium.be. Tickets €20 each.

To read more about the Community Help Service see www.chsbelgium.org

- The Giraffe Project: Charity Concert

Thursday October 23 at 19:30 at St John's International School, Waterloo.

A varied musical programme featuring singers, dancers and musicians to benefit schools and children living in poverty in Africa.

Reservations: email denise@giraffeproject.org, or call 02 384 5251. Tickets €12 (adults) €7 (children and students).

To read more about the Giraffe Project's work see www.giraffe.org

The UK's **National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE)** has recently produced its guideline on the diagnosis and management of ADHD in children, young people and adults. These have received wide media coverage. In essence the guidelines stress the need for age-appropriate training programmes for teachers and other professionals; support and education programmes for parents; drug treatment always to be a part of a comprehensive treatment plan. To read the guidelines in full go to www.nice.org.uk.

NASEN Awards. October 16 2008 is the date when the winners of the Children's Book Award will be announced. Check the website for the names of the winning authors and for a list of all the shortlisted books: www.nasen.org.uk. NASEN is the UK's National Association for Special Education Needs.

“Common Issues?” A recent article in *Education Week*, written by Christina A Samuels, highlights the challenge of maintaining a macro-level view of learning disability.

With the ease of networking and information spreading through the internet, the understandable passion individuals feel for specific family difficulties and the tendency of medical and educational establishments to label learning styles, it is all too easy to concentrate on just one issue – autism, say, or dyslexia – losing sight of the commonalities that many learning disabilities share. The article illustrates a spread of opinion: the importance of maintaining focus on one particular issue; the advantages of pooling experience, and provides much food for thought, particularly for organisations like ECOC which has a macro-level brief, playing our part in ensuring that *all* children receive high quality education. *Education Week* is published by EPA, a non-profit organisation whose aim is to raise the level of awareness and understanding of important issues in American education. For the full article go to www.edweek.org. Issue of September 17 2008, title “*In Advocacy Realm Specific Disabilities Gain in Prominence*”

Working at the Macro Level **- What's happening at the European level?**

Eurochild is a pan-European non-profit organisation, based in Brussels, and funded in the main by the European Union, although its membership spreads beyond the current EU borders. Its fifth conference takes place from November 5 – 7 in Budapest, the theme, "Including Children: a child rights approach to child wellbeing" The EU social inclusion process forms the basis of the conference discussions and clearly fighting child poverty is a cornerstone of this. However, inclusion is also a key part of education policy and it is to be hoped that at least one of the four conference workshops will address this issue. For more information see www.eurochild.org.

...and at the world level?

Inclusion is also the theme of the 48th session of the **International Conference on Education (ICE)**, held in Geneva from 25 - 28 November 2008. Its title is "Inclusive Education: the way of the future." ICE is part of UNESCO and is a major international forum for those involved in education – the politicians, the practitioners, the users of the service. With the central theme of the conference being the importance of evidence-informed policy making and its concluding debate being "Inclusive education: from vision to practice", there is indeed promise of action. For full details of the conference see <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/en/ice/48th-session-2008.html>

If any of our readers are attending either of these conferences, it would be good to receive some feedback. Email ecoc@ecoc.be with the subject line "conference feedback"

Resources

By no means a definitive list, but a quick look at some new titles on offer.

Jessica Kingsley Publishers (www.jkp.com)

Hope for the Autism Spectrum

A Mother and Son Journey of Insight and Biomedical Intervention

Author: Sally Kirk.

Hardback, ISBN: 978-1-84310-894-8, 234mm x 156mm / 9.25in x 6in, 432pp, October 2008, £17.99, \$24.95

All Dogs Have ADHD

Author: Kathy Hoopmann

Hardback, ISBN: 978-1-84310-651-7, 210mm x 210mm / 8.25in x 8.25in, 72pp, 2008, £9.99, \$14.95

The Red Beast

Controlling Anger in Children with Asperger's Syndrome

Author: K. I. Ghani, illustrated by Haitham Al-Ghani

Hardback, ISBN: 978-1-84310-943-3, 216mm x 279.4mm / 8.5in x 11in, 48pp, 2008, £12.99, \$21.95

Social Skills for Teenagers and Adults with Asperger Syndrome

A Practical Guide to Day-to-Day life

Author: Nancy J Patrick

Paperback, ISBN: 978-1-84310-876-4, 234mm x 156mm / 9.25in x 6in, 208pp, 2008, £12.99, \$19.95

Framework for Practice in Educational Psychology

A Textbook for Trainees and Practitioners

Edited by Barbara Kelly, Lisa Woolfson and James Boyle

Paperback, ISBN: 978-1-84310-600-5, 234mm x 156mm / 9.25in x 6in, 256pp, 2008, £22.99, \$45.00

QED Publications (www.qed.uk.com)

Developing an Inclusion Policy in your Early Years Setting

Author: Dr Hannah Mortimer and Alan Johnson

ISBN: 978 1 898873 56 3. £6.

Sage Publications Ltd (www.sagepub.org.uk)

Educating Children with Complex Conditions

Differentiating Instruction for Students with Learning Disabilities

Author: William N Bender

Multimedia kit ISBN 9781412967211 £162.00

Supporting Speech, Language & Communication Needs

Working with Students aged 11 – 19

Authors: Kate Ripley and Jenny Barrett

Paperback ISBN: 9781412947619 £23.99. Hardcover ISBN 97814129477602

TTS Group (www.tts-group.co.uk)

Pencil Grip set

meeting any handwriting need

Includes 12-page leaflet with practical guidance and advice.

Price: £25 (ex VAT). Product code : SD08031£25.00

Conferences and events

With our international readership in mind, we have trawled various websites in Europe and the United States for news of upcoming conferences and events which you may be interested in attending. The list is not definitive and we are always happy to review information on upcoming events sent to our email address: ecoc@ecoc.be.

Assistive Technology

- November 11 2008
Assistive Technology Conference
London, UK
Full details: www.bdadyslexia.org.uk

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

November 12 – 15 2008

The 20th Annual CHADD International Conference

Anaheim, California, USA

Full details: www.chadd.org (Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)

March 30 – April 1 2009

The 9th International ADDISS Conference

“The Spirit of ADHD: Resilience, Hope, Opportunity, Success”

Venue to be announced

Full details: www.addiss.co.uk

If you are interested in presenting at this conference, email your submission to info@addiss.co.uk

Autism

- November 12 – 13 2008
Conference “Answering Important Questions”
Tullamore Court Hotel
Co. Offaly
Full details: www.bild.org.uk (British Institute of Learning Disabilities)

Dyslexia

- October 29 to November 1 2008
The 59th Annual Conference of the International Dyslexia Association
Seattle, Washington, USA.
Full details: www.interdys.org
- November 13 2008, 15:00 (Central European Time)
Online Conference – “Dyslexia: neuroscience and psycholinguistics” – with Professors Stanislas Dehaene, José Junca de Morais and John Stein
Full details: www.dyslexia-international.org
- November 16 – 18 2008
Second All European Dyslexia Conference
Luxembourg
Full details: www.dyspel.org/eda/
- November 19 2008, 14:30 – 18:00, with reception to follow
Presentation – “Dyslexia and Teaching Children with Dyslexia” – by Dr Duncan Milne
Waterstone’s bookshop, Blvd Adolphe Max 71, 1000 Brussels
Full details: www.dyslexia-international.org

Dyslexia and Visual Impairment

- November 22 2008
The 15th Annual Symposium – “Dyslexia and Visual Impairment: finding the common ground”
University of Westminster, London, UK
Full details: www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk

Learning Disabilities

October 17 – 18 2008
Special Needs London 2008
London, UK
Full details: www.nasen.org.uk

The UK’s largest annual event dedicated to Special Educational Needs gives you the opportunity to seek specific advice, information and support to successfully manage individual student needs or classroom situations. Full details: www.nasen.org.uk

February 25 – 28 2009
The 46th Annual Conference of the Learning Disabilities Association of America
Salt Lake City, Utah, USA
Full details: www.ldanatl.org

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