

don't miss it!





Deaf Parenting UK
AWARDS 2011

Programme

Friday 7th October 2011




Welcome from the Chair

Hello and a very warm welcome to Deaf Parenting UK's 10 years Anniversary Celebration and what a better way to celebrate it by hosting our very first ever Deaf Parenting UK Awards.

For many of you who have known of Deaf Parenting UK and those who are new to our work, Deaf Parenting UK started as a small project in April 2001 and now grown to a pioneering organisation and well-known charity across UK and worldwide, providing support to Deaf parents, parent to be and professionals working with Deaf parents.

This is a fantastic opportunity to celebrate with a difference, where the Awards are to celebrate and applaud the commitment, dedication and determination of Deaf parents and professionals (who work with Deaf parents) from all over the country and from all walks of life, for their contribution to improve the quality of life for Deaf parents ranging from front-line service, community based and strategy levels.

At the Awards, we gathered together to honour the positive contributions of Deaf Parents, parents to be and professionals who works with Deaf parents to our community.

Many of the shortlisted finalists who have made an amazing positive difference to all of our lives are here today and we applaud them for coming this far. It is their passion, energy, courage and determination that inspired all of us especially our independent panel of Judges who had difficult tasks of going through every nominations received from individuals and groups across the UK before making their decisions on the winners.

It's an exciting time to witness such momentum in history of recognising Deaf parents and professionals in field of supporting Deaf parents as well as encourage a growth of people keen to make the difference in our lives too.

I also want to thanks to everyone involved in the process, including those who have nominated someone worthy of our awards, our panel of judges for their valuable and difficult time in deciding the winners, and to all of our sponsors, partners, ambassadors, staff and volunteers for making this event happen into a truly memorable event!

Enjoy the day and all the best of luck to all finalists - in our eyes, you all are winners! Congratulation!

Sabina Iqbal

Programme

- 10.30am **Welcome & Refreshment**
Music Entertainment brought to you by DeafRave
- 11.00am **Opening Ceremony** - Sabina Iqbal, Chair of Deaf Parenting UK (Host)
- 11.15am **Positive Deaf Parent Award** presented by: Colette Hogan, Director of CommunicationID (Sponsor) and Susan Daniels OBE, DPUK Ambassador
- 11.25am **Community of Deaf Parents Award** presented by: Sue Saxey, President of NCT (Sponsor) and Eileen Hayes MBE, DPUK Ambassador
- 11.35am **Supportive Professional of Deaf Parents Award** presented by: Sandra Duguid, Director of BSLworks (Sponsor) and Professor Ulrike Zeshan, DPUK Ambassador
- 11.45am **Best Practice of Working with Deaf Parents Award** presented by: John Caudle, Director of Trade Sales, Sprue Safety Products Ltd (Sponsor) and Mike Penning MP, DPUK Ambassador
- 11.55am **Caroline Parker (Deaf Entertainer)**
- 12.05pm **Campaigner of Deaf Parents Award** presented by: Darron Chapman, Managing Director of TFPL (sponsor) and Lilian Lawson OBE, DPUK Ambassador
- 12.15pm **Friends of Deaf Parents Award** presented by: Saimina Virmani, Founder of Joseph Frasier Solicitors (Sponsor) and Clarissa Williams, DPUK Ambassador
- 12.25pm **Lifetime Achievement Award** sponsored by: Royal Association for Deaf People, and **Special Announcement**
- 12.35pm **Raffles for fantastic prizes**
- 12.45pm **Buffet Lunch**

Finalists for Positive Deaf Parents Award, sponsored by CommunicationID

Charlotte Moulton-Thomas



"I have been fortunate to have Charlotte as my friend for 6 years now and I have always been impressed by her unfailing cheerfulness, generosity of spirit, great good humour and her overwhelmingly positive attitude to life and parenting.

She has two young sons – Jack, 12, who is hearing and Theo, 10, who has cerebral palsy, is deaf and a wheelchair user – both of whom are bright, engaging and a real credit to their mother. When I first met Charlotte she was raising them by herself which must have been incredibly challenging given their differing circumstances and needs. However, I never detected one note of complaint or discontent. Her children have always been a source of delight to her. Charlotte has had to constantly struggle to ensure that Theo receives the necessary support and services. This would be hard enough for a hearing parent but immeasurably more difficult for a deaf parent. Likewise she has had to cope in an all-hearing environment to make sure Jack is being supported at his mainstream school. Charlotte, however, is indefatigable, never gives up and is constantly alert to any opportunity to improve and enhance the progress and wellbeing of both her boys. As Charlotte has said herself 'In this house there's no such word as 'can't!'

Mrs Bronwynne Buxton, Carer/Support/Mother



Joshua was born with C.H.A.R.G.E. Syndrome and partial deaf. His parents were desponded at the birth revelation but at the same time they are very determined parent who wants to love and the best for Joshua's future. We witness how they faces many challenges, such as Joshua's birth to present - many hospital visits, several operations, fighting against local authority education about Joshua's future, won't believe doctors' medical assessment which had said Joshua can't walk or can eat through mouth, so on. Bronwynne is absolutely first class mother who devotes dearly for Joshua, always willing to clean the vomits due the feed-tube machine into Joshua's stomach. It is very humble for us to watch Bronwynne's worth hugs Joshua in his suffering.

We are very happy and indeed relieved for them because Joshua now can walk and can eat the food normally like everyone. Bronwynne [and his husband David] are truly remarkable parent, well deserved the positive parent award!

Melissa Mostyn Thomas



The last two years especially the first 12 months have been tough for us as parents... the emotional rollercoaster has been absolutely huge; ... we were so overwhelmed by the influx of hospital emergencies, child development assessments, therapies, examinations, tests, pediatric reviews and neurological scans.

*It was Isobel's diagnosis with cerebral palsy that finally prompted Melissa to start her compelling blog, *The Mostyn-Thomas Journal*, intending to find a way of maintaining her own composure. We were both very determined to have a positive attitude, as we understood from our own experiences as deaf people how invaluable this could be to Isobel in term of building the self-confidence that would be crucial for her developmental progress.*

Indeed, it is a measure of both Melissa's dedication to her maternal role and her love for Isobel that she regularly demonstrates a steadfast resolve... to bring out the best in Isobel whatever the circumstances... So devoted is she to turning things around for our little girl that she has truly blossomed as a writer, enabling her to articulate thoughts and feelings that her readers can relate to in an extraordinary diversity of contexts, thus touching upon their lives in a way that other community blogs.

Crucially Melissa reminds us, again and again, that Isobel is still a person - a human being with capabilities that she has yet to fulfil, whereas other parents might lament over their children never leading normal lives again, how awful their lives are going to be now they are bringing up a disabled child, and so on. Since she began the journal, Melissa has had many texts, emails and personal messages, nearly all showing admiration, empathy and support. Many people not just Deaf parents, but also hearing parents, parents of disabled children, adults with disabilities, and childless people who you never think would take an interest - tell her what much she has inspired them and how profound, insightful and moving they think the blog is.

Marie Sneesby



Marie Sneesby first came to the attention of Action Deafness through the two years Deaf Parenting Programme. Marie is the mother of one hearing child. She was looking for opportunities for herself and to be able to give back to the Community.

Marie was the first parent in Leicester willing to come forward and talk about her experiences of being pregnant. As part of this, she was a guest speaker at the DeMontfort University, Midwifery course, the first of its kind in the East Midlands. She made such an impression that she was later interviewed by See Hear, BBC East

Midlands and a range of midwifery professional journals through the Programme and DeMontfort University.

Through the Parenting Programme, Marie undertook training provided by Voluntary Action Leicester to become a trained Parent Befriender to other parents. She has also represented the Programme through the local Council Disability group Forum. Marie put herself and her husband forward to be a minibus driver to enable Deaf parents and their families going out on the once a month family social events.

Marie also got involved as a volunteer for the Programme's Summer Playscheme every Tuesday and Thursday and made herself available to hearing parents, deaf children, deaf parents and Coda's.

Since the Programme came to an end, Marie has continued to offer her volunteer services to the newly developed service AD Families. Marie is responsible for organising another Summer Playscheme, with a view to putting to good use her learning from the previous year's Playscheme.

During her very short time with the Programme and Action Deafness, Marie comes forward as a very positive role model to other parents and the amount of volunteer work is a credit to her.

Finalists for Community of Deaf Parents Award, sponsored by National Childbirth Trust

Conwy and Cyswllt Family Support Group, North Wales Deaf Association



This group has been running successfully for a number of years, originally as Conwy Family Support Group, but this was expanded by the closure of Cyswllt Deaf Children's Society 2 years ago.

The group organises events for Hearing parents of Deaf children and Deaf parents of Hearing children to meet, gain confidence and learn from each others experiences. The events are usually held once a month and are subsidised for its members. These events have included parties, trips to the theatre, and days at local shows and as they always ensure communication support is available, it gives Deaf parents and children a chance to enjoy the day without the barriers to communication they often face.

The organisation covers the whole of North Wales and so events are arranged in each county to ensure fairness when it comes to travel, and when the trips are further afield, transport is provided.

The group has also been able to signpost parent to other services often supplied by us here at North Wales Deaf Association which has meant parents who are often unable to access statutory services and information due to the provider's lack of Deaf Awareness.

The Arboretum Community Project and BSL Talking Hands



...both organisations Arboretum Community Project and BSL Talking Hands are so passionate about the work they conduct on behalf of the Deaf Community and show dedication and commitment...I have seen and heard what a difference the delivery of the following workshops has made. I never had an appreciation for what it was like to be Deaf and have learnt so much. I admire the organisations for their hard work, which has had such a positive impact on the families they support through this delivery.

Both the Arboretum Community Project and BSL Talking Hands have jointly delivered workshops and fun days for hearing children of Deaf parents (CODA). BSL Talking Hands have delivered the workshops to Derby KODA

(Kids Of Deaf Adults) group as part of the Arboretum Community Projects activities to support Derby Deaf Community.

Angie Poole, George Taylor from BSL Talking Hands and the Project Manager of the Arboretum Community Project, Niki Johnson who herself is Deaf, have all been involved with delivering workshops and fun days. Angie and George are both children of Deaf parents and bring a lifetime of experience to the workshops, talking openly about their upbringing they encourage and give children the opportunity, confidence and freedom, within a safe environment to talk openly about any issues they face as a child of Deaf Parents.

Whilst the KODA workshops are being delivered the Deaf Parents also attend workshops at which Deaf parents have reported a positive change in the family dynamics with regards to the child's self identity, self worth, confidence and respect which in turn benefits the whole family.

The children have taken a genuine interest in their parent's upbringing and lives as Deaf people. The work will continue, subject to funding, to support CODAs aged 8-16. Both organisations hope to broaden this age range to include younger children. The children have all expressed a pride in their identity and are keen to gain qualifications in British Sign Language.

Cheeky Monkey Family Group



Kathryn & Trevor are Deaf parents of two children who founded the Cheeky Monkey Family Group in May 2000.

The couple named above had a baby in September 1999 and the mother subsequently joined a mother and toddler group in her local area. Being a Deaf parent, she felt that a lack of communication between her and the hearing parents, children and staff created a barrier to her and her child's enjoyment of the groups' sessions.

From that day she, Kathryn, decided to establish a family group with the support of her husband at Walsall Deaf Peoples Centre for not only Deaf parents but she also welcomed hearing parents of Deaf and/or hearing children.

The family group is called Cheeky Monkey of which she has run on a volunteer capacity over the past 10 years. At present, she is no longer responsible for the organisation of the family group, as she wishes to concentrate her attentions on her two children who are aged 11 and 8 they are now involved in many different activities and competitions. Yet she continues to volunteer as a committee member and chair person.

The Cheeky Monkey Family Group celebrates its 11th birthday in May this year and is as strong as ever and has an excellent reputation within the West Midlands area. The committee and family group organised a surprise celebration for its 10 year anniversary last December at Walsall Deaf Peoples Centre to congratulate Kathryn and Trevor for their continued hard work... they deserve the recognition of Deaf parents award UK because they have never received any special attention for their passion and hard work over the last decade.

Deaf-SELF



who do these extra things voluntarily.

Deaf-SELF has been a rock for the deaf parents in South East London as despite not having any specific funding for deaf parents for a year they have still managed to get essential advice, information and still run monthly events and a parent and toddler group. This is due to the dedication of our team

Deaf-SELF recognises that each child member is part of a family and helps to support the needs of the whole family in offering respite for parents and carers.

Deaf-SELF also brings deaf parents together by organising fun outings and events on a monthly basis. These are fun filled days where games are set up, when adults and children alike can compete and enjoy themselves in a relaxed and friendly environment. The parents can interact with each other and establish friendships.

We have staff members at Deaf-SELF that are trained advocates who give continued support and advice if parents have any issues that they need to address. We have had an informal parent and toddler group meeting at soft play centres. We have temporarily ceased this in the summer but have plans to restart this in September.

This parent and toddler group gave deaf parents an opportunity to socialise together and share experiences with other parents and develop a peer network. Deaf-SELF has given these parents these activities at a very reasonable cost using both our reserves and negotiating special deals with venues such as swimming pools and soft play centres.

As ever, funding is an issue, with much of the work being done voluntarily. Funding is also required to provide the children with fun days, activities, along with family social events.

Finalists for Professional Support of Deaf Parents Award, sponsored by BSLworks

Dr Hilary Sutherland



Hilary has been working for many years now in the deafness field, in various roles including: researcher, consultant and educator.

A significant amount of this work has been in supporting Deaf and hearing parents to become more confident in their relationships with their children. Hilary has developed enormous skills in this area and has managed to always 'wear her wisdom lightly' – working alongside parents rather than adopting a simply educative approach. Hilary has great personal skills in this area

Throughout her professional work she has drawn on her own experience as a Deaf parent, incorporating this valuable experience together with relevant research and other evidence –based practice, but always in a style that has led to empowering parents and professionals. Her experience as a Deaf parent has led to her valuing good communication between parent and child and seeing the potential for this where other professionals have traditionally failed parents.

Over the years Hilary has worked with numerous organisations and services, imparting knowledge and support in various ways. We are aware that at times this work has been rewarding and valued and at other times, frustrating, but throughout these varied experiences Hilary has remained optimistic and positive, and often managed to positively re-frame situations to everyone's advantage.

Over the years Hilary has been building a strong academic evidence base to her work, culminating most recently in completing a PhD entitled 'Sign Bilingualism Through the Eyes of a child'. This certainly indicates both her level of motivation and commitment and specialist knowledge of this field.

Maple Tomlin – Used to be midwife but now head of SCBU, Princess Alexandra Hospital, Harlow



When I was pregnant with my 3rd child, I had to ring the midwifery team for an appointment. I found it difficult to explain to the new midwife there, when all of a sudden a confident lady came on the phone – mentioned that she had Level 2 BSL and would I like to have her? I was overjoyed but apprehensive as to what she was like. She came to my house, and what a wonderful lady! She made me feel so comfortable and explained everything that would come.

Even though this was my 3rd baby – I found out new things that I never knew before cos no one has explained to me. Such as what the tests include, what they are for, enabling me to make proper informed decision. She became my designated midwife and I saw her every month. She explained everything – I knew what was happening during the pregnancy. I asked my GP to be transferred to Cambridge hospital as I did not want my baby born at Harlow for personal reasons. Maple and I was disappointed as this meant she would not be able to assist at the birth. When Cambridge advised me I had gestational diabetes, Maple again gave me info and reassured me as I still had her for the home visits. Cambridge advised me to have caesarean – Maple gave me the pros and cons. Again I was making my decision on balanced information.

On the day of my planned caesarean at Cambridge – who did I see that morning? No one but Maple! She was there coincidentally on another duty but departed before our baby Yasmin was born.

She came to visit me at home to have a cuddle from Yasmin and brought me a little present! She became a friend and I thank her for being a happy part during my pregnancy and for making it such a joyful time.

Dr Joanna Downes, Freelance Consultant, Lecturer & Researcher



Dr Joanna Downes was first employed by Action Deafness to lead the newly funded two years Deaf Parenting Programme. The Programme funding came to an end in April 2011. Dr Downes made a very significant impact on behalf of Deaf parents in local mainstream Children and Family services in Leicester City and Leicestershire.

Dr Downes herself is a very positive role model. She is Deaf, BSL user, mother to two hearing children and achieved her Doctorate in Child Attachment, the first dissertation of its kind in the UK.

She made significant use of this research in her work with the Local Children's Safeguarding Board, Child Behaviour Initiative Services, Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Domestic Violence Forums, Leicestershire Constabulary, DeMontfort University Midwifery Department, Child Protection Social Services Teams, local schools, representing Deaf Parents through Common Assessment Framework procedures.

She also provided one to one support for individual Deaf parents [with various communication needs] through very difficult times in their lives such as child protection procedures, separation, divorce, supporting parents to lodge complaints with the Police.

Dr Downes became the first Deaf BSL professional to join Leicester City and

Leicestershire Children's Hearing Service Working Group (CHSWG) in its 12 year history of being established. Shortly after joining CHSWG, she became Co-Chair of this group and advocated most strongly for INFORMED parental choice for both Deaf and Hearing parents of Deaf and hearing children.

Through her passion as a Deaf professional, parent, Doctorate, knowledge of the legal rights and responsibilities, but most importantly, informed parental choice for Deaf parents and their hearing children she has created several legacies that will be continued including the development of

- *A free factsheet for local schools, making their schools accessible to Deaf Parents*
- *A free factsheet for the local Domestic Violence Forum, making their services accessible to Deaf families experiencing abuse*
- *Development and provision of the first Midwifery Course through DeMontfort University, which has received significant media coverage in both Deaf and Midwifery publications*

Dr Mary Griggs, Clinical Psychologist/Team leader Deaf Mental Health Team, Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust



Mary is a Clinical Psychologist, currently leading the Deaf Mental Health team, based in Bristol. She completed a PhD in Deafness and mental health in 1998 and have been working in this field since then, in various capacities: lecturer at the Centre for Deaf Studies, Bristol University and researcher on various projects over the years in the fields of Deaf mental health, families and Deaf education. More recently she have been involved in setting up Deaf Parenting Skills courses and mentoring projects in collaboration with NHS Bristol and Deaf Parenting UK.

Mary has been very supportive in making sure the Deaf Parenting courses were happening in Bristol. I believe she was involved with the pilot project and with more recently workshops too. Not only was she there to provide support for me as set up by NHS. Not only was she able to provide some mentoring support for me but also I could talk to her about some of the parents' concerns. Her knowledge and expertise in working with deaf people has been extremely useful in helping making the local NHS to become more deaf aware.

Finalists for Best Practice of Working with Deaf Parents Award, sponsored by Sprue Safety Products Ltd.

Science Museum



At the Science Museum we have been running our SIGNtific events for the past year and a half. These are deaf-led family events with the aim of making science accessible to families with deaf or hard-of-hearing members, and in particular to children.

Our initial response to making our family science shows and storytelling accessible was to provide a BSL interpreter to accompany the Museums presenters. But after speaking to visitors who came to these events, we realised that the children and their parents were unable to focus on the interpreter and a presenter doing demonstrations at the same time, and therefore found it difficult to fully engage with the event and enjoy the experience.

After further research and discussions with Deaf community groups, we decided that SIGNtific events should instead be deaf-led using British Sign Language, accompanied by voice-over interpretation. Science Museum staff worked with deaf presenters to tailor scripts and advise on suitable science content to be communicated through BSL...our events are suitable for both deaf and hearing audiences.

SIGNtific was launched on 28 March 2010 to members of the deaf community..all our presenters and interpreters worked extremely hard and presented fantastic events which were warmly received. We provide events for young children such as stories about snowflakes that go on incredible journeys, brave flight pioneers and determined inventors. For older children we put on exciting science shows with explosions, interactive workshops and make and take events. We also run The Bubble Show, a Science Museum institution that is fun for children of any age!

Since then, SIGNtific has gone from strength to strength. We feel that SIGNtific events are great for deaf parents because they are accessible to all, which means that parents and children can enjoy and share the events together...we are passionate about communicating science in a fun and engaging way that inspires and encourages family learning, which those deaf parents might not have previously considered.

ITV Signed Stories



www.signedstories.com is a not-for-profit children's storytelling website, fully accessible in animation, sound, subtitles and British Sign Language designed to encourage deaf children to read more books and improve their literacy. ITV invested £1.5million in the project as part of its Corporate and Social

Responsibility programme, and continued commitment to raising deaf awareness and providing access for deaf people.

All the family can enjoy Signed Stories – creating real inclusion for deaf children. Signed Stories brings an innovative and unique all-inclusive approach to children's literacy so deaf children are not ghettoised into a webspace. Everyone is invited and all children can share in fun learning.

We know from our research with NDCS that deaf children fall behind at school because of poor English skills, and that they have suffered from a lack of sign-accessible resources. Month on month our specialist team of deaf and hearing professionals source and animate new books to keep Signed Stories vibrant and build a community of interest. In a challenging financial climate we have found a number of sponsors whose names are attached to individual books. A wide range of celebrities and public figures have lent their names to Signed Stories, making reading 'cool'.

The advent of broadband is a watershed opportunity for the world's deaf community who use sign language. Sign language, a visual language, is ideally suited to the internet. Traditionally, on-screen sign language appears in a box in the bottom of the screen. By using visual elements from books we have fully integrated the signer into the story. We have repurposed our stories to bring sign-presented children's programming to mainstream television for the first time in ITV's history, in a very successful 12-part series for Mini CITV (CITV channel and ITV1). The second series is currently in production.

We provide a wealth of advice and information in English and BSL and free downloadable resources for teachers, parents and carers in a designated section for adults. We were concerned that putting reading ages on books as a means of selection could put off some deaf children who have a reading age below their actual age so we created The Story Tree, a more subtle approach to ranking books based on content and difficulty.

Our story worlds promote equality and celebrate inclusion and diversity, featuring deaf characters as it's important for deaf children to see themselves in books.

DeMontfort University Midwifery Department.



The Midwifery Department went above and beyond the call of duty in providing the first ever bespoke Awareness Training for midwifery students in being able to appropriately support all kinds of Deaf Parents

needing to access Midwifery services. In conjunction with Action Deafness' Deaf Parenting Programme, the following was undertaken:

- Research into the needs of Deaf parents with varying communication modes, BSL, SSE, oral, written and those parents with other signed/spoken languages*
- Development of a 12 hour Awareness Training programme consisting of what is Deafness, barriers faced by Deaf parents accessing midwifery services, the differing types and standards of communication professionals available and where they could be sourced, introduction to differing ways of being able to communicate with Deaf parents before, during and after their midwifery appointments, the importance of not using family members to interpret, the rights of Deaf partners assisting the mother through maternity and labour*
- Sourcing funding to further develop training for midwives nationally*
- Development of a "fob" of essential signs for midwives to carry with them to assist with informal communications with Deaf parents*
- Sourcing funding to further develop training for other health professionals through the use of e-learning, DVD's*
- Supporting d/Deaf Parents as Guest Speakers and acknowledging their previous negative experiences of maternity care*

What made the Midwifery Department personnel different were their openness, willingness, commitment, dedication and support of Deaf Parents directly.

Two groups of midwifery students have now completed the pilot training course, discussions are underway to further develop the 12 hour training programme and extend it to other health professionals involved in the maternity care for Deaf Mothers and Deaf partners

DeMontfort University and AD's Deaf Parenting Programme also received media attention as a result of this innovative partnership and practice through BBC See Hear, BSLBT "The Hub", BBC East Midlands News and various midwifery journals in print and online

Finalists for Campaigner of Deaf Parent Award sponsored by TFPL

Tomato Lichy



Tomato Lichy is the proud father of 2 lovely deaf children, Molly and Hazel.

Tomato made history recently by being the first Deaf parents in Britain to officially register their second child, Hazel, with a sign name. Last year, after Hazel's birth, Tomato and his partner, Paula, wanted to register Hazel's BSL name on her birth certificate – but were rejected. They won a legal battle to force the Home Office to accept BSL as a language appropriate for registering a baby's name. This decision sets a landmark in EU law, which means that all deaf people in the EU can now have their Sign Name formally entered as part of their legal name.

Tomato is also a parent-governor at Frank Barnes Deaf School and campaigned with the school to prevent its closure. The campaign won and a brand new multi-million pound school site is now being built.

He has just started a new job at the BDA, working on a new campaign for the right of Deaf children to receive an English / BSL bilingual education.

Clearly he is an excellent example of effective campaigner and challenging a large authority on the matter in his positive role as Deaf father for his daughter's name to be recorded in BSL.

Melissa Mostyn Thomas



You would have thought that given both Isobel's disability and our deafness combined, the services we use regularly would be more inclined to include the reasonable adjustments expected of them.

But this is not so. We have both lost count of the hospital emergencies involving Isobel's back when medics were struggling to bring her seizures under control where they systematically failed to organise a BSL interpreter, even though the agencies number was right on top of the file, in thick black letters.

They really should have known better by now. After Isobel had her first seizure at 12 hours old, Melissa had to make a huge fuss just so she could have an interpreter for three hours for most of the 17 days Isobel was in

hospital. It was a very demoralising experience for Melissa, especially since she just had a traumatic birth, and she was utterly determined that it would not happen again.

But it has, and she has since made it her mission to campaign for the rights of Deaf parents whenever she can....Of course, being a full-time mum to a little girl who needs a lot of one-to-one support, Melissa has not been able to join any protest marches, but she does use the blog to highlight not just access issues that we very personally experienced, but also issues arising from assumptions others make about us as a family.

One bugbear is the medical experts who think they know more about communication than we do. Isobel's disability means that she has to work much harder at developing her speech and cognitive abilities as well as her motor skills, so we often communicate with her in sign and speech. As her parents, we are already painfully aware that we can't assume that Isobel will learn to speak.

Yet we had therapists patronisingly telling us that we *MUST* speak clearly to Isobel, and that BSL is too complicated for her to have in her life. It is indicative, we both think, of society misconceptions about both Deaf people and BSL.

It's for that reason that Melissa has felt the need to take suitable action to ensure that we only work with therapists who respect our language. Thus she has successfully made them realise that they can indicate how we should be as a family, especially when their support of Deaf parents is so limited anyway.

Melissa never takes things lying down. She makes a point of extending her own values to Isobel wherever they go, whether it is a local therapeutic playgroup, a baby rhyme session or even a parents and toddlers group. Using communication as the key, if she feels that they lack accessibility, she'll blog about it. Often this is her most effective campaigning method, as the area we live in is not as clued up about access as places like London are, and she uses the hearing locals she befriends to spread the word too.

Dr Joanna Downes, Freelance Consultant, Lecturer & Researcher



Dr Joanna Downes fought against the odds for the benefits of Deaf Parents in Leicester City, Leicestershire and Rutland both at a strategic and operational level...she strongly advocated for Deaf Parents who had previously experienced great difficulties in accessing local schools / medical / legal / child protection / domestic violence / mental health and did not forget that Parents were also entitled to access social and leisure activities.

The following is a sample of some of the campaign work she undertook on behalf of isolated, vulnerable Deaf Parents:

- The right of an Oral Deaf Parent to access legal services through the use of a lipspeaker/ palantypist rather than an Interpreter that was being provided through Court Services, after 6 months, the parent was able to actively participate in court proceedings
- The right of an Oral Deaf Parent to have appropriate access to Child Protection proceedings by providing Advocacy and Deaf Awareness training throughout the proceedings to other professionals involved in the Core Group Meetings, after 18 months, her children are no longer on the register
- The right of a Deaf BSL Mother to have access to appropriately trained and qualified Interpreters to access vital medical assistance that she had been denied the previous five years, after being involved for 18 months, the parent has now received the essential medical training they required to live safely
- The right of five separate parents to approach the various schools their children attended and have access to appropriately trained qualified Interpreters for Parent/Teacher meetings
- Supported two separate Deaf Parents to lodge complaints with the local Police regarding the inappropriate use of their hearing children being used as Interpreters, both families received an apology with a commitment this would no longer occur
- The right of a Deaf BSL Mother to have her own independent interpreters to participate in Child Assessment Framework proceedings rather than being reliant on her children to "interpret", after 18 months, this family are now receiving appropriate mainstream support services

Throughout her campaign work, Dr Joanna Downes was very clear about Deaf parents' rights and their responsibilities. Dr Downes utilised national and international legal framework when dealing with professionals to ensure they were also made aware of their legal responsibilities in making their services accessible to Deaf Parents. Dr Downes also campaigned on the following issues at a strategic level:

- Bilingual education be considered and further developed for Deaf families in Leicester. The Local Children's Safeguarding Board undertake an access audit of the services they provide to Deaf families in Leicester, previously Deaf families were not part of their "at risk" priority list
- That the education / employment / legal / medical / mental health services consider their legal duties under the Equality Act
- That hearing children (Coda's) who have Deaf parents are not used by professionals to act as Interpreters

Finalists for Friend of Deaf Parents Award, sponsored by Joseph Frasier Solicitors

Stuart Harrison



Stuart is Deaf, BSL user and also uses speech. He is also a parent. Stuart was previously a Teacher of the Deaf, a Trustee of Deaf Parenting UK. He is currently involved with UK Deaf Sports on a voluntary capacity. He has a multitude of different roles including being self-employed.

However, it is not his previous history...it is the support he has provided another Deaf parent for several years to assist them through a multitude of complex emotional, legal, mental health, domestic violence issues.

Due to the smallness of the Deaf Community, it would not be appropriate to highlight any further details regarding the Deaf parent that Stuart supported. It is important for us to ensure the plight of any Deaf parent is dealt with safely and appropriately and allow Deaf Parents their sense of dignity and respect through difficult times.

What we are able to share is that Stuart's support was pivotal to this Deaf parent. He maintained his sense of humour, his respect, his knowledge, skills and experience. He was able to provide appropriate information, advice and guidance for this parent.

He was available to "be there" for the parent when times were particularly challenging for several years.

The parent concerned is now thriving and a fully functioning member of society, the parent is involved in community activities and professional work.

Shazia Nasreen



As a Deaf parent with three young children aged 5, 3 and 9 months old, Shazia, my Deaf sister in law, has been an immense support to me especially during my pregnancy of 3 kids and with the recent addition in Oct 2010, few weeks after the birth, I experienced sudden blood haemorrhaging of the womb which can be life threatening.

Shazia was there to look after the first two kids when my husband and I went to hospital in ambulance which resulted in almost a week stay at hospital with blood transfusion. Shaz was always smiley and never once complained and kids love her for her calm manner and bonding very well with them.

She was also able to shield both my first two kids from worrying too much about me during my hospital stay both during the birth of my 3rd child and when I was bleeding badly from haemorrhaging and the ambulance came to my house to assist and took care of me, taking me out of the house in a supported chair. The kids were happily playing in the lounge without any thoughts on the horrific events that took place outside that room. Shaz and my husband calmly told them that 'mummy has to go back to hospital for a rest' and the kids were fine with this!

Shazia have always been there, supported me and my family even through my pregnancy and birth of all my 3 children. She was always in hand to help out and even stay with me for a month prior to my 3rd baby being born!

She cooked for me, cleaned the house and even fed the kids and takes them out, so that I could focus on feeding on my newborn baby until I recovered from my health. Furthermore she had lots of responsibility in her own home aswell as supporting me in my hours of needs at the time when I needed her, the most!

I couldn't imagine what it would be like without her invaluable support which is why I am nominating her for this worthy award, she deserves such recognition.

Lifetime Achievement Award, sponsored by Royal Association for Deaf People (RAD)

To be announced at the Award Ceremony

Buffet Lunch Menu

at Hall of India, 1st Floor.



Hot food

Marinated Moroccan Chicken kebab

Lamb mint kofta with coriander salsa

Falafel bites with sweet chilli (V)

Mediterranean vegetable stone-baked mini pizza (v)

Cold food

A selection of sandwiches to include vegetarian options

Mozzarella beef tomato and basil toasted ciabatta (v)

Dessert

Fruit skewers

Danish Pastries

All foods are halal and some vegetarian options available.



Drinks available from the bar.

With thanks to our
generous sponsor
MSFF



Deaf Parenting UK

Enabling Confidence, Empowering and Supporting Deaf Parents & Deaf Parents to be



Deaf Parenting UK is a unique organisation with a pool of Deaf Parenting Skills Trainers and we can offer the following services for Deaf Parents and Deaf Parents to be:

Services:

- Parenting Skills Courses
- Befriender Services
- 1:1 Parenting Skills Support
- Tailor-made services to meet your needs.

Want to know more about us, we can offer those services by:

- Providing 2 hours workshops to a group of maximum 12 parents at a hired venue or a one to one support at private home at own discretion.
- Provide information, support and advice on positive parenting, talk about own experience of parenting and sharing ideas with one another
- Learn new skills to develop better relationship within your family.
- Courses can be tailor-made to meet your specific needs e.g.: length of course, BSL friendly handouts, one to one support etc

Our Services/ courses can be held across the UK, at hired venues, or private homes. To learn more, please contact us for further discussion/ information:

Email: info@deafparent.org.uk
E Fax: 0871 2643323 SMS: 07928 842 529
Web: www.deafparent.org.uk

Registered Charity: 1112453

FREE Deaf Parenting Support Group run by Deaf Parenting UK

- Are you a Deaf Parent/ Deaf Parent to be?
- Want to mix with other Deaf Parents & children in a family friendly environment?
- Want to receive information, support and advice on parenting?
- Why not come along and find out what it is all about?

Deaf Parenting Support Group – Camden Locality

Time: 10am - 12 noon

When:

- Friday 9th September 2011
- Friday 14th October 2011
- Friday 11th November 2011
- Friday 9th December 2011

Where: Harmood Children Centre, 1 Forge Place, Off Ferdinand Street NW1 8DQ

Deaf Parenting Support Group – Hackney Locality

Time: 12.30pm- 2.30pm

When:

- Monday 19th September 2011
- Monday 17th October 2011
- Monday 21st November 2011

Where: Comet Children Centre, 20 Halcomb Street, Hackney N1 5RF

Deaf Parenting Support Group - Newham Locality

Time: 10am - 12pm

When:

- Friday 16th September 2011
- Tuesday 4th October 2011
- Friday 4th November 2011
- Friday 2nd December 2011

Where: Abbey Lane Children Centre, 1 Abbey Lane, Stratford E15 2SD

Contact Nicole Campbell, DPUK Coordinator for more information.

Email: info@deafparent.org.uk **Fax:** 0871 264 3323

SMS: 07928 842529 (text message only)

Thanks to our Supporters and Sponsors

