



Newsletter
December 2011

Adventist Special Needs Association



INSIDE:
Celebrating 10 years of ASNA
Annual report
A HUGE thank you
...and more!



Welcome to this special edition of ASNA's newsletter. We are celebrating the organisation's tenth anniversary and are delighted to look back over all that we have accomplished from 2001 to 2011. As you can see from our highlights (right) and the annual report (pages 4 and 5) we have a huge amount to be thankful for. We also have a lot of people to thank (see page 6). We are grateful for everyone who has played a part in our successes.

We are also looking forward to the next ten years, with projects afoot to mark the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2012, and more events in the pipeline for young people, carers, and families. We hope you'll join us for those, and if you've not been in touch before, please contact me. My details are on the back cover and I'd love to hear from you. Here's to the next ten years!

Sophia Nicholls
Co-founder, Hon. Secretary and Trustee



About ASNA

ASNA UK is an association established to support the spiritual, social, emotional and physical development of people living with special needs and disabilities. It also aims to support their families/carers and professionals working within the field of special needs by providing resources, training and awareness programmes, family weekend breaks and special needs focus days. ASNA also exists to enable access for disabled people by providing training, awareness resources and workshops to support service provision.

The history of ASNA

ASNA was initiated by the birth of Matthew Nicholls in 1996 to Sophia and Nigel Nicholls. Matthew is blind and has multiple and complex physical and learning disabilities. Keen to raise awareness of special needs in the national Adventist church community, and particularly the effects having a disabled child can have on the life of the family, Sophia and Nigel established the Adventist Special Needs Association.

ASNA aims to raise awareness in churches and so enable church leaders and members to become more welcoming and understanding of the experience of their members with special needs. ASNA supports all churches requiring training and all people needing our services, including non-Adventists.

ASNA was launched on 1 December 2001 at the Advent Centre, London. A concert of music and drama celebrated the birth of an association 'whose time had come', and participants included people with and without disabilities. Ever since our launch, concerts and events organised by ASNA have always aimed to provide an opportunity for people of all abilities to use their skills and talents.

ASNA became a charity in November 2003 and has been working to provide support networks and projects which:

- raise awareness of disabilities and special needs, and
- promote inclusion and involvement of people with special needs.

We have organised ten annual respite and training weekends, all of which have taken place in the beautiful UK countryside. During the weekends families living with disabilities meet for mutual emotional and social support. There are theme-specific workshops for parents and carers. Children and adults with special needs can also attend because an inclusive programme is provided, supported by trained, CRB-cleared volunteer carers.

We have organised four volunteer training conferences, bringing leaders together to discuss our shared ministry to the disabled. Since December 2001, we have presented over 70 disability awareness training events and activities in the UK (plus one in Ireland) to over 6,000 people.

ASNA is a registered charity, number 110047
www.asna.info



Pastor Sam Davis, President of the SEC
talks to Nigel Nicholls, Chairman of ASNA

Asna
Adventist Special Needs Association

2001–2011

Highlights of ASNA's first ten years

December 2001

ASNA launch with inspirational concert.

March 2002

First residential respite and training weekend.

September 2002

First National Disability Awareness conference, held at Newbold College.

January 2002

First of many ASNA Disability Awareness training workshops.

November 2003

ASNA became a registered charity.

September 2005

First residential carers' weekend, supporting carers.

October 2007

First Joint National training conference with BUC for Disability Coordinators.

Production of the first working manual for coordinators.

August 2008

First young carers' residential activity 'week – 'Bright Futures' – providing support and challenging activities.

May 2010

Our first stand at the Christian Resources Exhibition in partnership with Churches for All.

April 2011

Our tenth and largest ever family respite weekend.

Throughout 2011 we have been developing further training materials to commemorate our tenth year. What will we achieve next? And how can you participate? Keep reading...



Comments from participants at a recent carers' weekend:

“It was great to spend time as a family and not feel that you attract attention because members of your group behave differently from the expectations of others.”

“I found the whole event to be well organised, a perfect retreat for special needs people and their families.”

“[I enjoyed] meeting so many new faces and being with them. Making them laugh, and them making me laugh.”

“Fellowship, worship, friendship.”

“[I liked the] interaction – the fact that everyone can be involved.”

God continued to bless the work of ASNA in 2010 and inspire the numerous individuals who work voluntarily in its cause.

ASNA Aims and Objectives

ASNA supports the spiritual, emotional, physical and social needs of people living with disabilities. ASNA also provides disability awareness training, information and advice to enable volunteers and workers to ensure access to services for all.

Our unique service within the Seventh Day Church enables the development of programmes that meet our objectives, which are to educate members, elevate the gospel model of disability, and to serve as a forum for all to be included in worship as well as supporting those living with disability.

In 2010, we have continued to provide support and training services through our three main projects: Connect breaks, Assign, and Enabling Access.

Connect breaks and Assign

These projects provide respite and training residential short breaks for people living with disability for peer support, spiritual development and social interaction. Workshops also provide training for the families who support people with disabilities and for the volunteers who support these families. The Connect breaks programmes run in the spring, summer and autumn.

April 2010 saw over 120 people attend the annual respite weekend, including more than 30 children with and without disabilities. This brings the total number of attendees since we started running respite weekend in 2002 to just under 700!

Activities included abseiling, orienteering, music therapy, arts and crafts and praise and worship, and the theme for the weekend was Health and Well-being. Workshops were provided by the health director for the BUC, Sharon Platt McDonald, and Dr Jacqueline Halliday Bell ended the weekend with testimonies and praise by an open camp fire.

Positive feedback from carers and children brought joy and encouragement to the organisers and informs our future planning and progress.

Another success was the Young Carers programme

which took place at the Frontier Centre in Northampton in the summer. Sixteen young carers and friends supported by seven trained volunteers during the week-long residential short break took part in activities designed to encourage and develop team building skills, peer support and confidence. All 16 attendees felt they really enjoyed the week, would definitely come back again and learnt a great deal about themselves and the other carers. Since its pilot in 2008, a total of 48 young carers have participated in this programme.

The autumn carers' weekend took place from 1 to 3 October. The new venue in Oxfordshire was well received, with carers commenting that they found the counselling sessions, access to the spa and relaxation therapy session a boost to the weekend. New attendees enjoyed the company and spiritual food served up by Pastor Paul Liburd from the NEC. This carers' weekend saw 40 people enjoying a stress-relieving, relaxing weekend, taking the total number of attendees since 2005 to 191.

The Assign project provides people living with disabilities and special needs with information, support, advice, and resources. This year we were able to provide support for over 80 people during the Connect breaks, over the phone and by email.

These events have enable ASNA to provide spiritual, physical, social and emotional support for people living with disabilities. They have also enabled young people to access events and activities that they would not normally have access to, which have challenged their skills and given them new experiences.

Enabling Access

We continue working together in partnership with ADRA UK (SYCAF, volunteer training), Through the Roof (resources and training), Causeway Prospects (resources and training), SEC (disability coordinator support, support for members), NEC (training) and the BUC (training).

In 2010, ASNA provided disability awareness training days to the following churches: Amersham, Balham, High Wycombe, Reading, Reading Ghana, and Aberdeen. We also gave individual support to coordinators from Enfield, Edmonton, Reading Witney, Grays, Lewisham, Dublin, Birmingham,



Annual Report 2010

Grantham and Wolverhampton and other groups in the UK and Ireland.

Since 2003, we have provided training to over 2,500 people across the BUC through disability awareness training seminars and workshops. These events have included church disability training days, SEC camp meetings in 2004, 2005, and 2006, and training for BUC school headteachers. Our resource database continues to grow, with more than 500 disability resources distributed during training events and on request from the disability coordinators and other members.

These projects are important because they allow us all to appreciate that we have and serve a God who created all men and women equal. Recognising this allows us to find the gifts which God has given to the disabled and non-disabled alike.

We continue to grow our volunteer team with over 40 volunteers and nine trustees on our database.

The OCN-accredited Disability Awareness pathway within the leadership training course – in partnership with the NEC through Grace Walsh (NEC Health Director and Disability coordinator) – has seen seven people attend the training program and three volunteers complete the coursework.

Membership and supporters

We continue to attract new members and supporters. Our new website has enabled a wider audience to access our online services and brought members 'closer' together via social networking and other online accessible services.

Marketing and promotion

Our marketing strategy for 2009–2011 is aimed at increasing ASNA's reach within the church and local communities, and to further develop partnerships with other organisations and agencies. We also attended the annual Christian Resources Exhibition (CRE) in May 2010 which provided over 60 new contacts and an opportunity for ASNA to have a presence within the wider Christian community in partnership with other Christian charities.

Trustee retention

We were pleased to appoint Bro. Bacchus, a long-serving ASNA member, elder of his home church and father of a young lady with disabilities to our trustee board. He brings great energy and ideas to the board as well as a wealth of experience of long term caring.

“These projects are important because they allow us all to appreciate that we have and serve a God who created all men and women equal. Recognising this allows us to find the gifts which God has given to the disabled and non-disabled alike.”

Partnership working

BUC

We continue to work with the BUC in the development of resources and in the organisation and implementation of the fourth annual disabilities conference. This year 15 coordinators attended the conference bringing the total number of coordinators who

have attended this joint event since 2007 to 121. This conference saw the launch of the Accessible Church award. A number of churches were given this award for their commitment to progressing the work of ensuring access to services in our churches.

Through the Roof and Prospects

We have made use of their resources and trainers to support leaders in the BUC. We collaborated on joint training sessions at the Christian Resources Exhibition 2010 to increase our reach and services.

Churches for All

CfA is a partnership of Christian charities working towards inclusion for disabled people in the life of the church. ASNA have become an associate member of this group. The benefits of this have been to share good practice, databases and resources and provide training. Through this group ASNA has provided ideas for developing 'disability champions' in all the churches in the UK; attended the Christian Resources Exhibition within the new disability zone; helped to organise and present at the first Enabling Church conference and presented on Premier Radio's prime time morning slot to promote the work of ASNA and the Enabling Church conference.

We thank God for his leadership in 2010. We also thank volunteers, members, donors and supporters.

A HUGE thank you

ASNAs is reliant on many people who generously give their time and money to ensure we are able to provide important services to those who need them. As we mark our tenth year, we would like to acknowledge your contributions. Thank you all very much.

Volunteer carers

Volunteering for ASNA involves enabling a child or adult with a disability or special need to access the many services provided by ASNA. ASNA provides respite care for many parents, carers and other family members looking after relatives and friends with disabilities, long term illness and mental illness. Services for carers include short breaks, family fun days, music therapy, music workshops, and activity weekends.

The support provided by these volunteers is crucial to the work of the charity. Caring for adults or children with special needs and disabilities can be very stressful and challenging. People from all walks of life and backgrounds are carers – more than three of every five people in the UK will become carers at some time in their lives. Caring can be a rewarding experience, yet many face isolation, poverty and ill-health.

ASNA's volunteer carers provide much needed respite for carers. Respite allows the opportunity for carers to recharge their batteries, which helps to prevent ill-health and burnout. During these short breaks and respite events, carers also have the opportunity to interact and socialise with other carers and support workers, thereby reducing the risk of isolation.

Thank you to all these volunteers who are so important to us and those we serve. Thanks also to all our volunteer workshop leaders without whom we could not provide the services and care unique to our work.

Recognising our donors

As an organisation, we recognise the changes we make to peoples lives through our projects and support. Thanks to the financial contributions and moral support of our partners and donors, we are able to provide an oasis of respite in the challenging and stressful lives of our members and those living with disabilities.



Currently, ASNA is working in partnership with the following organisations to provide projects and services across the country. Services include training and awareness workshops and seminars, access to numerous resources and consultancy in the disability field.

Special thanks to our funders and sponsors. These include:

ADRA UK
BUC
SEC
Four Acre Trust
Members
Oxford church



 **Four Acre Trust**

We would also like to thank all our members and supporters who have given us encouragement and financial contributions over the 10 years along with our cyclists who took part in the Cycle 4 ASNA event in the summer of 2011.

CYCLE 4 ASNA

We did it! 12 cyclists braved the inclement weather on Sunday 28 August to cycle a combined total of 119 miles through the challenging but beautiful terrain of Richmond Park in Surrey, complete with deer spectators!

This event was the launch of 'CYCLE 4 ASNA' – a fundraising and family fun day project organised to raise awareness of and funds for ASNA in celebration of our tenth anniversary. Our wonderful supporters helped us to raise more than £1000 for the charity in sponsorship and donations. Thanks to Tony



Clairmont (father of two young children with disabilities) and his team for organising this event, and to everyone who gave so generously.

Ten-year celebrations!

We've marked our tenth year with lots of events. First was February's inspirational volunteer training programme with ACT 4: Supporting children with disabilities in the church, followed by our four-day Grand Family Weekend in April, attended by 120 people.

May saw the launch of new ASNA publications and a carers' pack to support disability training and awareness. There was also a national survey of the current status of disability practice in Christian churches. (The final report is due in February 2012.)

Video footage of carers and sponsors congratulating ASNA on 10 years at an event in June can be seen at <http://bit.ly/ASNA10Years>.

In July we launched an ASNA promotional DVD celebrating 10 years, and in August our new fundraising initiative Cycle 4 ASNA (see above).

September brought the appointment

by the SEC Executive committee of a new voluntary role: the SEC Disability Coordinator.

In October we had the wonderful ASNA 10 year celebration fundraising banquet and concert by international gospel singer Marilyn Baker and Tracey Williamson, followed by the launch of the SEC Disability Ministry Advisory Group in November. A busy year!



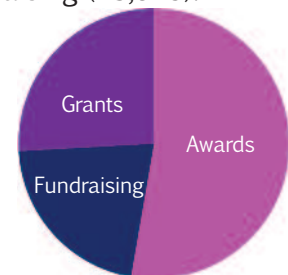
Happy faces at ASNA's celebration banquet

For your diary: 2012 Events

29 January: ASNA executive committee meeting
 5 February: Volunteer training
 13–15 April: Family Weekend (TBC)
 5–7 October: Carers' weekend

2010 Finances

Our total income for 2010 was £40,560. Of this, £10,500 was grants for restricted purposes, and the remainder was unrestricted, coming from awards (£21,385) and fundraising (£8,675).



Our total expenditure was £43,109 which breaks down as follows:

training and awareness £8,994;
 membership support £23,222;
 partnership projects £6,243;
 charity governance and administration £4,651.



How to get involved

pray

Please join with us in prayer for:

- The homeless project in Milton Keynes during December 2011
- The health and disability ministry in Dagenham area
- The ministry to the disabled in the South England Conference of the Seventh Day Adventist Church
- The new SEC Disability Ministry Coordinator – new appointment and much work to be done
- The Special Class Ministry in Birmingham, Camp Hill
- The Multi Sensory Music Ministry in Oxford
- The Disability Ministry in Reading
- The ASNA Hearing Loss and Carers projects for 2012

volunteer

Please consider volunteering with us. You can make such a difference!

- ASNA is looking for three types of volunteers:
 - people to support the residential projects, as respite carers or with other skills
 - trustees with financial background,
 - IT support.
- The homeless project in Milton Keynes needs volunteers to support their work. Please contact ASNA and ask to be put in touch with the project leader, Anne Loftman.
- Volunteers are also needed to join the SEC Disability Advisory Group. The first meeting will be on 5 February 2012 in London. Contact ASNA for more details.

donate

Donating to ASNA means that we are able to fund more resources, more residential activity trips and carers' respite breaks, and more awareness-raising publicity which helps spread our message of inclusivity and care.

To make a financial gift to our work, you can click through from the ASNA website (www.asna.info) or go directly to <http://bit.ly/Give2ASNA>. Alternatively you can send a cheque (payable to ASNA) to the address opposite.



contact

If you would like further information about ASNA or would like to become a member, please contact Sophia Nicholls.

Phone: 01491 821103
01491 821104
07768 298297

Email: info@asna.info

Post: ASNA
Howbery Park
Suite W-05
Windrush Innovation Centre
Wallingford
Oxfordshire
OX10 8BA

Online: www.asna.info