

❖ Inclusive Futures ❖

Issue 2

November 1998

Are you

working with children or adults at risk of social exclusion or segregation

- *interested in developing your approach to inclusion*
- *seeking practical tools to strengthen the inclusion of vulnerable or challenging individuals into communities*
- *wanting contacts and links, or stronger networks of support for you or for your work...*

then read on!

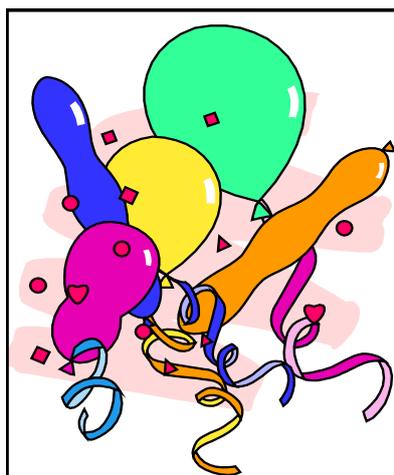
Welcome to the second newsletter from *Inclusive Futures*. Our aim is to share snippets of good news and hopeful information to help us all work for a more inclusive society. It is relevant to all those who believe that everyone has a right to belong. We distributed nearly 600 copies of our first issue.

You can support this newsletter:

- ⇒ Send an item for the next issue - we are hungry for good news and stories from people who have got into inclusive communities.
- ⇒ If you like this newsletter and wish to make a voluntary contribution towards the production and postage costs, then we would be very glad to receive it. Send a cheque made out to 'Inclusive Futures'
- ⇒ Let us know about any mailing list amendments -

- such as your friends!
- ⇒ Photocopy this newsletter and pass copies to your friends
- ⇒ Support our conferences

Write to *Inclusive Futures* at 49 Northcliffe Avenue, Mapperley Nottingham, or Email to batesmp@compuserve.com



“To accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream; not only plan, but also believe.”

Anatole France

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Future Conferences

Jack Pearpoint and Marsha Forest will be leading an inclusion day in Nottingham on **28 May 1999**. There will also be courses on 'Inclusive Tools' on **25 and 26 May**. Write to 'Inclusive Futures' at 49 Northcliffe Avenue, Mapperley, Nottingham for further details.

Mental Health and Inclusive

Learning is the title of a national conference to be held on **20 January 1999** at New College, Nottingham. The College has an award-winning mental health support service. Contact Kathryn James on 0115 953 4249.

**Building
COMMUNITY
by making
CONNECTIONS**

Come to a 'no labels' inclusion conference at Nottingham's East Midlands Conference Centre on **25 February 1999**. We will explore pathways and partnerships to community citizenship for all. Themes will include building bridges into community life; education; employment; good news; the media challenge; health, housing and homelessness; inclusion tools; leisure time and regeneration; and healthy living centres. Contact Community Connections on 0115 967 1794.

Neville's story

After a period of mental health difficulties, Neville Dessau applied to Community Connections in May 1997. He was supported in his application by Julie Swann, his Occupational Therapist. Neville wanted to become a volunteer in order get his mind 'in gear'.

As he was skilled in administration and computer programming, the Nottingham Law Centre was approached for a placement where Neville could gain useful experience and update his skills.

The work was fairly straightforward to begin with and Neville received vital support from his care manager, Dean Pearson. But after a promising start, Neville became unwell during the fifth month of the placement and needed to take a break. Cheryl Weston, the volunteer co-ordinator at the Law Centre, agreed that he could return when he felt well again. Although Neville kept in touch it was to be eight months before he felt well enough to attend on a regular basis.

Since returning to the Law Centre, Neville has gone from strength to strength and recently increased his hours. He has felt ready to take on more responsibilities, and has recently asked Community

Connections for support in finding a relevant college course. His work at the Law Centre is of a high standard and continues to improve. He has developed his work skills, but, more importantly, there is something else that is difficult to verbalise. It is a subtlety that is not easily measured - ambition has resurfaced, along with self belief.

Everyone involved in supporting Neville have found it a positive and rewarding experience. Good communication, support and a common aim has helped Neville to achieve success. Most important has been a tolerant and supportive community host who values Neville's contribution. A big thank you to all concerned. Neville is looking forward to the future and hoping that his voluntary work will eventually lead towards paid employment.

With Jane Danforth, Community Bridgebuilder - Volunteering, at Community Connections, Nottingham. Tel 0115 967 1794 (Jane notes that permission has been obtained from all mentioned in this article.)

New Employment Initiative for People with Disabilities

WorkRight: The Nottingham Job Coach Initiative was formed out of an identified local need for greater support in employment for disabled people.

Established through a European funded project led by Remploy Ltd., the project will work in partnership with leading local organisations. The Boots Co. plc, Employment Services, Greater Nottingham TEC, New College Nottingham and the Nottingham Healthcare NHS Trust have all added their weight to the project and representatives from these prominent companies will sit on the project's Steering Group.

The project will provide support and training for people with disabilities wishing to enter open employment, as opposed to sheltered employment, whilst encouraging local businesses and employers to see the positive side of offering disabled people employment opportunities.

Said Mike Hudson-Scott, Senior Job Coach, "The aims and objectives of WorkRight are to positively support people with a disability in obtaining meaningful, open employment. This new and exciting initiative pioneers the non-traditional access to employment for people with a disability. Each job is carefully matched to the individual's needs together with the needs of the employer."

Training and support are given on-the-job and will last for as long as the client needs it. The whole process will be based on an individualised approach in order to maximise an individual's potential for success in the job. Thus, some people will need intensive support and others, the bare minimum. Should a job's specification change at any time, the Job Coaches will return to update the employee's skills.

For more information contact Senior Job Coach Mike Hudson-Scott on 0115 953 2047 or Project Manager Alison Ward on 07887 628 620.

What's happening in Leicestershire?

Kate Phipps is a manager in the Social Services Department. For the past year or two she has been talking to people about the future of day centres for people who have experienced mental health difficulties. Kate wrote to us...

This summer we talked to people who come to our centres, our staff and colleagues in health, education and the voluntary sector.

This marked the culmination of over twelve months' work, where we looked at what is good and what is not so good about our service.

Unanimously, the good things are: 'safe spaces', things to do, reliability, and links with education and health. The not so good included: being in one building, transport and access for people in villages, and the fact that younger people feel left out.

As a result, a new 'community resource service' will be launched in January 1999. It will focus on 'getting in on' education, volunteering, employment and making sure the safe spaces get better, providing time to sit, chat and get support from others. We also want to increase joint work with community mental health teams, day hospitals and further education and employment professionals. It is early days, but enthusiasm is high. Instead of aiming for inclusion while running building-based services, inclusion will be our main purpose.

Wish us luck!



“And then it dawned on me:
 Belonging isn't taking someone out, it's not volunteering your time, it's sharing something of yourself. So I tell people that I'm not looking, in essence, for volunteers; but if you have a gift, an interest or something, that you wish to share, please share it with this person.”

Sandra Nahornoff

The Great good Place

Ray Oldenburg is a sociologist who writes about "Third Places" in his book *The Great Good Place: Cafe's, Coffee Shops, Community Centres, Beauty Parlours, General Stores, Bars, Hangouts and How They Get You Through The Day.*

The first two places are home and work, but the third place is an informal spot where people gather on neutral ground to associate, share good cheer and converse with a diverse group of others. These are "places where individuals may come and go as they please, in which no-one is required to play host, and in which all feel at home and comfortable."

A Third Place:

- ◆ must be on neutral ground.
- ◆ is a 'leveller' - an inclusive place where one's station in life is insignificant and where one's personality is the most important characteristic.
- ◆ is a place where the main activity is conversation, regardless of the functional purpose of the setting.
- ◆ is a place where regulars are trusted.
- ◆ is a place where one can become a regular if one wishes to be.

Do you know these places in your locality?

The Runners

With her medical history, Michelle is probably one of the last people you'd expect in a running club. Born with knee problems, she was sensitised to what people with disabilities go through.

After surgery during college she joined the Running Club, moved up into a leadership position, and then began working towards her goal of having the Club welcome people who have disabilities as members.

Lawrence walks with the easy gait of the athlete that he is. Growing up in a small town in Texas offered few opportunities for a youngster with a learning disability, but his mother pushed for him to be included in mainstream school, and they saw that he could run, *really* run. Lawrence became the school's track star and began to coach younger long-distance runners. After school, Lawrence's mum met Michelle, and they quickly realised that Special Olympics would bore Lawrence to death. "So I invited him to join my Running Club instead", says Michelle. Lawrence's fast time and friendly manner just blew the other members away and he took no time at all to make friends. He is now one of the area's best runners and has become active in the Club's many social activities as well as the races.

Johnny has labels of learning disability and schizophrenia. He has his own flat, but prior to his Running Club days, had no friends or social life. Today, though, he sings in a church

choir, attends a computer class, and is job-hunting. His interest in running began at Special Olympics where he did the 200 metres and the 400 metre relay. Now, in spite of a knee injury that is slowing him down, he's running the mile. "I like to get up at 5am and start running. It's fun and something I really do for myself. But I also enjoy helping the other runners. I teach them how to do the stretches."

The Saturday morning sky is bright as the crowd gathers for

*How are friendships born?
For most adults,
the starting point is
a common interest,
shared activities
and experiences -
being involved
together in
something each one
genuinely enjoys.*

Like running.



the run. The Club has men and women, teenagers and retired people, including some recent members who have disabilities. Twenty minutes before the starting gun, the athletes gather to stretch and warm up. Adam, exuberant, positions his upstretched arms into a V - "V for victory!" he declares. The group members follow his lead, smiling and excited.

Just before the start, an official explains that at the first bend, the people doing a long run turn left, while those doing the shorter run turn right. There's some confusion among the ranks, so when the race begins, someone sprints ahead and points each person the right way.

Finally the last runner crosses the finish line. The crowd gathers while officers of various running clubs announce upcoming runs and invite everybody to next month's social events. As the crowd disperses, there are handshakes, hugs and pats on the back.

*Abridged from "Community Connections...Weaving Friendships".
For a free copy write to: Texas Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities, 4900 N. Lamar Blvd, Austin, TX 78751-2399, USA.*

Schools

The Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education analysed national league tables of school exam results. Seventy percent of special schools failed to enter any students at all for GCSE in 1996. Only 4% of 15-16 year olds in English special schools obtained 5 GCSE passes A-G, compared with 87% in the mainstream. Given the diverse population in special schools, success would be expected to be higher. The report has been researched and written by Gary Thomas, Professor and Reader in Education at the University of the West of England. Copies can be obtained from CSIE, 1 Redland Close, Elm Lane, Bristol, BS6 6UE.

Human Rights and School Change: The Newham Story by

Linda Jordan and Chris Goodey is published by CSIE, 1 Redland Close, Elm Lane, Bristol, BS6 6UE. It tells how the London Borough of Newham moved towards the closure of most of its separate special schools and units over a 12 year period, between 1984 and 1996, while at the same time improving mainstream provision for all pupils.

The Newham story covers the early days of policy making, with the consultations and the compromises, and shows how the change makers kept a vision in focus. It describes the building of the mainstream support network, staff development, and pupil achievement. The contributions of parents and disabled people emerge as an important catalyst in the moves to de-segregation.

Interestingly, Newham is also

the LEA with the largest percentage improvement in its GCSE pass rate (1997 figures). Yet more evidence that everyone gains from inclusion.

The Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education has just produced a new report called *Disaffection and Inclusion* which is based on the

experience of Merton Education Authority, London. In Merton permanent disciplinary exclusions have decreased following moves by the LEA to a more inclusive approach to difficult behaviour. These results go against the national trend for rising exclusions. Instead of concentrating provision for disaffected pupils in an off-site behaviour support centre, Merton switched its main efforts to preventing difficult behaviour through supporting mainstream schools and classes. Get the report for £7 from CSIE tel 0117 923 8450.

Anyone for a beer?

8pm onwards
on 3rd
December 1998
and 18th
February 1999
at the Gateway
Hotel,
Nottingham (tel
0115 979 4949).

Ask at
Reception for
the Inclusive
Futures group.
Everyone is
welcome

INCLUSION IN SCOTLAND

Clare Pitkeathly has recently been appointed as *Inclusion Development Worker (Children)* in Edinburgh. Instead of focusing on "what's wrong", she will:

- * compile a positive portrait of the young person and what they need on order for education to work well for them
- * offer independent advocacy to support the young person's own choices and negotiate with the school and education authority
- * put parents and the young person in touch with networks of support
- * assist teaching staff and the education authority to develop policies which value diversity and welcome all children.

We wish Clare well in her endeavours. You can contact her at *Access Ability* on 0131 475 2300 (telephone and minicom).

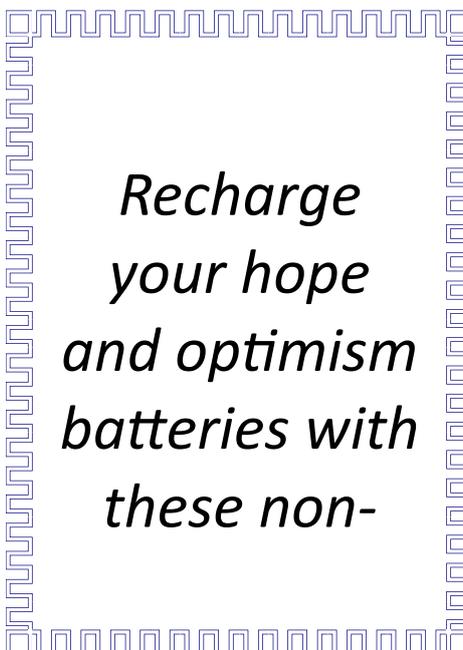
Reading matters - four testimonies on family life written by parents of children with disabilities

Anne Fadiman's, *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down* (1997, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, New York) starts with American doctors (mistakenly) telling an immigrant Hmong family that their severely disabled daughter is about to die. The family reacts in shock and horror, not only because they do not want to lose their daughter, but also because to them, the doctor's statement means the same as "we are about to kill your daughter." The family will not accept the imminent death of their daughter and I won't spoil the story beyond telling you that the family is right and the doctor is wrong. It is the powerful story of one family's hope. For those who need or just enjoy a periodic booster shot of hope as parents of children with disabilities, it is great.

Kenzaburo Oe's (1995) *A Healing Family* is another excellent book. Oe's 1994 Nobel prize for literature capped off a brilliant career of writing existential fiction. *The Healing Family* is a family narrative. Oe's book includes illustrations and a brief afterword by Yukari Oe, the wife of the author. In his mid-thirties, Hikari Oe remains mentally and physically handicapped, epileptic, and shows some features of autism. He speaks simply, but he has written some very beautiful classical music with two CDs and national prize for classical composition to his credit. Michael Brub's (1996) *Life As We Know It* is also partly about

family transformation, although the author does not explicitly state it. Like Oe, Brub is also an exceptional writer. As the subtitle suggests, it is about "a father, a family, and an exceptional child," in this case a son with Down's syndrome. The book presents Brub's evolving perspective in what appears to be a process of transformation. In many places the book seems like a stop-

social justice that he already possessed have informed his perspective on disabilities and how people experience them at the end of the twentieth century. *Life as We Know It* presents his perspective on disability and it is very much worth reading. The book is about cultural representations of disability as they connect with the personal experiences of the author and his family, but it is also of great interest as an example of a personal transformation.



*Recharge
your hope
and optimism
batteries with
these non-*

action photo that has caught the author in mid-air as he leaps between the world as he saw it in pre-Jamie reality and the world he is beginning to see as Jamie's father. This is not to say that these worlds are entirely alien to each other; they are not, but the analysis has been forever transformed.

If Brub's experience of parenting a child with a disability has informed his perspective on a wide variety of social issues, it is also true that his keen sense of culture and

Barbara Gill's (1997) *Changed by a Child* is a series of almost 200 short meditations, each headed with a relevant quote. Gill is the mother of Amar, a boy with Down's syndrome. As the title implies, Gill and her family have been transformed by Amar. The meditations do not provide a narrative of the process, but they are organized into three sections that provide a kind of map of the process.

Any parent who has been through the process will recognize the feelings behind the meditations in this book. Any parent who is still in the midst of the journey and uncertain of where it will finally lead can read this with some reassurance that there are some very positive possibilities ahead.

Faith Communities

No Disabled Souls ...How to welcome people with disabilities into your life and your church.

by Jim Pierson
ISBN 0-7847-0768-5
Standard Publishing.

This book covers:

- ⇒ More alike than different
- ⇒ Friendship adventures
- ⇒ Practice looking at the heart
- ⇒ Inclusion: More than an Ideal
- ⇒ Relating with respect
- ⇒ Love, laughter, life and Heaven too!
- ⇒ Caring responsive congregation
- ⇒ Coping with a learning disability
- ⇒ Acquired disabilities change external conditions only
- ⇒ Assisting the family

⇒ Rehabilitating the whole person

Each chapter begins with a story of a person with a disability and how they have made a difference in his life. Then he goes on to share steps to making a difference. One quote from the book that I will share. It is by John Wern, director of JAF ministries. "Disability ministry is not disability ministry until the disabled are ministering." The viewpoint of this book is Protestant, evangelical, but not so overtly that it would not be helpful in other communities.

Faith Communities and inclusion of people with developmental disabilities

is a resource pack with 69 pages, containing details of dozens of published papers. Buy a copy from the Center on Human Policy, Syracuse University, 805 South Crouse Ave, Syracuse, NY 13244-2280, USA.

Stop Press

- Subscribe to Circles Network UK Tel 0117 939 3917.
- "Discovering Connections: A guide to the fun of bridging disability differences" by Linda Hall will be reviewed in Issue 3.
- Transforming your Day Centre into community support for people with learning disabilities? Get "Days of Change" from the King's Fund. Tel 0171 307 2400

SOCIAL EXCLUSION UNIT - WHERE NEXT?

Social exclusion is a shorthand label for what can happen when individuals or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown.

Tackling social exclusion is one of the UK Government's highest priorities. It's Social Exclusion Unit will focus on some of the most difficult problems, where several Departments need to work together and where solutions have been very hard to find. In particular to shift the focus of policies towards preventing social exclusion rather than merely dealing with its consequences. The Unit reports directly to the Prime Minister. The purpose of the unit includes promoting solutions by encouraging co-operation, disseminating best practice, and where necessary, making recommendations for changes in policies, machinery or delivery mechanisms. The unit will not cover issues which are of interest to one department only, or duplicate work done elsewhere. On 14/8/98 the Minister without Portfolio said "Our vision is to end social exclusion".

We do not know whether the Government has a clear vision of social inclusion. Do they support efforts to bring all marginalised and excluded people into the mainstream of community life? Do they want to see friendships built across traditional boundaries of age, ability and affluence? 'Tackling social exclusion' has become a popular phrase, essential in funding bids. What do you believe it means?

Inclusion for older adults

The basic ideas behind inclusion are simple. People have a right to belong to their natural communities. They have a right to friendships, positive roles and relationships with people who are delightfully different. In a ghetto, people who are considered alike on a single criterion are made to spend all their days with one another. This kind of ghetto might be comfortable, and the staff may be very caring, but it does not create social inclusion. Inclusion simply means building communities where everyone belongs. Surely that should include people who are 'old and full of years'?

So we sent out lots of emails, searching the world for projects which are inclusive of older people. Here are our findings so far.

- 1 Lots of people are working to help older people live in their own homes, rather than living in institutions. This is a good start, but inclusion means supporting people to get friends as well as food, participation as well as personal care.
- 2 Some services for older people are not equally welcoming to everyone. There are campaigns to try and make sure that people with lifelong support needs are welcomed into day centres and lunch clubs just the same as everyone else.
- 3 Kathryn Fox at the Community Membership Project in Waltham, Massachusetts, is working with older people who have a learning disability. They are using person centered planning and circles of support to help people sustain their lives in the ordinary community, rather than end up in the segregated elder system.
- 4 We were told that Harvey Sterns at the University of Akron is helping people who have used adult day services to retire from them and merge with the general population of pensioners.
- 5 On average, people with disabilities live much longer these days. As a result, services for older people will have to change.
- 6 Some service providers think that all old people want to be together and so set up retirement villages, day centres and so on. Others think that healthy older people shun frail people as they don't want to be reminded of what life can become. Can it really be true that such negative

stereotypes guide service design?

- 7 Some projects that are creating opportunities for retired people to participate in community life are limiting their work to relatively youthful and healthy pensioners. If inclusion means everyone, then surely somebody out there is supporting older people with complex needs....
- 8 One meals programme in Missoula, Montana, gives out meals vouchers instead of food. Low income and disabled people meet friends and eat in local restaurants - in the evening, sometimes!
- 9 A Swiss programme runs dances for people with dementia, carers and friends. Numbers have increased with every session. They don't yet go to publicly run dances....

So is anyone drawing on the thinking about inclusive communities in order to create innovative new services which will serve very old and frail people? We at Inclusive Futures would be delighted to hear details of projects which are working on this vital issue.



Issue 3 of the Inclusive Futures newsletter will be out by March 22 1999.
Please send your contributions or mailing list amendments to Inclusive Futures, 49 Northcliffe Avenue, Mapperley, Nottingham, UK, by February 19, 1999.