



July & August 2021 Newsletter

CALENDAR DATES

- Sat 3 July [Hitchin Youth Trust Family Support Session](#)
Hitchin Youth Trust Garden, Walsworth
Road, SG4 9SP - 2.00-4.00pm
- Sun 25 July [Picnic in the Park](#)
Cassiobury Park, Watford, WD18 7LG
12.00—3.00pm
- Wed 4 Aug [New Parent Park Meet Up](#)
Fairlands Valley Park, Shephall View Car
Park, SG1 1RP—From 10.00am
- Sat 7 Aug [Hitchin Youth Trust Family Support Session](#)
Hitchin Youth Trust Garden, Walsworth
Road, SG4 9SP - 2.00-4.00pm
- Mondays [Teen Fitness Group](#)
Via Zoom at 5.00pm
- Thursdays & [Teen Zoomers](#)
- Fridays Our Teen Social Communication Groups
meeting via Zoom at 6.45pm and 5.45pm
- Saturdays [Speech Therapy Groups](#)
Meeting Saturday mornings at Hitchin
and London Colney
- Sat 11 Sept [Hitchin Youth Trust Family Support Session](#)
Hitchin Youth Trust, Walsworth Road, SG4
9SP - 2.00-4.00pm



Up
On Downs

*If you have any
questions or
suggestions please
contact Sande, Jan
or Eleanor at:*

[enquiries.nhdowns
@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:enquiries.nhdowns@yahoo.co.uk)

*call:
(01727) 420365*

*Or visit:
www.upondowns.co.uk*





Family and Friends Get Together

Thanks so much to those who came along to Hitchin Youth Trust earlier in June for the first of our family support meetings since lockdown eased. It was great to see how much the children had developed and lovely to meet some new faces too. Thanks for making it such a super afternoon and look out for details of our next meeting on the following page.



We're Back!

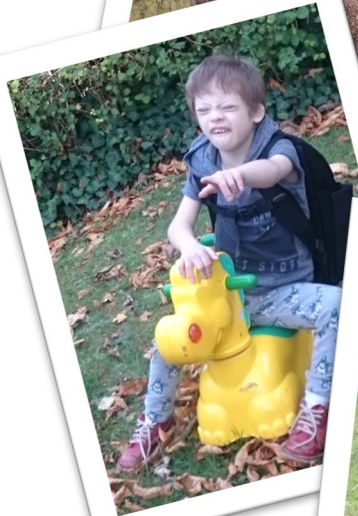
3rd July and 7th Aug 2.00-4.00pm

Hitchin Youth Trust, 111 Walsworth Road SG4 9SP

We were so excited to resume our face to face activities with a family support session at Hitchin a few weeks ago we can't wait to do it again in July and August. We will be making full use of the lovely garden at HYT, with lots of great outdoor toys there, but there will be able to use of indoor facilities and we can move under cover in the event of a shower. Please note, in September we will return to our regular schedule of the second Saturday of each month for these meetings.



We want to make things as easy as possible for families so there is no need to book, but if you can let us know you'd be dropping by that would be great. There will be refreshments, table tennis, bubble machine, colouring, plant a sunflower, mini-trikes, parachute games and more. Most importantly, there will be the chance to chat together (at a social distance!) and interact with other people in real life.



All equipment will be thoroughly cleaned prior to use and in between families and hand sanitiser will be available. To let us know you'll be coming or if you have any questions please email us at: enquiries.nhdowns@yahoo.co.uk

There will also be a chance to buy some of the lovely WDSO merchandise as seen in our last newsletter.



Volunteers - We Thank You!

To celebrate volunteers week in June Up on Downs would love to acknowledge the wonderful contributions that our volunteers make.



Without the lovely volunteers there would be a lot less drinks dispensed at events. You also help groups attend bowling, you organise arts and crafts, you even help Santa!



Most importantly our volunteers provide significant fundraising by organising raffles, doing sponsored events or running baked goods or yard sales. All these efforts help to fund our ability to provide much needed support and enable us to provide our Speech and Language programme.



Thank you all for your patience during the pandemic, please continue to keep in touch. We are very much looking forward to resuming our activities and we will need you again when the time is right.



If you would like to register as a volunteer for Up on Downs please email enquiries.nhdowns@yahoo.co.uk



Picnic in the Park

Sunday 25th July 12.00—3.00pm Cassiobury Park, Watford, WD18 7LG

Whilst it is still easier to meet out of doors we thought we would take advantage of the (hopefully!) good summer weather and come together for a picnic at Cassiobury Park.

We will be meeting on the large grassy area between the car park and the cafe,

look out for our banner and gazebos. Toilets are nearby in the café / splashpark building and the large play area is only a short stroll away. Drop by with a picnic and something to sit on any time between 12.00 and 3.00pm—we are really looking forward to catching up with you and hearing your news. For those that don't know it



Cassiobury is a large park close to central Watford. There is a large play area with something for children of most ages and a splash park for the brave. See the [park website](#) for full details of all the facilities.

The main [Cassiobury Park car park](#) is at Gade Avenue WD18 7LG, this is free for the first two hours (you must still display a ticket, use the ticket

machine if you can as if you use your phone to pay by Ringo there will be a transaction fee). [Other parking](#) is available.

In the interest of managing little ones expectations please be aware that access to the splash park is quite limited owing to Covid restrictions, although there is a priority system for disabled visitors. For more information please see the [Splash park access details](#). There is plenty else of interest throughout the park though, the play area is well equipped and there is even a ride on train (£2.00 per person, cash only).





Book of Hope

Daisy's 21 Wishes

Daisy's 21 Wishes is a charity set up by Corina Gander, mum to Daisy, who has Down's Syndrome. It celebrates difference and aims to work alongside professionals supporting families who are faced with the toughest times.



Corina is collecting stories from families whose children or babies have spent prolonged periods in Paediatric Intensive Care Units. These are to be collated into a 'Book of Hope' that will be made available to families in PICUs. If you have a story you would like to share or would like to find out more about this initiative please get in touch.

If you want to find out more about the Daisy's 21 Wishes Charity see their Facebook Page. You might also be interested in reading the article about Corina and her family which appeared in the Daily Mail last year [here](#).





New Parent Park Meet Up

**4th August 10.00am
onwards—The Old
Bandstand, Fairlands
Valley Park, Stevenage**



It was really great to finally be able to meet some of our 'lockdown babies' and see younger members in person when we met at Fairlands Valley Park earlier in the month. It was lovely to have a proper face to face chat to find out how everyone was getting on, even if we couldn't steal a cheeky cuddle of the beautiful babies. Eleanor entertained with some impromptu singing and signing and the adjacent yoga class proved captivating for many of the children!

Join us again in August when we will be getting together with our pre-schoolers once more. We will meet at the old bandstand, pictured below, from 10.00am onwards—it would be great to see you there.



The old bandstand is between Shephall View car park, Fairlands Valley Park (free, SG1 1RP) and the lake. It is close to the main play area and café where there are toilets available. Fairlands has several car parks but some of these are quite a distance from the bandstand as it's a very large park so head for Shephall View.



Spotlight on...

Hertfordshire Discount Schemes: HAND card and Carers Passport

With restrictions lifting and the prospect of the long Summer holiday to come, why not consider using your discount cards to get the family out and about. Members have reported some venues are increasingly asking for proof of disability before issuing discounts. Wherever possible check terms before visiting and use schemes like these to get the beneficial rate you are entitled to.



Hertfordshire Additional Needs Database (HAND) is a voluntary register of disabled children from 0-25. By joining the register you can get discounts around the county (and beyond).

Benefits of joining:

A free Digital HAND card offering perks and discounts for family days out in Hertfordshire.

The SEND newsletter providing the latest news from SEND services.

Opportunities to feedback views on SEND services. [For more information visit the local offer website here.](#)



The **Carers' Passport** offers over 440 discounts across a variety of activities and services across Hertfordshire.

A vital resource for any carers that gives valued support in the form of financial savings but also helps carers to feel valued, recognised and supported.

The application process is easy and available [online here.](#)

However if you would prefer to make an application by post than the applications forms are available via your local library or call 01992 58 69 69 to request one directly from Carers in Herts.

Up on Downs products have arrived...

With the help of our fabulous members , Up on Downs has produced a beautiful piece of artwork for World Down Syndrome Day that we simply couldn't keep to ourselves.



Mug £10



Notebook £8



Bag £15



Limited stock available.

Email enquiries.nhdowns@yahoo.co.uk
to place an order.

National Down Syndrome Policy Group

May was exciting because it saw the launch of a new **All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Down syndrome**.

APPGs are informal groups comprised of Parliamentarians from different political parties. The groups have no official status within Parliament but by signing up to the group, MPs are declaring an interest in issues around Down syndrome and a willingness to work with members of the community to address issues of concern.

The initial five key areas identified for improvement are:

- Community and wellbeing
- Education
- Maternity Care
- Healthcare and Research
- Employment

The APPG has already begun its first major campaign with Dr. Liam Fox recently putting forward a draft Down Syndrome Bill in the Houses of Parliament. This could be an exciting development for the community and we shall continue to monitor this news story. To find out more please visit the [National Down Syndrome Policy Group website](#) to hear directly from its Trustees as to why this bill is so important.

The APPG includes the following MPs from the local area:

- Sir Charles Walker, MP for Broxbourne
- Andrew Selous, MP for South West Bedfordshire
- Sir Oliver Heald, MP for North East Hertfordshire



St Albans Half Marathon

It was a real privilege to represent Up on Downs as official cheer marshals at the St Albans Half Marathon this year. We had great fun cheering everyone on, including lots of familiar faces—particular congratulations to friends of the charity Nicky Laitner and Trish Hall. We have every admiration for



them and everyone who took part in the 5K and half marathons on what was surely the hottest day of the year so far. Well done to all!

THANK YOU!

Everyone who has supported us by purchasing our WDSD merchandise—thanks very much!



Trish and Richard hall for their St Albans Half Marathon donations—well done for battling in the heat and finishing!

The Stockley family, for their continued support with their regular monthly donations.

The Google employee who has nominated Up on Downs for a workplace donation via the Benevity giving scheme—let us know who you are and we can thank you properly!



Up
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Preparing for Primary school transition?



Transitions are difficult for anyone, but for the younger members of our community it can be particularly tricky. If you are coming up to a transition into Primary school soon then you may be interested in checking out the '[Smooth Transitions Toolkit](#)' produced by Herts for Learning. Lots of resources are available here to help schools, families and children prepare for those changes.

Look out for our private FaceBook page and ask friends and family to like our public page.

Up on Downs has a FaceBook page Up on Downs which can be viewed by all.

We also have a closed group for members only: Up OnDowns (set up as an individual person on FaceBook). To join this search for Up onDowns and you should see our balloon logo. Send us a friend request and if you're member we'll add you to the group. Look us up!



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