

# EVERYONE MATTERS

FORCES ADDITIONAL NEEDS  
& DISABILITY NEWSLETTER



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## WELCOME



Welcome to our first "e-newsletter"! This new venture will enable us to communicate our news more quickly and efficiently with the entire FANDF membership.

This edition brings news of the next biennial Conference at the Ministry of Defence in London in June 2016. It seems a long way away, but planning has started and we want you to keep the date free to join us. If you have experienced previous Conferences and have any comments to make, we would be grateful to hear them via the Forum website as we want to make the event as useful and enjoyable as possible!

Also included in this newsletter are stories and photographs from this summer's SSAFA Short Breaks, which really speak for themselves and show what a marvellous opportunity they are for our less advantaged children. If your children have not experienced

these yet, the stories may encourage you to apply for next year. My children have both benefitted from the Short Breaks. In the past and I can recommend them wholeheartedly.

As ever, please follow us on the Forum and let us know if you have any comments or queries on the way Forces Life is affecting your family.

Thanks to everyone who has sent in articles for this edition of the FANDF Newsletter.

The newsletter always needs articles for future editions, so if you have any ideas or information, please either email or post them to the address on the back page.

**Iza Gill**  
**FANDF Chair**

SAVE THE DATE - MONDAY 20 JUNE 2016

## FORCES ADDITIONAL NEEDS & DISABILITY FORUM CONFERENCE

**The Forces Additional Needs and Disability Conference will be held at the MOD main building on the 20th June 2016. It is aimed at tri service military families giving them an opportunity to meet families who are in same unique situations as they are, having a serving member of the family together with an adult or child with an additional need or disability.**

Iza Gill the FANDF Chairperson and FANDF Forum members will provide the opening addresses and we have invited a number of interesting speakers to present on the day. There will be an array of exhibitors at the venue and a chance for Families to meet and discuss issues or concerns with senior welfare providers, during lunch.

There will be a meet and greet dinner the evening before on the 19th June 2016 at the Union Jack club for those families staying overnight.

SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity will cover the cost of accommodation for any family wishing to stay at the UJC on the evening of the 19th June 2016.

If you require further information about the conference do not hesitate to contact Frances Robinson the Short Breaks Leader and AN&D Adviser on **020 7463 9315** or email **Frances.r@ssafa.org.uk**

Do look out for the posters and information or visit the website at **www.ssafa.org.uk**



\*Please Note\* The Newsletter can be photo copied and passed on. Views printed in this newsletter are NOT necessarily those of the Editor or SSAFA.

# **A FAMILY'S PERSPECTIVE ON THE SSAFA SIBLINGS AND YOUNG CARERS BREAK**

**Mum-of-two Steph sent her daughter on the SSAFA Siblings and Young Carers Short Break for the first time this year. Her daughter gained confidence, independence as a result of the SSAFA Short Break and was an extremely positive experience and accomplishment this year.**

We are the Eustace family; I'm Steph and currently a full time carer to Harvey, studying for my Special Educational Needs advanced diploma. My husband Mark has been serving in the RAF for 10 years as an Aircraft Technician at RAF Coningsby. We have a daughter Felicity, 9 and son Harvey, 6. Harvey has autism, ADHD and epilepsy; he was diagnosed when he was 3 and a half years old. Harvey struggles with his behaviour, having violent outbursts, which are sometimes directed at Felicity and myself. Felicity is amazing with Harvey; she sees only the best in him, even when he's having a really bad day.

Last year we heard about the SSAFA Sibling Breaks from our local SSAFA branch. I looked into it and thought what an amazing opportunity it would be for Felicity to have a break, make some friends who are in the same boat, and have fun. I am so glad I filled the forms in now as Felicity enjoyed it so much. The activities were amazing and Felicity especially enjoyed the abseiling. She was very scared but with some encouragement, she did it and she is so proud of herself for doing it, and so are we. Her short break has given her lots of confidence, independence and a series of stories she loves to tell about her adventures. The volunteers were absolutely amazing and really supported her.

Whilst she was away we were able to have quality one-to-one time with Harvey, but it also gave everybody a long overdue break from the difficulties that we face with bringing up a special needs child. As a result, upon Felicity's return, everybody felt refreshed.

We loved going to pick her up and seeing how happy she was and seeing all she had accomplished. She can't wait to fill out the forms for next year's short break. Thank you to all involved at Short Breaks.



# A FAMILY'S PERSPECTIVE ON THE SSAFA FAMILY'S BREAK

**My name is Rosanne Reid, I am married to Colin Reid and we are based at MOD Corsham in Wiltshire. We have two children, Isaac (21) and Archie (10). When we were posted at RAF Lossiemouth and whilst Colin was deployed on operations in Afghanistan, Archie was really struggling at school. I had many meetings with his teachers but nothing seemed to progress.**

At a families brief, I met a lady from SSAFA called Janet. I expressed my concerns and how futile it seemed. She said she would pay me a visit at home. When she came, she encouraged me to persist with the school and gave me other helpful advice and contacts that led to a diagnosis of Developmental Coordination Delay (Dyspraxia) and other physiological issues including low muscle tone, hypermobility, and poor working memory that affects his organisational abilities. His self-esteem and confidence was low due to falling behind further and further at school and was not helped by his Dad being away a lot since our move to Scotland.

On Colin's return and within 6 months we moved to Corsham. We hoped that we would have a better semblance of a "normal" family life, with a more stable job for Colin and being closer to family. Whilst reading Unit Routine Orders one day, Colin read about SSAFA Short Breaks and asked if it was something I would like us all to do. I had some concerns and Archie was extremely

hesitant! Despite this we thought that this would be a great opportunity and we decided to apply.

Archie's hesitance followed him to Exmoor and we could see the anguish on his face. This was quickly alleviated due to the welcoming staff Fran, Hannah and Jackie. They gave us our itinerary and without time to unpack, we met our instructor, Ed and other families in our group and were taken to our first activity.

Abseiling is not the first thing I would have chosen for Archie to undertake! However, Ed and his new friends helped to give him assurance. He reluctantly went down the wall and went on a zip wire, which was the start of an amazing change in Archie. He enjoyed all of the activities laid on, even finding energy to go swimming in the evenings!

It was fantastic to see our normally quiet and thoughtful son making new friends and spending real quality time as a family. It was good for Colin and I to meet other parents and their children. Although every family had their own different and specific difficulties, there were common experiences and helpful advice that could be sought.

It was a fantastic experience that allowed us to visibly see our son develop day by day and hour after hour. I would thoroughly recommend the SSAFA Short Break scheme and we will definitely apply again - fingers crossed!



# SSAFA SHORT BREAKS



DEN BUILDING

ABSEILING



CLIMBING

6 volunteers to coach the young people

37 forces children with disabilities, additional needs or siblings and young carers who have a brother, sister or parent with disabilities or additional needs



KAYAKING

CRAFTS



ARCHERY

SSAFA'S GOT TALENT AND DISCO

# CONTACT US

Frances Robinson - Short Breaks Leader

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Tel: **0207 463 9315** Fax: **020 7403 8815** Email: **Frances.r@ssafa.org.uk**

**ssafa.org.uk**

## USEFUL CONTACTS

### National Autistic Society

Accept difference. Not indifference

The National Autistic Society is the leading UK charity for people with autism (including Asperger syndrome) and their families. They provide information, support and pioneering services, and campaign for a better world for people with autism.

[www.autism.org.uk](http://www.autism.org.uk)

Helpline 0808 8004104. lines open 10am – 4pm)

Monday to Friday (free from landlines and most mobiles)

### FOR CARERS

Carers UK, is an organisation for carers 020 7490 8818 or freephone 0808 808 7777

### Benefit Enquiry Line 0800 882200

For Disabled People & Carers Overseas Benefit Advice Line 0191 2187878 (For families travelling overseas who may require benefit advice overseas)

### FORCESLINE

Our Forces Line is completely independent of the military chain of command, free and totally confidential; it offers listening, information and signposting. Open 10.30am to 6.30pm.

- From the UK (Main Line): 0800 731 4880

- From Germany: 0800 1827 395

- From Cyprus: 800 91065

- From the Falkland Islands #6111

- From anywhere in the world (Call-back)

+44 (0)1980 630854

### LOCAL SUPPORT GROUPS

#### RAF Marham

Tom Smith 01760 446051

#### Anchor Group - Plymouth

Adele Towsey (NPFS) 01752 779054

Sarah Osborne - group member 01752 292020

Dan Richmond - NACO/NPFS 01752 343225

#### Gillingham, Kent

Jon Vann 01634 841487

#### HMS Neptune

Special Needs Support Group Families Centre, Churchill Square, Churchill Estate, HMS Neptune 01436 679526

#### EAST BERKSHIRE

Mrs Lindsay 'Priory Special' Support & Advice for Physically Disabled Children & Additional Needs Education. 01753 830346

If you also have a group please let us know so we can add it to our list. If you want a group 'on camp' why not get in touch with your local SSAFA Social Worker, Army Welfare Worker or NPFS representative or start one yourself! If any group requires help with setting up, please contact us.