

## INTRODUCTION

As you will have read in our newsletter *Loud & Clear* the Inland Revenue have introduced new regulations regarding tax relief on charitable donations. We can now reclaim the tax on any gift, no matter how large or small, regular or one off, if given by a tax payer who has returned a Gift Aid Declaration form. These new measures will help us to raise more money throughout the year.



I have sad news as I am leaving Sense Scotland and moving onto pastures new. My time with Sense Scotland has been so enjoyable and rewarding and I shall certainly miss you all. Thank you for all your help during my time with Sense Scotland and I am sure this will continue with my successor.

*Ellen Ferguson*

## Enabler Services – recognising individuality

Many of you will be aware of the excellent work carried out by Sense Scotland staff in supporting people of all ages who use our respite, residential, holiday and day services. You will know the high value they put on responding in an individual way to people who are after all individuals first, whether or not they live alone or occupy the majority of their time in a group setting. Although individuals may share particular needs with one another they will have differing interests, personalities, skills and home circumstances which all require a more personalised support.

Enabler services, which have been offered in recent years by Sense Scotland in Dundee, Ayrshire and now Glasgow, are a natural progression in the way we offer services to people with sensory impairments. The service offers one-to-one support for people with complex needs or those

who are fairly independent and just need a guiding hand. This can range from a couple of hours a day with on call service to 24 hours support. It may be based in the family home, the individual's own accommodation or start from a designated meeting point each day. This may be the only support received or form part of a package involving more mainstream day services or residential care provided by another agency. Basically, the service is able to be very flexible and is tailored to the personal requirements of each individual.

Each person will have their own small dedicated staff team who can also call on the experience of other staff within the organisation. As the service is based around one person it allows greater flexibility in the day to day planning of activities, allowing for changes without affecting other people. This flexibility does not take away from the intensive nature of the work and skills, which will always be required when working with someone with complex needs, but it does provide more scope for grasping unexpected opportunities as they arise. ....continued  
*overleaf*

*Enabler Service contd....*

People who have used these services have made immense strides in their development, particularly social skills, because of the constant companionship of someone who is there just for them. They succeed because they are based around ordinary relationships, giving more control to the individual. It is also an excellent way to work in partnership with families who are often still highly involved in providing care and support for their relative. This partnership may include a progression towards full time support away from the family home and can also act as a bridge between different services in assisting people plan for the future. We see enabler services as the ideal response to many requests for support, and their ongoing development as a key element in the future of Sense Scotland services.

Megan Wilson  
Principal Officer  
Community Services

## Hitting your head off a brick wall?

Are you suffering from hitting your head off the brick wall syndrome? If the answer is yes, then let me tell you there are a lot of us around

I am the lone parent of a deaf-blind, mentally impaired daughter who also has a syndrome called Familial Dysautonomia (FD).

Can I say, at this point, I don't feel sorry for myself or my daughter whose name is Shireen. She is 9 years old and a delight to be with.

My problems have always been with the so called professionals who, no matter what I said, they knew better, when in fact, I know,

knew better, when in fact, I know, they know very little with regards to Shireen. Shireen attended a school in North Ayrshire for four years, in the second year I knew she was not in the right educational establishment. I did address my concerns within the school but was more or less ignored, I felt that no-one was listening to me. Shireen needed a teacher that can sign fluently in order for my daughter to communicate with her teacher and for her to be educated. At Shireen's school, this was not the case. When her teacher went off sick, there was no-one to replace the teacher who could

finally told me what I knew all along was that the school wasn't meeting her Educational Needs therefore an appropriate school would need to be found outside of my local authority. The relief I felt coming out of that meeting was tremendous. My daughter is back to her old self and now attends Carnbooth School in Glasgow and has been there for the past six months and is loving it.

I am not a confident person with lots of self-esteem. I am only a parent but a very stubborn one. If I can do it you can too.

I have started Parents for Change



Shireen with mum Isabel

sign. There were times I was asked to teach the classroom assistants to sign! I even kept Shireen off school until the Local Authority provided a teacher that can sign, this was for a couple of months. Shireen's behaviour was becoming difficult to manage, it was also soul destroying watching my one time funny, confident, happy child become a very violent depressed child and all of the fun had gone out of her. But there was light at the end of the tunnel.

After three years of arguments with the professional bodies, they finally told me what I knew all

within the Advocacy in North Ayrshire, telephone number 01294 472362. Phone me, if I am not there, leave your name and number and I will get back to you.

At this point can I thank Pat Brown, Advisory Officer Sense Scotland; Morag McClure, North Ayrshire Advocacy Service; B Holloman, Cameron Solicitors; Margaret Ann Sutherland, named person and, of course, my family and friends who kept me sane.

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# Future Fundraising Events

## **Sense Scotland Seventh Golf Spectacular**

Wednesday 30th August 2000, Hilton Park Golf Club, Milngavie, Glasgow. Team and individual prizes and your chance to win a car for a hole in one. £200.00 per 3 person team.

## **Sense Scotland Helen Keller Award**

Art exhibition 10th — 20th October 2000, Kelvingrove Museum & Art Galleries

## **Sense Scotland Ladies Luncheon, Sunday 19th November, 2000 12.30pm, Marriott Hotel, Glasgow**

Enjoy the pleasure of not having to cook Sunday lunch, indulge in a glass or two of Champagne followed by a three course luncheon finishing with tea or coffee and petit fours. Guest speaker and entertainment.

Tickets £25 each or £225 for a table of ten.

## **Sense Scotland/Marks & Spencer Fashion Show**

Wednesday 21st February 2001, Glasgow City Chambers. Ticket price to be confirmed

To receive further information or order tickets for any of the above events please contact:-

Fundraising Department,  
Sense Scotland, 5th Floor,  
Clyde Way Centre, 45 Finnieston  
Street, Glasgow G3 8JU

Tel: 0141 564 2444

Text: 0141 564 2442

email: fundraising@sensescotland.org.uk



Graham, right, swimming with Stephen Chisholm his support worker

## The boy everyone gave up on – Until Now

Graham was born on the 28th January 1968, our first child. He was a beautiful, healthy baby, always smiling, so much so he was nick named Laughing Boy .

He was 17 months old when he contracted meningitis, he pulled through but was left severely brain damaged. "Dumb, epileptic, mentally retarded" was how he was described, and he was registered blind and his balance affected.

At the age of six years we were told by the experts that the only help they could, or would, give us was to put Graham at the top of their waiting list for Lennox Castle Hospital as a full time resident. No way were we going to give up on our son.

We kept Graham at home until he was 14 years old and did the best we could but it really was hard going as we also had twins who were 17 months younger than Graham.

We at last received help in the form of a Mrs Sheena Walker who ran a day centre at Cumbernauld.

She took Graham daily until he was about 16 when he was then transferred to a day centre in Glasgow, where he attended until September of last year, but they could not give him the help and stimulation he needed.

Fortunately we have at last been put in touch with what we think is our son's future. I thank God we have at last found Sense Scotland .

He goes there on a daily basis and although he cannot tell us we know he loves it and he just can't wait to get to Durham Street every morning.

The way he greets the young men and women who care for him is amazing. You just know that he is well looked after.

At the age of 31 years our son is at last receiving the help he has so long been denied. When he leaves us each morning, a happy young man, we know that Sense will continue to teach him and help bring him to his full potential and that is all that we have ever wanted for our son.

Greg & Mary Keegan

# Developing Sense

The past fifteen years have seen the services provided by Sense Scotland grow considerably. The aspirations and experiences of parents, with their continuing involvement, have been crucial to the growth of Sense Scotland and the provision of current services.

The opening of Finglassie in Fife brings the number of **Community Houses** to a total of ten with more being planned for the future. These houses are home to over 40 deafblind and multiply impaired people and reflect the family ethos that is fundamental to the organisation.

The **Day Centre** at Durham Street, Kinning Park, Glasgow is used by residential and day clients. The appointment of Art and Music tutors, in conjunction with the Arts Development Officer, has allowed individual programmes to be tailored to individual needs which has resulted in many new skills and interests being identified.

Cardonald college provides an educational tutor who has developed various environmental projects. She also encourages learning of basic cooking skills with baking sessions.

Each day staff use a professional programme of physiotherapy with those who wish to join in, using music and movement to suit individual needs.

The computer room is there to help develop communication and to teach the use of "Moon" which is a tactile language, simpler to learn than braille. The sensory room provides the opportunity to enjoy an aromatherapy foot or hand



**Fun on the bouncy castle at a family fun day**

massage or to simply relax and enjoy the lights, music and vibrating bed. This room can also be used to stimulate the senses and to encourage people to discover the use of switches and sound beams.

The **Respite Service** is located in the family resource centre in Glasgow and has provision for seven children at any one time. The service operates 365 days each year. This service offers a welcome break for both parents and children alike and the children can enjoy many new and exciting experiences with the staff and other friends.

**Playdays**, which are open to all members of the family have been a great success as they encourage families to mix with others who share the same problems as themselves.

The **Holiday Programme** is also planned and organised by staff at the family centre and this year there will be three groups at Ayr, Trefoil and the Borders.

The **Advisory Team**, consisting of three advisory workers, covers the whole of Scotland with one member of staff based in Dundee and

the other two in Glasgow. Requests for visits and help in many different ways stretch the resources of the team but nonetheless they provide a very comprehensive service for people at what is usually a critical time of their lives.

The **Practice Development Department** is a team of practitioners with many years of experience in working with deafblind or multi-sensory impaired people who have complex communication difficulties. They offer support directly to staff teams working in a range of settings, including adult training and resource centres, community living projects and long stay hospitals.

As Sense Scotland's services continue to grow, new needs are identified and new services investigated. Your continued support of this very vital work is greatly appreciated as we strive to support deafblind and multi-sensory impaired people towards more independence.

Bill Mitchell,  
Head of Fundraising