



down's syndrome oxford

Newsletter | March 2020

From the Chair

Let me start with a belated Happy New Year to you all from my family and me. As 2019 drew to a close, there was no let-up in the vast array of DSO events taking place and the numbers of people participating. It was lovely to see so many of you at the **Christmas party** in Exeter Hall. We believe it was DSO's biggest Christmas Party so far. What a lovely reflection of the continuing growth of our amazing community. Thank you to everybody who helped make these events happen.



2020 is already shaping up to be another great year for DSO, with some wonderful events in the pipeline and some newer initiatives taking shape:

Our inaugural **Dual Diagnosis Social Group** gathering took place (see page 20) and the first in a new series of **Twilight Training sessions for Teaching Assistants** was held (see page 15), aiming to champion good practice in the classroom and to connect our valuable TA community. More sessions are planned for the year ahead, helped by funding from The Coventry Building Society. Any TA supporting an individual with Down's syndrome in Oxfordshire can attend, so do make sure your local school knows about this valuable opportunity.

I can't believe that we are already wishing **Happy 1st Birthday to the DSO Singing and Signing Choir**, which continues to go from strength to strength (see page 5). You can see them next in Witney on Saturday 21st March 2020. What a great way to celebrate **World Down's Syndrome Day!**

Two major fundraisers are underway: do you know of any rowing enthusiasts who can join the **Rowathon** (see page 26) or runners who can join our growing **Oxford Half Marathon Team** (see page 27)?

Finally, a special mention for **Kelly Stacey** who's organised the **Primary Club** for the last seven years and will be stepping down this year. On everybody's behalf I would like to thank Kelly for all the wonderful events she has organised. Who will take the Primary Club Coordinator role - could it be you (see page 17)?

Wishing you all a wonderful Spring and I look forward to seeing you in the weeks and months ahead.

Jos Smith, Chair

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World Down's Syndrome Day

How will you be celebrating WDSD on Saturday 21st March?

World Down's Syndrome Day is fast approaching, and once again DSO has created a WDSD Awareness and Fundraising Pack to help us celebrate the day in our children's schools and local communities. WDSD is also one of our major fundraising opportunities this year.

The pack include:

- ⇒ A4 Posters - for raising awareness of WDSD & your fundraising efforts
- ⇒ A5 Leaflets - for desk and bag drops in class or at work
- ⇒ Folding cardboard collection box - for easy gathering of cash donations
- ⇒ A fundraising ideas sheet - some great tips and ideas for raising money, raising awareness or speaking to your school or classmates about DS
- ⇒ Optional DSO merchandise - DSO wristbands, balloons, etc.

If you'd like one of the packs, please get in touch via our fundraising email:
fundraising@dsoxford.org.uk

DSO Choir Performance in Witney

The DSO Singing and Signing Choir will be celebrating WDSD and raising awareness of DSO (and hopefully some funds!) by performing once again in Witney town centre.

They will be performing at the **Woolgate Shopping Centre** (by the clock tower outside Waitrose) **at 12.00pm**. If you are in the area, do stop by and say hello.



Caroline Wood has already **raised £50 for DSO** by selling World Down's Syndrome Day badges.

Thank you Caroline!



We'd love to see photos of you all celebrating WDSD. Send them to us so that we can include them in the next edition of the newsletter.

newsletter@dsoxford.org.uk

Fundraising and awareness-raising tips for World Down's Syndrome Day



For the confident among you

Offer to go in to school and speak in assembly or to your child's class...

- **Keep it simple and age-appropriate**
- **Focus on similarities rather than differences**
- There's a **great book** called *It's OK to be different* by Todd Parr which may help you (it'll certainly get the kids laughing!)
- Teach a simple song in **Makaton**.
- Ask all the children to think of **something they find difficult** and how it would feel if no one had the patience to help them
- Get some teachers to demonstrate **how they walk** and ask the children to guess how old they were when they started walking (I bet there's no difference between the early developers and late starters!)
- **Wear odd socks** and ask the children to see if they feel different, smell different or if one does the job better than the other.

There are loads of ways to approach talking about Down's Syndrome in a child-friendly way!

For the quieter among you

- Ask if the children can all **wear odd socks** for a donation in a bucket – don't be put off that Sports Relief and other events may be around the same time as you'll probably find that the school would rather support a small local charity especially if you ask nice and early!
- **Hold a bake sale** – everybody loves cake and if you ask for people to help you with the baking this can be a really easy way to raise loads of money. Just remember the weather in March isn't always fantastic, so think about holding it under cover!
- Offer to do **biscuit decorating** with a class or the whole school. Sock shaped biscuits with some blue and yellow icing and sprinkles are a sure fire winner with kids
- Get some **DSO merchandise** (by emailing fundraising@dsoxford.org.uk) and set up a table-top sale. No baking required here!
- If your school has a **Facebook page/group**, post links to inspirational images/videos, eg: https://youtu.be/Biex1XR_mpo 'Wouldn't change a thing '1,000 years' song
<https://youtu.be/nguLcSzN7mM> 'Down's Syndrome 101 - the basics'
<http://bit.ly/DSPeopleSay> Things people with Down's Syndrome are tired of hearing
- Set the children a task to learn **21 signs in 21 days** throughout March. You could print off some free Makaton resources and get the school to send them home in book bags. Arrange to go in to the school assembly and get the children to demonstrate their signing to you – a chocolate coin for everyone who remembers all 21 signs will really make WDSD stick in their memories!
- Ask school if they would be happy just to simply put up some **posters or blue and yellow balloons** – anything that might get the children asking "what's WDSD?"



Amber has Down's syndrome and is about to start school together with her twin sister, Olivia. Although at first her experience is positive, she soon starts to struggle and asks to stay at home. Olivia is keen to keep her twin sister in the same class and so begins the struggle of keeping the girls together at school.

The film follows the challenges for both girls through 4 years of school and charts the changes in their relationship, uniquely from their own perspectives.

Amber and Olivia live in Oxfordshire with their parents Ian (director and producer of the film) and Marion and their older brother Finn. They are all proud members of Down's Syndrome Oxford.

Amber and Me @ Phoenix Picturehouse

Wednesday 18 March, 6.20pm

For more information and other screenings please see:

www.amberandmefilm.com or @amberandmefilm

Happy Birthday to the Choir



On Saturday 1st February the **DSO Singing and Signing Choir** celebrated its **first birthday!** And what a fantastic year it's been—a year of fun, friendship, live performances, and lots of fundraising. Of course, none of this would be possible without the dedication of Annie, their amazing choir leader, and Elsa, who does a sterling job organizing it all. A huge thank-you to you both.

The choir celebrated their birthday at their Saturday afternoon practice at Wheatley Park school with a **stunning birthday cake**, made by Emily Robinson, and **delicious brownies**, made by Julie Bricknell.



Our young reporter and choir member, **Alexander Horrocks**, writes:

“What I like about the choir is I really like the songs we sing and this time we are doing new songs. They are called:

- ⇒ Dance Monkey by Tones and I
- ⇒ True Colours from Trolls by Anna Kendrick and Justin Timberlake
- ⇒ Try Everything by Shakira from Zootopia
- ⇒ Higher Love by Kygo & Whitney Houston

I like the songs so far.”

Choir Christmas Performances

The choir gave two performances in the run-up to Christmas. We had been busy adding to our ever-growing repertoire with a range of Christmas songs and carols, so when we were asked to **perform as part of the Oxford Lights Festival**, we jumped at the chance.

We were lucky to be given a prime spot on Bonn Square, on a Saturday afternoon, when Oxford was busy with Christmas shoppers.

We almost had full choir, with the majority of our members taking part in the performance. We certainly looked the part with our Christmas hats and choir t-shirts. As soon as we started to perform, the crowds gathered

and it wasn't long before we had an audience that was three to four people deep, with many jostling to get a view of us.

We performed for about 40 minutes and in that short time **we were thrilled to have collected £637** in our buckets!

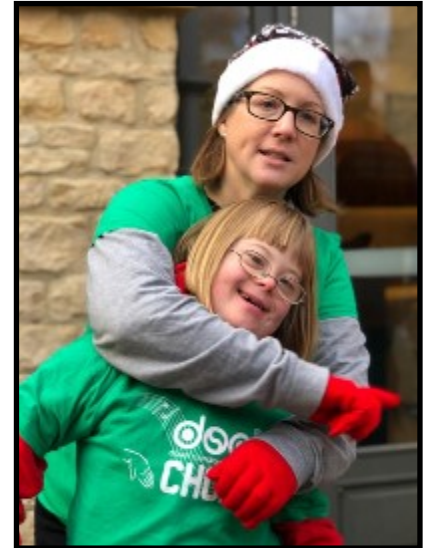
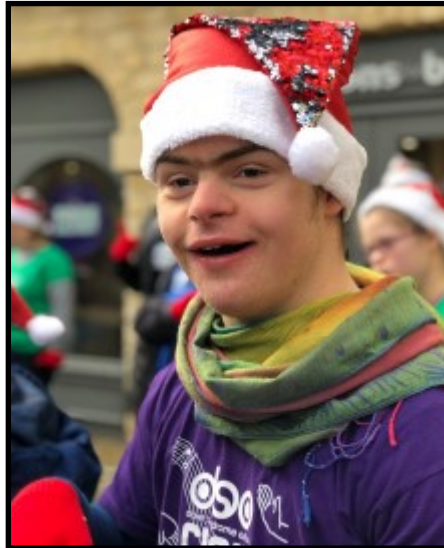
Our second performance was a few weeks later in the **Woolgate Shopping Centre in Witney**. We gathered on a chilly Sunday afternoon and performed our Christmas set twice. Again we were armed with collection buckets and managed **to raise a brilliant £551**.

This means we raised **a total of £1,188 across both performances!**

Bonn Square, Oxford



Woolgate Shopping Centre, Witney



A very generous donation ...



DSO was thrilled to recently receive a **very generous donation from Johnnie Littler, the organizer of the Thame Music Festival**. Johnnie contacted Elsa to say:

“The DSO choir were the **surprise hit of our festival last year**. The joy on the faces of both the performers and the audience was a delight to see and summed up everything we are trying to do with giving people a chance to perform and see live music.

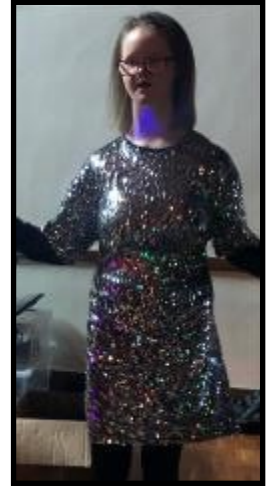
I heard from Trish Clempson how much time, effort and love you bring to creating such experiences for DSO. **We would very much like to make a donation of £500 to you in recognition of your spirit.**”

Thank you very much Johnnie!

Christmas Party

On Sunday 8 December we held our Christmas party at Exeter Hall in Kidlington. This was our **biggest party yet** with approximately **150 people** attending!

Jeff Allen entertained us with party games and a disco, and once again the very talented Samuel Pittick sang beautifully as we all tucked into the buffet. And to finish of the afternoon we were lucky to have a visit from Father Christmas. Thank-you to everyone for making it a great success.



Pantomime Visits

Emma Smith writes:

DSO had another bumper year of panto visits at the end of 2019.

We were lucky to be given an allocation of free tickets by The Province of Oxfordshire

Freemasons who invited our members on their annual trip to the Oxford Playhouse panto again. This year's show was **Beauty & The Beast** and **40 of our members** were able to attend. As always, the Masons generously provided the tickets for free, along with ice creams and goody bags for the children.

We took 78 members to see Justin Fletcher in Cinderella at the Reading Hexagon on the Saturday before Christmas and another 60 members to the relaxed performance in early January. As always, Justin enchanted the children and the show was spectacular. It had all the elements of the panto we've come to expect: a soaking from water pistols, the Ghostbusters skit and a bra that was meant to hold three. It'll make sense if you were there!

Justin gave a special hello to 'our friends from Oxford' and thanked us for supporting the panto over the last few years. It was a nice touch, as was **his appearance at the stage door** after the performance to sing the Hello Song from Something Special with the assembled children and parents.

Justin and his dame Paul Morse will be back at the Hexagon this Christmas for Beauty and the Beast and we'll be offering tickets to our members around September on a first-come, first-served basis (although I will try my best to accommodate any families who haven't already been).

These shows have become regular fixtures in the DSO calendar over the last few years and are a great way to kick off the festive season.



DSO Merchandise

In December we were pleased to launch a new range of DSO merchandise in addition to our already popular Christmas merchandise. We now offer a range of clothing that is **suitable to wear all year round**.

You can choose a T-shirt, hoodie, zoodie (hoodie with a zip!) or our popular ladies slouch top all in a range of colours. You then **personalise your item** by choosing from two different DSO slogans in an exciting range of colours, including gold, silver, or rose gold!

We will be placing orders for merchandise four times a year. **The next order deadline is Saturday 28th March**. Simply fill in the order form on page 13, take a photo of it or scan it, and return to:

fundraising@dsoxford.org.uk

Here are some of our DSO members modelling the new merchandise. I think you'll agree they all look great!

Remember orders need to be received by:

Saturday 28th March 2020

How to order

- ⇒ Choose your garment type
- ⇒ Choose your size
- ⇒ Choose your base colour
- ⇒ Choose your text option
- ⇒ Choose your text colour
- ⇒ Fill in your order form
- ⇒ Return your order form to **fundraising@dsoxford.org.uk** by **Saturday 28th March**



1. Select your garment type, size, and colour

Kids Merchandise	Sizes	Colours
Kids T-Shirt £12.00	1-2y, 2-3y, 3-4y, 5-6y, 7-8y, 9-11y, 12-13y, 14-15y	Red, Black, Navy, Light Grey, Dark Grey, or Hot Pink
Kids Hoodie £17.50	18-24m, 2-3y, 3-4y, 5-6y, 9-11y, 12-13y	Red, Black, Navy, Light Grey, Dark Grey, or Hot Pink
Kids Zoodie £19.50	18-24m, 2-3y, 3-4y, 5-6y, 9-11y, 12-13y	Red, Black, Navy, Light Grey, Dark Grey, or Hot Pink
Kids Sweatshirt £17.50	18-24m, 2-3y, 3-4y, 5-6y, 9-11y, 12-13y	Red, Black, Navy, Light Grey, Dark Grey, or Hot Pink

Adult Merchandise	Sizes	Colours
Adult T-Shirt £14.00	Small, Medium, Large, XL, XXL, or 3XL	Red, Black, Navy, Light Grey, Dark Grey, or Hot Pink
Adult Hoodie £22.50	Small, Medium, Large, XL, XXL, or 3XL	Red, Black, Navy, Light Grey, Dark Grey, or Hot Pink
Adult Zoodie £24.50	Small, Medium, Large, XL, XXL, or 3XL	Red, Black, Navy, Light Grey, Dark Grey, or Hot Pink
Adult Sweatshirt £22.50	Small, Medium, Large, XL, XXL, or 3XL	Red, Black, Navy, Light Grey, Dark Grey, or Hot Pink
Ladies Slouch Top £30.00	S(10), M(12), L(14), XL(16/18)	Black, Light Grey, Navy Marl

Adult Size	Small	Medium	Large	XL	XXL	3XL
Chest Size	34/36	38/40	42/44	46/48	50/52	54/56

T-shirt



Hoodie



Zoodie



Sweatshirt



2. Select the text option

Option A:

Down's Syndrome Oxford



Option B:

Down's Syndrome Oxford

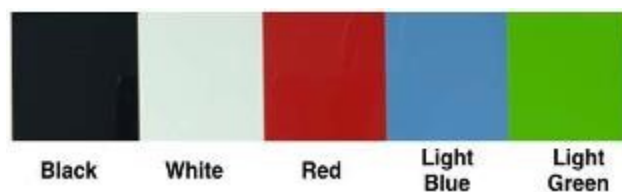
#SEE THE ABILITY



3. Select the text colour

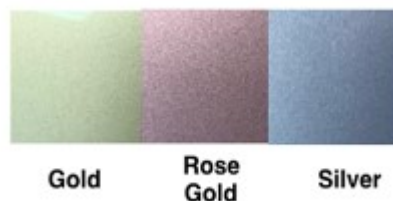
Plain text options:

(Available for both Options A and B)



Plain text options:

(Available for both Options A and B)



4. Fill in the order form

- Email your completed order form to **fundraising@dsoxford.org.uk**
(Once you've filled in the order form on page 13 and you can either scan it or take a photo of it and attach it to your email).
- The deadline for orders is **Saturday 28th March 2020.**
- We will contact you following receipt of your order to arrange payment.
Payment is respectfully requested within 48 hours, in order to secure your order.



DSO Merchandise - Spring 2020

ORDER FORM



Name:

Email:

Telephone:

Address:

Please submit orders **no later than Saturday 28th March 2020** to:

fundraising@dsoxford.org.uk

We will email an invoice to you for payment within 48 hours of receipt.

Please tick your preferred delivery method:

- ☐ I will collect from a DSO Choir Meeting
- ☐ I will collect from a DSO Committee Meeting
- ☐ Please deliver to the address above 1st class signed for (additional £4.50)

Item	Item Colour	Size	Quantity	Text Option	Text Colour	Cost
<i>Example: Kids Hoodie</i>	<i>Red</i>	<i>3-4y</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>£17.50</i>
					+ postage (if needed)	£4.50
					TOTAL	

Down's Syndrome Oxford:

Twilight Training



- Mini training sessions for TAs, teachers, nursery staff and professionals who support a pupil with DS — a different topic each time
- This session—**Sensory processing in children with DS**
- Speech and language therapist specialising in sensory processing issues available to answer questions
- View books and resources
- Network with other staff —share experiences and examples of resources & apps
- Refreshments and cake!

Sensory Processing



To book a place email
Marion:

jonsimon@clara.co.uk

Date: Mon 30th March 2020

Time: 4-6pm

Venue: Risinghurst Community
Centre, Kiln Lane

OX3 8ER

Cost: FREE

Training Update

Twilight Training

DSO has launched an exciting new training initiative for teachers, TAs, SENCos and nursery staff who support pupils with **Downs Syndrome**. Each mini training session, which is free to attend, takes place between 4.00pm and 6.00pm. The first session took place before Christmas; the topic was **Teaching children with DS to read**.

The session was well-attended with staff from both mainstream and special schools. The training was provided by Speech & Language Therapist Colette Lloyd, and Rachel Clare from the SENSS Down's Syndrome and Complex Needs Team.

All attendees were given a **DSO goodie bag** containing free stationery and each school was given a list of resources, for example, See and Learn packs, Makaton books, Clicker or Special iApps from which they could choose an item. **These free resources**

were generously paid for by a Coventry Building Society grant.

The feedback from those who attended was very positive so we are aiming to run more sessions throughout the school year, each with a different topic. We have also received a further Coventry Building Society grant to help fund these future sessions.

We would urge all interested school staff to join our email mailing list, found on the DSO website or to join our newly launched closed Facebook group 'DSO Schools Network' to hear about future sessions.

The next training session is taking place on **Monday 30 March** and will be on **Sensory Processing**. See advert on previous page for more information.

Elsa Gill, Training Organiser

DS Dual Diagnosis Training

In October, DSO ran a training day 'Understanding Dual Diagnosis of Down Syndrome and Autism Spectrum Condition'. The workshop was open to both parents and professionals and was run by Geraldine White, a Clinical Psychologist from the Down's Syndrome Association.

Geraldine outlined the current research on this topic and explained why a diagnosis is important but can sometimes be difficult to

achieve. She also went on to explain some specific support strategies and interventions which can be helpful for people with a dual diagnosis, for example, social stories, sensory diets and equipment and comic strip conversations.

Importantly, parents were given a valuable opportunity to ask questions and to share their experiences in a supportive group.

Elsa Gill, Training Organiser

**DSO have set up a new DS Dual Diagnosis social group.
Find out more about it on page 20.**



down's syndrome oxford

**A new closed Facebook group for
TAs, teachers and nursery staff.**

'DSO Schools Network'

'DSO Schools Network' is a new closed FB group for TA's, teachers, nursery staff, SENCOs and professionals supporting pupils with Down's syndrome in Oxfordshire. The aim of this friendly group is to share resources and training opportunities discussed at Twilight Training. Search 'DSO Schools Network' and request to join, this involves answering a couple of questions about your role.

Please note, this is not a group for parents.

Positions Vacant

At DSO, we rely on volunteer parents and supporters to carry out all the great work we do and we're currently seeking two new volunteers.



New Primary Club Co-ordinator needed



We're looking for a keen volunteer to take on the role of Primary Club Coordinator. The role involves organising social activities for primary-age children with DS and their families, managing the annual club budget, and writing updates for the newsletter. If you are interested in taking on the role or would like more information about it **please contact Jos Smith** (chair@dsoxford.org.uk).

Thank you Kelly

We would like to say a **huge thank you to Kelly Stacey** who has carried out this role for the last 7 years or so. She has done a fantastic job and organised some wonderful outings.



Elliot's Shed Volunteer/s needed!

We're looking for a keen volunteer or two to take on the management of Elliot's Shed.

Elliot's Shed contains specialist equipment and educational resources for members of Down's Syndrome Oxford to borrow. It provides a great opportunity for our members to 'try before you buy', especially on items that can be expensive to purchase.

We're seeking a keen volunteer to take on the management of Elliot's Shed. The role would involve cataloguing all the items, advertising them to our members, and arranging collection and drop off of items when members wish to borrow things.

The role could be shared if more than one person would like to take it on.

For more information on what the role entails please get in touch with

Jos Smith (chair@dsoxford.org.uk)

Around the World with Cook + Chat

In 2018 Ellie Walpole, mum to Thomas (aged 16), set up a Cook + Chat initiative for young people with Down's syndrome, and over the months it's gone from strength to strength. Ellie tells us about the initiative, how she set it up, and her reasons for doing so. Whilst Cook + Chat is not a DSO-funded activity, many of our members attend, and it's a great example of a very successful parent-led initiative.

Ellie Walpole writes:

It's easy to say 'a picture tells a thousand words' but actually if you enjoy looking at the pictures then this is just a snapshot of what has become a terrific regular hook-up for a great bunch of tweens, teens and beyond.

When I started Cook + Chat a couple of years ago I was aiming to engage our children who have a low level of spoken language to support each other and engage using food as the discussion point. This ranged from getting the children to ask 'do you like broccoli on your pizza?' to 'can I grate the cheese?'. But actually they do enjoy the cooking and EATING a lot and through our regular monthly hook-up have had an opportunity to cut and grate and stir and snip putting together the menu of the week. We have made plenty of pizza but also at Halloween we made 'Mummy Dog Rolls' and also some super sweets and puddings too.

Thanks to a great Social Engagement Group 'The Lets Cook Project' I attended a 2-day workshop (FREE and thanks to a



Buckinghamshire 'Less Waste' Initiative) with Sarah Long (North Bucks DS group) and Anna and Amy from Thomley Activity Centre in how to deliver a cooking workshop.

Following this we were **given funding to buy our now famous 'party pans'** (basically a large electric lidded frying pan). The pans are a great way for the youngsters involved to cook together rather than crowding around a hob—see pictures.

We have had a number of terrific 'buddies' involved too who are key to this session being a success. These boys and girls get stuck in directly supporting the kids attending rather than their parents – and from what I am told they get a lot out of the session too. Having youth supporting the youth also makes this more enjoyable for everyone (including the parents).



We have also had some fun with a round-the-room question session where the children pick out a question from a hat and read it to the person next to them. One of my favourites would be 'If the rain could be any colour then what colour would you like it to be?', or 'Where is your dream holiday?'.

Now known as 'Around the World with Cook + Chat' we vote on a country and base the menu for the next session on the cuisine of that nation. This also gives us something to base our 'chat' on in the form of a brief show and tell at the beginning of the club. For me at least, it was all about getting the kids to use their voices more in a social environment – and this is leading to stronger friendships between both the youngsters attending and the great teenage buddies too.

I must say a MASSIVE thanks to Thomley Activity Centre. Anna has grabbed this and ensures that we have the café at Thomley available exclusively, prepares a menu and ensures the ingredients are available. Lorna is our rock on the day – always busy getting ready, supporting the youngsters and making sure we are clean and tidy!

Not featured in the photos are the parents who get a chance to CHAT too... all parents are expected to stay on site for the duration of the club unless they nominate someone else to be their support instead.

I would love to run or set up a second club in another part of the county so just ask!
(elliewalpole@hotmail.co.uk)



New DS Dual Diagnosis Social Group

In January, a new social group was created called the **DS Dual Diagnosis Group**. Organised by **Elsa Gill**, whose son Jack has a dual diagnosis of DS and Autism, the group is aimed at DSO children with an additional diagnosis of Autism, ADHD or with additional complex medical issues. (A formal diagnosis is not required to join the group). The friendly group is smaller in numbers, with extra adults on hand to help and hopes to run activities with a sensory feel.

The first session was run by **Andy Fowler of Rhythm Zone** and consisted of **drumming** and then **circus skills** after a break. The feedback from parents was positive so we hope to run more sessions in the future.



Big Band makes a Big Bang for DSO



On Saturday 25th January 2020, **Oxford North Rotary Club** held a Charity Big Band Evening with **Oxford Youth Big Band**. The evening aimed to **raise funds for DSO and Parkinson's Oxford**.

Over 200 people came together in Exeter Hall, Kidlington, to dance, and in some cases sing the evening away to a play list of wonderful tunes, from the traditional Glen Miller to the more recent Amy Winehouse. The dance floor was full and feet were tapping at the amazing performance of the Oxford Youth Big Band.

DSO family and friends had two tables and were joined by two local residents who were not members of DSO, but will be staying in touch with us. It was a **great example of DSO reaching out to those in the community** who could benefit from our services, but simply don't know what we do.

An extremely successful raffle raised enough to cover all of the cost of running the evening and **whilst the final sum raised won't be confirmed until June, we've been told that approximately £1000 was raised** for each charity and an anonymous donor who attended the evening, **donated an extra £500** to each charity. What an amazing gesture of support.

Jos Smith, Chair



Pre-school Club



The Pre-school Club have recently enjoyed **two outings to Millets Farm.**

The first was a visit to **Father Christmas.** We had great fun singing with the elves, making our own bear in Santa's workshop, and making reindeer food before we got to meet the big man himself!

The second was a visit to the **Sprouts Playbarn.** We had a busy two and half hours where the kids got to run around and play in all the different areas with slides, ball pits, and a basketball court. By the end I think the parents were more exhausted than the kids but everyone really enjoyed themselves!

Natalie Rowe, Pre-School Club Co-ordinator



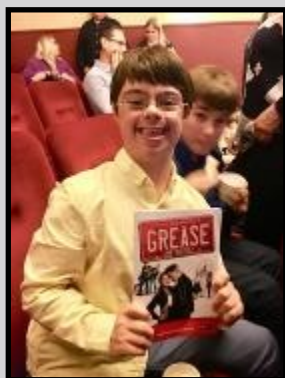
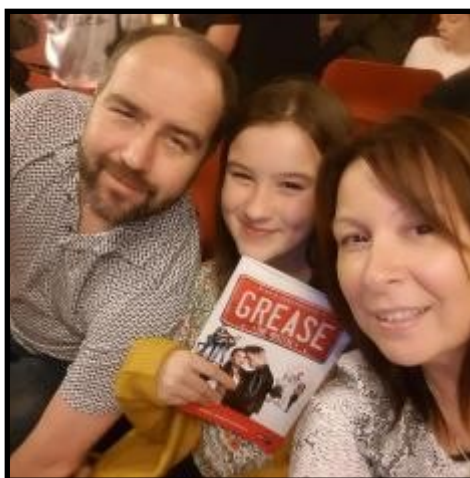


10+ Club



In October a group of nearly fifty 10+ Club members enjoyed a trip to see the musical **Grease** at the **New Theatre** in Oxford. It was a great show with all the familiar hits including *Greased Lightning*, *Summer Loving*, and *You're the one that I want*. A special mention must go to our very own Pink Lady, Lucy Mitchell-Farmer, who looked the part in her wonderful outfit!

Lucy Sanderson, 10+ Club Co-ordinator

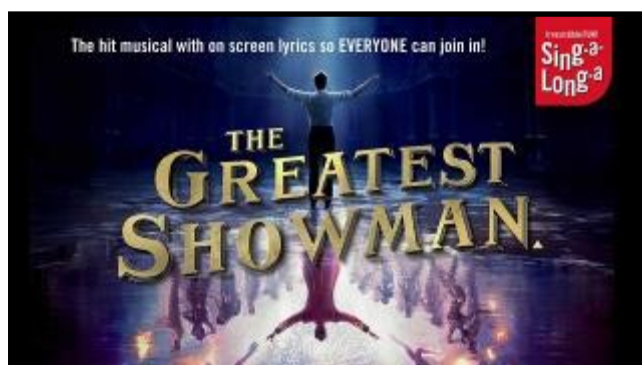


Our young reporter and DSO member, **Alexander Horrocks**, writes:

"Thank you for everyone who came to the New Theatre Oxford to see Grease. We had good songs. I like:

- Grease
- You're The One That I Want.

What are your best bits?"



The 10+ Club's next outing is in March is to see the **Greatest Showman Sing-along** at the New Theatre. We're thrilled to have **over sixty** people attending the trip, many of whom are also members of the choir so not only will we be singing along to the songs but signing along too! We'll share photos in the next edition of the newsletter.

Our Kids

Emma gets her red belt

A huge well done to Emma Jing for achieving her red belt for Karate. Mum Angela says "she is not very stable on her feet even for normal walking, running etc., so she has worked really hard to get this grading which involving one leg balancing/kicking etc. We are all very proud of her."



Gorgeous little elves!

Twins, Jack and Andrew, looking fantastic in their outfits for the elf day at nursery.



Samuel makes a splash

Samuel had his first swimming trip to a wave pool and absolutely loved it!



And a happy birthday to ...

... **Bill** who turned two on 31st December, and to twins **Jack and Andrew** who celebrated their fourth birthday on 22nd January.



Then and now ...

Michelle Blackstock writes:

In January, **Emma Johnson celebrated her 18th birthday**. She had a great time celebrating with her friends who she has known since she was a baby when her family joined DSO.



Our families met in 2002. Below is a photo of our first Christmas party. We got together at the original DSO port-a-cabin at the Park Hospital for our children's first Christmas. We've been there for each other ever since. Our children are all going to be adults this year and we look forward to sharing the next chapter of their lives. It's going to be a busy year with lots of special parties to celebrate our lovely lot becoming ADULTS!



Rowathon Event

Rotary Club of Oxford North is staging its annual “Rowathon” at The Athlete Centre, Osney Mead, Oxford, on Saturday 25th April 2020 to raise money for Down’s Syndrome Oxford and Parkinson’s UK Oxford Branch.

The Rowathon features teams of four, rowing on static Concept 2 rowing machines over a half-marathon [21 kilometres] distance. With the race shown on a big screen, the event has a great atmosphere and everyone can see what they have to do to keep up with the leaders.

Each year since 2013, Rotary Club of Oxford North has recruited teams from a range of local Oxford companies. With the invaluable support and help of The Athlete Centre, at Osney Mead, Oxford, some very successful days have raised over £25,000 for a number of Oxford-based charities. **This year, we are very fortunate that the fun day will be held in aid of DSO and Parkinson’s UK Oxford Branch, Rotary Club of Oxford North’s chosen charities of the year**, and other Rotary charities in Oxford.

Each team is asked to obtain sponsorship, to pay for their entry-fee of £400, and also to provide additional funds for the charities - although participants may also raise money for their own nominated charity. The 2019 corporate winners were VSL and Partners, Commercial Property Consultants, based in Kidlington. It’s hoped they will be back to defend their crown in 2020. A great supporter and host of the event, The Athlete Centre, enter their own teams, and they set a very hot pace indeed.

Some gentler rowing comes from the Rotary team, and their German partner club has also taken part. For several years the Indian

Rowers, a team of guys who in June 2018, rowed from Australia to Mauritius (that’s 6000km!) in just over 60 days, have taken part.

There are still team places available so if you have a relationship with any local sports club, gyms or employers who might want to enter a team, please do encourage them to enter!

For more details and to find an application form to enter a team please go to **www.oxfordnorthrotary.org.uk/rowathon-2020**



CHARITY ROWATHON

Saturday 25th April 2020

The Athlete Centre, Osney Mead

Raising money for
Parkinson’s UK, Oxford Branch
and
Down’s Syndrome Oxford

For more details and to find an application form, visit our website:



www.oxfordnorthrotary.org.uk/rowathon-2020

Moving to Adulthood Workshop

At the end of November DSO arranged a “Moving to Adulthood” information evening, for parents of children aged 14 and upwards to give them information when thinking about arrangements post 16.

Gail Hanrahan from the **Oxfordshire Family Support Network** spent over 2 hours with a group of 20 parents and provided a wealth of information. As every parent knows, thinking about the next stage of life for your child with DS can be a worrying and anxious time, whether it's finding the right pre-school or secondary school, or making sure you are in receipt of appropriate benefits, etc. **This session was intended to be a starting point for thinking about options post 16.**

Gail was incredibly helpful and positive – she allayed some fears, gave practical information about the law, and above all reminded us to keep the interests of our child at the heart of

any decision making. She also inspired us to believe that although it may be a hard road, getting the right solution for your child is achievable.

Gail mentioned that any individual is welcome to contact the Oxfordshire Family Support Network – they exist for people like us! Their website address is:

www.oxfsn.org.uk/

We hope to arrange further information evenings for parents of young people aged 14 and over to help guide them through the next stage.

If you have any ideas of people or organisations who would be able to provide information, or if you have a specific request for information, please contact katharine.horrocks@Mkha.co.uk

Katharine Horrocks, *parent*

Run the Oxford Half Marathon and raise money for DSO

DSO are putting a team together to run
the Oxford Half Marathon on
Sunday 11 October 2020

If you are interested in joining the team,
please email

fundraising@dsoxford.org.uk

for more details.



Fundraising and Donations

DSO is extremely grateful to have been given the following money from 1st October 2019 to 31st January 2020, either through some amazing fundraising efforts or through donations.

Coventry Building Society
(in branch collection tins) **£111.13**

Coventry Building Society
(in branch summer raffle)..... **£211.10**

Halloween at the Old Post Office
Wallingford..... **£75.54**

Great Western Railway
dress-down day **£35.37**

Louise Allen Scentsy
Commission..... **£70.00**

Mrs Mills Carswell School swim
(100 miles in a year) **£113.00**

Blackbird Leys Bowls Club
summer fundraiser..... **£738.00**

Rivetnut Quarterly charitable
donation..... **£30.00**

Oxfordshire Freemason
Nominated charity donation **£550.00**

Mrs Bamford Christmas
donation **£65.00**

Anonymous one-off donation **£400.00**

Paypal Giving **£374.00**

Just Giving Pages **£143.00**

Amazon Smile **£56.00**

DSO Lottery income **£732.00**

Also a huge thank you to all those that give regularly to DSO via a **monthly standing order** donation.

**If you are making a donation via our justgiving page please email
treasurer@dsoxford.org.uk
so I can look out for it and make sure we can show our appreciation.**

Sarah Fonge, Treasurer

DO YOU SHOP ON AMAZON?

Remember, you can shop on Amazon and raise money for DSO at the same time!

AmazonSmile is the same as Amazon - same products, same prices, same service. The bonus is that DSO will receive 0.5% of the net purchase price of your shopping (excludes VAT, returns and shipping fees). It's easy to set up:

1. **Simply visit smile.amazon.co.uk**—the first time you visit you'll be asked to select your chosen charity
2. Select **"Down'S Syndrome Oxford"** as your chosen charity from the list of available charities and confirm.
3. **Start your Amazon shop on smile.amazon.co.uk** (NOT amazon.co.uk)
4. **Shop as normal.** That's it. Simple!

DSO is already receiving funds this way. In just four months we've raised **£56.00**. Just think how much we could raise if more of us shopped this way!



Fundraising and Donations



Blackbird Leys Bowls Club

Sarah Fonge collected a cheque from the Blackbird Leys Bowls Club. The club held a fundraising event and very generously donated the proceeds to DSO. The event **raised a huge £738!** A big thank-you from us all.



Freemasons presentation evening

In November, Jos Smith and Emily Higgins a charity presentation evening held by the Freemasons. They accepted a very **generous donation of £550** from Bertie Lodge and the Province of Oxfordshire. Thank you so much to Adrian Barlow for the nomination and to the Provincial Grand Charity Steward. We are so grateful for this wonderful support!

Freya's bike ride

When Freya Crawford, sister to Evie, was asked at school to choose a local charity and do something to raise money for them, she chose DSO as they have helped and supported her family so much over the years. The task she decided to take on was to cycle 21 miles (21 representing the addition chromosome that people with Down's syndrome have) over one week.

Undertaking this task in December was not easy and involved going out in the cold and dark after school, but she did it and managed to **raise a staggering £270.**

Thank you so much Freya, you are amazing!

Lottery Results



Recent Winners:

October 2019

1st prize - £50.00	Emily & Matt Robinson
2nd prize - £30.00	Ella Terblanche
3rd prize - £20.00	Sarah Stevenson

November 2019

1st prize - £50.00	Jane & Alan Bennett
2nd prize - £30.00	Carlyon Walker
3rd prize - £20.00	Netty Lings

December 2019

1st prize - £50.00	Miss W Parker
2nd prize - £30.00	Emily & Matt Robinson
3rd prize - £20.00	Ella Terblanche

January 2020

1st prize - £50.00	Netty Lings
2nd prize - £30.00	Katharine Horrocks
3rd prize - £20.00	Sarah Fonge

A big thank-you to all those who
take part for your continued support.

We now raise
£150
per month for DSO!



Some of our recent winners.
It could be you too!

Want to join the DSO lottery?

Each ticket is £5 per month

All you need to do is:

- 1** Set up a regular monthly payment to our lottery account
→ **Account number 29786768 / Sort code 30-80-45**
- 2** Send an email to Amanda Foulds at
→ **lottery@dsoxford.org.uk**
- 3** We'll allocate you a number, email you back to tell you your number, and let you know when you win!



Gift Aid Declaration

Please tick appropriate response:

- ☐ I would like DSO to reclaim the tax on all donations I've made since April 2000 and all my future donations until further notice. I understand that I must pay an amount of income tax or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax DSO reclaims on my donation(s).
- ☐ I am not a UK tax payer

I enclose my gift of £ _____ (Cheque/PO payable to Down's Syndrome Oxford)

Or

A regular gift of £ _____ per month/quarter/year (please delete as appropriate)

Commencing on the _____ (day) _____ (month) _____ (year)

Name of bank: _____

Address of bank: _____

_____ Postcode: _____

Account No.: _____ Sort Code: __ - __ - __

Signature: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Bank Ref: _____

(Completed by DSO)

Bank Instructions: please pay the above amount on the same day every month/quarter/year (as indicated) thereafter to Lloyds Bank (30-94-04) for the account of Down's Syndrome Oxford (a/c 01154094).

Please return this form to **Down's Syndrome Oxford**, not your bank, c/o Treasurer, Manor Farm, Waterperry, Oxfordshire, OX33 1LB

We will not share your information with any other organisations:

Your name: _____

Your address: _____

Postcode: _____

Registered Charity No. 1103850

Contacts

Chair

Jos Smith
chair@dsoxford.org.uk

Secretary

Roberta Caleste
secretary@dsoxford.org.uk

Treasurer

Sarah Fonge
treasurer@dsoxford.org.uk

Assistant Treasurer

Emily Robinson
info@dsoxford.org.uk

New Parent Contact

Emily Higgins
newparent@dsoxford.org.uk

Training Organiser

Elsa Gill
training@dsoxford.org.uk

Newsletter Editor

Lucy Sanderson
newsletter@dsoxford.org.uk

Media & Communications

Andrew Dubock
media@dsoxford.org.uk

Membership & Website

Matt Robinson
membership@dsoxford.org.uk
website@dsoxford.org.uk

DSO Lottery Organiser

Amanda Foulds
lottery@dsoxford.org.uk

Elliot's Shed

Post vacant
elliottshed@dsoxford.org.uk

Fundraising

Jos Smith
fundraising@dsoxford.org.uk

Preschool Club Co-ordinator

Natalie Rowe
preschool@dsoxford.org.uk

Primary Club Co-ordinator

Position Vacant
primary@dsoxford.org.uk

10+ Club Co-ordinator

Lucy Sanderson
10plus@dsoxford.org.uk

Early Development Group Administrator

Amanda Foulds
edgs@dsoxford.org.uk

Early Development Group Leader

Collette Lloyd (01993 883707)

Primary Development Groups

Marion Simon
pdgs@dsoxford.org.uk

**General enquiries email address:**

info@dsoxford.org.uk

DLA/PIP Application Support

Rowena Pearce (07512 210851)

SeniorMedicalAdvisor@dsoxford.org.uk

**Website:**

<http://www.dsoxford.org.uk>



Registered charity number: 1103850

**Facebook (closed group):**

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/dsoxford>

**Facebook (public group):**

<https://www.facebook.com/downssyndromeoxford>

**Twitter:**

[@DownsOxford](http://twitter.com/DownsOxford)

With thanks to First Move Direct Marketing in High Wycombe who generously print and distribute our newsletter free of charge.

The deadline for the next edition of the newsletter is Friday 5th June 2020.

We welcome text or photos about your child enjoying themselves—not necessarily a DSO event.

Please send materials to the editor Lucy Sanderson at newsletter@dsoxford.org.uk