

Winter 2025 Newsletter

CALENDAR DATES

Mon 3 Feb [New Parent Meeting at SEND chat and play](#)
BECC Family Centre, Shakespeare Drive,
Borehamwood WD6 4FD 10.00 am

Sat 8 Feb [Family Support Meeting](#)
Hitchin Youth Trust, 111 Walsworth Rd,
Hitchin SG4 9SP 2.00-4.00pm

Sun 2 Mar [Soft Play Meet-up](#)
DJs Play Jungle, 156 St Albans Road, St
Albans AL4 9LP 3.30pm—advance booking
required

Sat 8 Mar [Family Support Meeting](#)
Hitchin Youth Trust, 111 Walsworth Rd,
Hitchin SG4 9SP 2.00-4.00pm

Fri 21 Mar [World Down Syndrome Day](#)
Keep an eye out for communications on our
special WDSD celebrations!

Thu 27 Mar [DSPL1 Information Fair](#)
The Icknield Centre, Icknield Way,
Letchworth Garden City SG6 1EF

Saturdays [Speech Development Group Meetings](#)
Continues weekly for enrolled children
with our Symbol trained practitioners
(during term time)



*If you have any questions
or
suggestions please
contact Jan or Gemma
at:*

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

*call:
07738 470634*

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



Up on Downs is 20!

Up on Downs turns 20!

2025 will mark the twentieth anniversary since Up on Downs came into being. We asked Sande Nuttal, founder, trustee, and until very recently, director how it all started.

Up on Downs, like so many good ideas, started with a couple of mums getting together around a kitchen table, with coffee. At the time, we all had small children and the challenges began with how to make contact with other parents. At the time Facebook was barely a thing, children's centres hadn't been invented, there were no specialist DS health visitors around and getting onto the internet at home for any sort of information was a painful process involving something called "dial-up". Added to that, of course we had babies and kids who were often ill and getting out of the house to anything was a constant challenge. Wouldn't it be great, we thought, if new parents could be put in touch with each other, could meet up and share information, perhaps we could even create services to help our children develop. Maybe the professionals would listen better if we knew what to ask for and how to ask for it in their language. How did you get hold of all this "early intervention" stuff and what was it supposed to look like?

Twenty years on, we still meet up and have good ideas. Facebook, is just one of several platforms parents can find us on and we have networked to get our details onto many more. Parents can find each other in minutes on a phone now and we give families the space to come together "IRL", as they say. Our speech development programme is almost 18 years old and has had practitioners who have grown their expertise over time and a generation of children. We have successfully advocated on many fronts and created information resources of every kind. Quite a few of the tiny babies that we visited as new-borns are now off to college and many more continue to inspire us as every age.

In this, our twentieth year we are looking back to celebrate how far we have come and looking forward to taking up new challenges. As we go we'll be providing the same down to earth, friendly parent to parent support that we were set up for and the high quality services that will help your children to thrive.

Help us celebrate

Is the young person in your life with DS in, or approaching, their twenties? Were you one of the families who first came across us all those years ago? If so, would you be willing to share a few lines and pictures with us about your story? We would love to collect '20 stories of those at 20' to share with our members and help celebrate our special anniversary.



Training and employment opportunity

Are you interested in Symbol UK fully-funded speech therapy training for a possible support role with Up on Downs?

If you would like to extend your ability to support speech development and ultimately take on a small and very rewarding amount of work (1-3 hrs pw in term-time at the weekend), we would love to talk with you.

The initial four modules of training will commence in March and will concentrate on language skills and DS and the research and practice in this area. You will be learning alongside Speech and Language therapists and other job roles.



Once these are completed, assuming that they have established suitability to move forwards, there would be two more modules specifically working with Leela Baksi on the Symbol Co-worker Training pack .

From September 2025 trainees would begin small group work with children who have DS. A further 1-2 sessions will be provided to give ongoing support from Leela after the direct work with children begins in September. Other ongoing support will be discussed according to need.

To express interest, and book a no-obligation discussion of timing, location, support given, payment etc please get in touch with Jan at enquiries.nhdowns@yahoo.co.uk or on 07738 470634. If you have a CV to send that would also be helpful.

Up on Downs Christmas Party



It seems a long while ago now but big thanks you to everyone who joined and helped out at our Christmas party—we hope you enjoyed it as much as we did!



Up on Downs Christmas Party

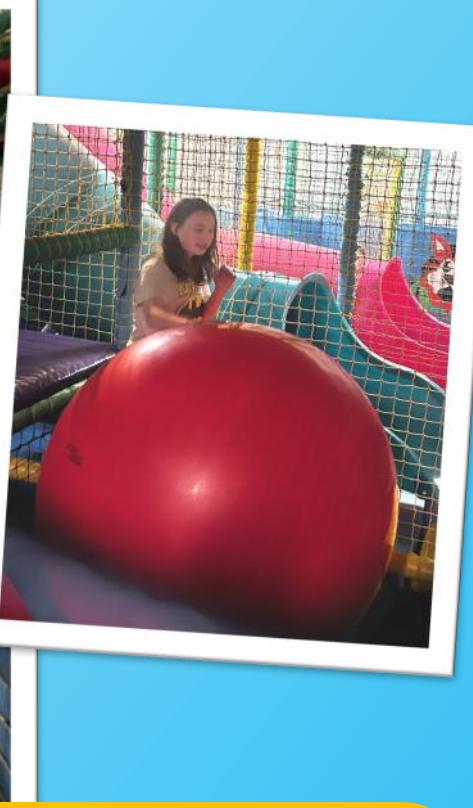


Soft Play Get Together

Sunday 2nd March 3.30pm

DJs Play Jungle, 156 St Albans Road, St Albans AL4 9LP

We will be at the March SEN soft play session at DJ Jungle in St Albans and would love you to join us. Particularly suitable for younger members or indeed any members who still enjoy some soft play fun, siblings welcome. Just let us know at enquiries.nhdowns@yahoo.co.uk if you would like to join us—we will book and meet the cost of your tickets for a £5 deposit / contribution.



DSPL1 Information Fair

Thursday 27th March time TBC

The Icknield Centre, Icknield Way, Letchworth SG6 1EF

If you are in the DSPL1 area why not come along to their next SEN information fair to see what is on offer for SEN families—be sure to drop by to our stall and say hi.

SEND Chat and Play

Monday 3rd February 10am



Up
On Downs



Family Centre Service -

Drop us an email to let us know
you can make it:
enquiries.nhdowns@yahoo.co.uk

They have a selection of toys
for all ages and access to the
sensory room

Come and join Up on Downs
at the Send chat and play.
Meet other parents of
children with Down's
syndrome. Ideal for new
parents and children under
5 years



**The BECC Family Centre
Shakespeare Drive
off Furzehill Road
Borehamwood
WD6 2FD**

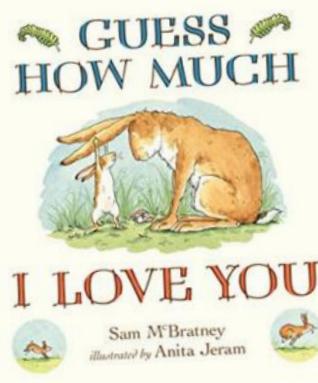


Family Support Meetings

Saturday 8th February and 8th March 2.00-4.00pm

Hitchin Youth Trust, 111 Walsworth Road SG4 9SP

Our family meetings are the perfect way to meet new families and share news and experiences whilst the children socialise and play together. We will be celebrating those we love in February, ahead of Valentine's day, and close the meeting with an interactive storytelling session of the classic 'Guess how much I love you'. In March we will be marking World Down Syndrome Day with some very special visitors.



21 March 2025



Our meetings are always on the second Saturday of the month, including school holidays. The meetings are run in a drop in format so just come along if you are free. If you'd like to let us know you'll be coming or have any questions please email us at: enquiries.nhdowns@yahoo.co.uk

Out and About

It was great to be involved in the St Albans Postbox toppers initiative throughout December, the perfect opportunity to raise awareness and funds in the St Albans area. Thanks to our Young Ambassadors, and their families, who helped us to make the most of this opportunity. We look



forward to working with Gaddesden Place Riding for the Disabled, our charity partners for the event, this year.

We were delighted to be back at the St Albans Cathedral Community Showcase in October, a good opportunity to network and share experience with other local charities.





Tuesdays
Restarting 14th Jan
1:30-2:30pm

WELLBEING

Fun, gentle strengthening exercises. Helps relaxation, concentration and to calm your body and mind.


contact@inclusiveunited.co.uk

Active Dacorum Hub
Grovehill, Hemel
HP2 7BA


Inclusive United Community Interest Company
Registered in the UK 14962587.

INCLUSIVE UNITED CIC

YOGA & PILATES INSPIRED WELLBEING SESSIONS

SUITABLE FOR:

- Individuals with learning disabilities, neurodiversity additional needs, SEN.
- Aged 18+
- (Group bookings available)
- £5 per participant - cash/card/bank on the day

www.inclusiveunited.co.uk/events



NEW **STARTING 3RD FEBRUARY!** 

INCLUSIVE SPORTS & EMPLOYABILITY PROGRAMME

JOIN US! 

SPORT ENGLAND

Suitable for individuals 18+ with mild learning disabilities, neurodiversity, SEN, additional needs.

Stay fit & healthy
Have fun
Meet friends

Learn skills and gain confidence through sport to help build the foundations to gain future volunteering or work opportunities in sport.

Visiting industry professionals and signposting to organisations that can help find future opportunities.

Mondays 11:30am-2pm
Term time for 24 weeks starting 3/2/25

Grovehill Adventure Playground
Hemel Hempstead
Herts HP2 7BA

Indoor & Outdoor Activities



Get in touch to discuss joining the programme:
contact@inclusiveunited.co.uk

07746 155110 

www.inclusiveunited.co.uk
A Community Interest Company registered in England.
Registration no. 14962587

DS Active Family Tennis

Tennis coach Suman Sharma is looking to restart tennis sessions in Abbotts Langley and St Albans after Easter. The family tennis programme aims to help develop social skills, confidence and physical ability whilst learning racket and ball skills. If you are interested please contact Suman Sharma by telephone 07900 496027 or by email ss.lse44@yahoo.co.uk to register your interest. All sessions are fully funded by the Herts LTA.



Well done Joe!

We couldn't resist sharing with you this article for the St Albans edition of 'My local news' about member Joe Edwards' amazing achievement at the British Down Syndrome Swimming Championships...

my local
NEWS

mylocal
EXCLUSIVE

Swimmer wins eight golds at British Championships

Written by Anna Shreeves

A swimmer who trains in St Albans returned from the British Down Syndrome Swimming Championships with a haul of eight gold medals.

Joe Edwards, 15, attends St Michael's Catholic High School in Garston and recently swam in eight junior categories at the championships in Crawley on November 16 and 17.

He won gold in every single one of his events – 100m breaststroke, 50m butterfly, 200m freestyle, 50m breaststroke, 100m individual medley, 50m freestyle, 50m backstroke and 100m freestyle.

This is Joe's second time competing in the championships, following his win of three golds and one silver last year.

"But this year it was just golds," he told **STALBANSNEWS** as he joked that he is "weighed down" by all his medals.

Joe explained: "I got into swimming from my dad because he was a top swimmer, and he taught me from a very young age."

Joe has been swimming competitively since primary school and now swims with Verulam Swim Club in St Albans.

He said that he loves swimming because "you feel free in the water – it's like you have powers!".

Joe has now been invited to join the GB Down



Joe joked he is 'weighed down' by his eight gold medals syndrome squad at their training camp in Coventry in January.

Rob, coaching team representative at Verulam Swim Club, said: "As with any success in swimming, there are no shortcuts. Joe has had to dedicate himself to training and competing at Verulam events and open meets.

"Joe's success can be attributed to his great capacity to learn and enthusiasm to swim. Most importantly, he always has fun!"



Many thanks to the Radlett Cork Lodge of the Freemasons for their generous donation of £250 for teen / young adult activities—thanks so much!



Thank you to everyone who bought our Christmas cards and took part in our Christmas tombola



Many thanks to the Championing Social Care organisation for their £5000 donation and to our ambassador Amanda Jeram for representing us at their Care Sector Fundraising Ball which was held to raise the finds

HOW TO FIND UP ON DOWNS

You can find us in a variety of ways, whatever way suits you best please come and find us:



enquiries.nhdowns@yahoo.co.uk



Call us on (01727) 420365



Visit the website: www.upondowns.co.uk



Like Up on Downs on facebook

For members we have a private facebook group called Up on Downs Community. To request to join please go to our public page, click on groups tab to find the Up on Downs Community group.



Follow [upondowns_herts](https://www.instagram.com/upondowns_herts/) on Instagram



Up on Downs, 20A Upper Culver Road, St Albans AL1 4EE
Charity registration number 1126111