



NEWSletter

Winter 2006



We've won an award!

The Parent Network has been awarded the **Winners Prize** in the 'Parent-Led Initiative' category of the 'Excellence in Parenting Provision Competition 2004'!

Projects from across Wales competed for the award, with The Parent Network of Neath Port Talbot being chosen as the **winner** by a panel of judges.

The award was presented on October 5th, 2005 at the *Empowering Mothers, Fathers and Carers in Wales* conference in Swansea. It consisted of a framed certificate, and a voucher for £80.

Nicole James (pictured), development officer for the Network and mum of 1, said, "We entered the competition because we feel we provide a unique way of supporting and involving parents and carers – and not just those who are having difficulties, but also those who are simply dealing with the every-day realities of parenting. The award is fantastic reinforcement that we're doing something important and innovative!"

The Network is also used by service providers to get feedback on an issue, have parent representation on committees and forums, and get input on a range of issues. "We feel it's important that services do things with us, instead of for us," points out Nicole. "By working together, we believe we can make the most out of the services provided in NPT."

Leader of Neath Port Talbot Council, Derek Vaughan, said, "This award recognises all the good work that The Parent Network has done since it was first set up just 1 year ago...I am delighted this excellent work has been recognised as good practice for others to follow."



Our Volunteers Celebrate !

On the 12th of December we joined with Barnardo's Parenting Matters project in celebrating the valuable contributions of our volunteers by inviting them to a special holiday lunch at a 'mystery location'.

Volunteers boarded coaches and were whisked away—by Santa himself, no less—to the Masons Arms in Bryncethin.

Following a gorgeous lunch with lots of laughter and treats, everyone did a spot of Christmas shopping at nearby Macarthur Glen before returning to Neath.

A wonderful time was had by all, and plans are already in the works for a summer 'do'!

Would you like to volunteer with us?

The Parent Network is run by **parents** who **volunteer** to help make the Network a success — **could you help us, too?**

There is a wide variety of things to help with, such as special activities and events, this magazine, our website, Get Togethers, the Parents' Panel, office tasks...**it's up to you!**

Whether you have a lot of time or very little, there's sure to be **something fun and interesting** for you to get involved with!

Plus, we can help with your **travel** expenses, **childcare** costs, and **meals!**

To learn more, simply contact us.

contact

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Minister Announces Action Plan for Parents



In December, The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning Jane Davidson launched the Welsh Assembly Government's **Parenting Action Plan**.

The plan aims to encourage parents and carers to take part in planning services for children, and hopes to provide support and advice for parents and those caring for children in Wales.

"We all know that being a parent is a big job," said Davidson at the launch in Neath. "Sometimes parents need additional support and encouragement and that is the main purpose of the Parenting Action Plan, to help those who need guidance and assistance find it quickly and easily...The overall aim is to ensure that parents get the advice and support they need and know where to go for help when they need it."

The **Parent Network of NPT** has been involved from the start, contributing to the draft version of the document, as well as providing feedback during the consultation period.

The full version specifically mentions us, and Section 5.2 of the summary of the plan states:

"In some areas Parent Networks have been set up...The Welsh Assembly Government wants to encourage these Parent Networks."

The Parent Network of NPT is leading the way!

Website update



The website has been doing very well since its launch in August—we are averaging over 300 visits each month!

Here are just some of the features of the site:

- The **Resources** page provides over 40 links to other websites and information on a wide variety of topics.
- **Download an issue of *NPT Parent!*** Current and past issues are available in PDF format.
- The **Events** page provides details about upcoming events and activities.
- The **Contact Us** page provides all of our contact details, as well as a handy online contact form.

www.TheParentNetworkNPT.org.uk

Could you join our Parents' Panel?



The Parents' Panel is a core group of parents/carers from across NPT who get together on a regular basis to:

- **Talk about issues** that are common to all parents and carers in Neath Port Talbot
- **Provide feedback** to professional groups looking for honest input from parents
- Help **determine the future** of The Parent Network of NPT
- Some members choose to serve as **Parent Representatives** on professional groups

In return, Parents' Panel members are offered:

- The chance to **socialise** with other parents and **make new friends**
- The chance to have a **direct say** in important issues and **make a real difference**.
- Ongoing **FREE** training and support
- **Reimbursement** of travel and childcare costs related to attending meetings.

Interested?

Please ring Nicole on 01639 620 771



Have you been to one of our Get-Togethers yet?

The most common comment we get from parents across NPT is that they "want to meet other parents" — so we're helping by hosting **FREE** get-togethers for parents in local areas!

WE:

Host the party — we supply the food, the crèche and the goodie bags.

YOU:

Enjoy the chance to meet and chat with other parents, **Relax** and **have some 'you time'** while the kids play in the free crèche, and **Treat** yourself to the free nibbles and 'goodie bags'

It's FUN, It's FREE, And it's all FOR YOU!

So far we've held get-togethers in **Neath** and **Sandfields**, and both have been a success!

We are now planning get-togethers for the spring — if you would like us to hold one in **YOUR** neighbourhood, please let us know - we're happy to come anywhere in NPT!