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**NEWSLETTER 2**

**AUTUMN 2015**

Welcome to the second edition of the Coram Cambridgeshire Adoption newsletter. We plan to send out three newsletters a year, to bring you news of what is happening at Coram Cambridgeshire as well as in the world of adoption more generally. If you have anything that you feel would be of interest to us or other adopters we would be delighted to receive your contributions. Please email Rob Geen at [rob.geen@coramcambridgeshireadoption.org.uk](mailto:rob.geen@coramcambridgeshireadoption.org.uk) or post to the above address. We look forward to hearing from you.

**MUSIC THERAPY**

Coram Cambridgeshire Adoption Music Therapist, Caroline Swinburne, is now accepting referrals under the Adoption Support Fund.



Music therapy can be a highly effective way of helping adopted children work through and move on from pre-verbal trauma, and forge new bonds with their adoptive family. Even very young children can be helped to communicate and express their feelings using free improvised music. The therapy can also provide a safe space for older children and teenagers to work through difficult emotions as they experience puberty. With younger children Caroline often works with adoptive parents in the room; she may also offer family group therapy. Sessions for older children normally take place without the parents, and with this group she may introduce



structured activities such as song writing and composition alongside free improvisation. There is no need for either children or adoptive parents to have any prior musical knowledge.

Music therapists in the UK are educated to Masters level, and work through and are registered by the HCPC. For more information see [www.bamt.org.uk](http://www.bamt.org.uk).

Music therapy sessions in Cambridge take place on Wednesdays in term time, in the Anglia Ruskin Music Therapy Centre, Young Street (just off East Road). There may also be opportunities to access therapy on other days.

For further information please contact Coram Cambridgeshire Adoption Support Team on 01223 275300, or contact Caroline Swinburne directly, on 07956 723720, or by email:

caroline.swinburne@coramcambridgeshireadoption.org.uk



## **ADOPTION JOURNEY**

This short essay was sent in by one of our adopters struggling to cope with the hectic reality of managing a new family and doing so with a much needed sense of humour.

*'(Shout, growl, hiss, BANG! SMASH! CRASH! sound of something being thrown down the stairs) "Don't worry, it's just a chair!" So just another day in the mad house then! How did we manage to stay so calm?*

*'Becoming parents' isn't something that just happens overnight. I think that, while we're called 'mummy and daddy' instantly, 'mummy and daddy' really is something we grow into. A journey. I remember, several years ago, when we legally adopted the children, feeling that, as well as them getting new names (middle names and surnames), we should be getting new names too, as it really felt like they'd adopted us too. Then we realised they had given us new names! 'Mummy and Daddy!'*

*People often talk about their 'adoption journey' to refer to what led them to adopt, or the assessment and matching process, but I don't think the journey ever ends. Adoption starts out as something we're considering, then a process we're going through, then placement date, then adoption order date, but then it becomes life. And that's all part of the journey.*

*The journey we're on doesn't come with a map. Often in my experience it's more of a rollercoaster. Ups and downs and twists and turns.*

*An awful lot of this ongoing journey is about the way we parent, discovering what works best for our particular children, with their particular needs, growing into a more therapeutic way of doing things than our current 'mainstream' parenting culture promotes. This year on the journey I've had to learn to put a much higher priority on 'Self Care'. This has meant a lot of things for our family, including pushing hard to get a much needed diagnosis and treatment for our son; getting therapy for both of us as parents; prioritising time for ourselves as individuals, and time together as a couple. I think that all of these things have contributed hugely to our ability to respond more therapeutically to our children (and each other!). Of course, journeys are always better with others, and it is with the help of both professional and personal 'travelling companions' that these changes have taken place. Adoption is definitely not a journey to travel alone.*

*The other day 'Turbo-Boy' was not having a good morning. He hit the cat (AKA 'Thera-Cat' - but that's another story), the poor feline leapt through the cat flap, only to freeze as he came face-to-face with his arch-nemesis on the other side. The poor thing was left suspended midway, front end outside at threat from 'Fluffy Black Cat' (as the kids have named him), back end inside still at threat from the chaos behind him. I think I was a little less therapeutic this time. Oh well, like I said, it's a journey!'*

## **adopter**voice

are delighted to announce the launch of their online Adopter Voice forum.

### **What is Adopter Voice?**

Adopter Voice is a project funded initiative by the Department for Education, being delivered by Adoption UK. It has been designed to enable an improved adoption system directly influenced and continuously developed by adoptive families.

### ***How will it work?***

There will be two themes to the project:

- 1) Online - online forums are now live for all 152 local authorities across England. Registered users will be able to contribute to these forums from their own experiences.
- 2) Face-to-Face - Face-to-face forums are currently being set up in 10 pilot local authorities around England.

### ***How can I take part?***

Taking part is simple. You can choose to register (if you haven't already) on the Adopter Voice section on Adoption UK's website: [www.adoptionuk.org.uk/welcome](http://www.adoptionuk.org.uk/welcome)

If you would like to take part in the face-to-face forums, or you have any other questions, please email [scott@adoptionuk.org.uk](mailto:scott@adoptionuk.org.uk)



### **COULD YOU HELP PROSPECTIVE ADOPTERS BY SHARING YOUR EXPERIENCE?**

What was the best part of your adoption preparation training? According to the feedback we receive, for many people it is hearing from adopters themselves about their experience. We have a small list of adopters who have said that they are willing to speak at preparation groups, but we would be very grateful for more volunteers so we can share the load. We are running Stage 1 and Stage 2 preparation training throughout the year and both courses include a session with adopters speaking. If you would be happy to do this once or twice a year please get in touch so we can add you to our list of volunteers.

[enquiries@coramcambridgeshireadoption.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@coramcambridgeshireadoption.org.uk)  
or ring Jane Singh on 01223 275300.

### **CHILDREN'S GROUP**



Over the half term break we ran another of our support groups for adopted children, this time with an age range of 5 to 11 years. The theme for the sessions was one of sensory involvement and an emphasis on play and reading. The children were encouraged to participate in spray painting, cloud dust and play dough, puppet making and other activities and it was an opportunity for them to meet other adopted children; something that they had told us they valued. The day was a real success, the evidence of which was plain to see and provided all staff with an afternoon of scrubbing on hands and knees.

Coram Cambridgeshire Adoption is committed to finding forever families for children who need permanent, loving homes.

We are a voluntary agency created by UK children's charity Coram working jointly with Cambridgeshire County Council and with funding from the Department for Education.

We bring together the best skills and expertise from Coram and the Local Authority to help tackle adopter shortage so children in the care system do not experience drift and delay.