

If you would like to donate, please visit: [www.justgiving.com/swingsandsmiles](http://www.justgiving.com/swingsandsmiles). Thank you!

# news



Issue 5 Summer 2009

Swings & Smiles will be an indoor and outdoor recreational facility in West Berkshire for all children with special needs and their families.

[www.swingsandsmiles.co.uk](http://www.swingsandsmiles.co.uk)

a place to play



## Volunteers

The enormous task of raising funds for Swings & Smiles could not be done without volunteers who give up their own time to attend various events. They not only help raise much needed funds but also help to raise awareness of the charity and what it is all about.

An evening to gather our volunteers together was held on 4 March at The Castle School in Newbury. This was so we could get to know our volunteers better and for them to meet each other. We also felt it important to find out what they needed from Swings & Smiles in terms of information and resources. It was an overwhelming success with over 50 volunteers from all walks of life, ages and backgrounds getting together for a couple of hours over a glass of wine! There was a really happy atmosphere which was wonderful. Jan Stiff the Volunteer Co-ordinator devised a questionnaire for each volunteer to fill out.

The purpose of this was so a 'Talent Bank' can be created, to identify expertise in areas such as marketing, IT and DIY for future events. The questionnaire asked the volunteers what they were prepared to do to help out and what they would prefer not to do. Jan explains, 'Some people simply don't like standing at events shaking buckets but are quite happy to sell on a stall or bake cakes for an event'. The volunteers also held a brainstorming session on fundraising ideas. This was a fantastic way for them to get to know each other and was lots of fun. Not only that, ideas were flowing and the enthusiasm and passion for Swings & Smiles was very evident. One of these ideas was that future volunteer evenings will be a quarterly social event combining the serious work of Swings & Smiles with the opportunity to 'catch up' with everyone.

**If you would like to become a volunteer please visit our website or call 0845 094 9785.**

## Sainsbury's

We have just received the wonderful news that Sainsbury's in Newbury have chosen Swings & Smiles to be their charity for the coming year. We were shortlisted from nominations by customers and, following a presentation to the store, we were the unanimous choice. Leigh Brown, the Store Manager, said: 'I am delighted to say that our colleagues felt that Sainsbury's could build a meaningful partnership with Swings & Smiles and make a positive difference to the local community'. Thank you so much to all concerned.

# St Gabriel's School

After being short listed to just three, pupils voted Swings & Smiles as their chosen charity for the following term. We were delighted and Sian went to the school assembly to tell the girls more about our vision and to answer questions. The finale to all of their hard work in fund

raising which included cakes stalls, cellar tours and a fashion show, was a James Bond themed ball. Two hundred and twenty parents, sixth formers and their guests attended the ball which hosted an auction. They had a more than persuasive auctioneer to hand in the guise of Principal, Alun Jones. The event was also attended by Karen and Graeme Murty. In total, a truly incredible £13,850 was raised. Many thanks!



## Clare Balding

Everyone at Swings & Smiles would like to wish our founder patron, Clare Balding, a very speedy recovery.

## Mary Cameron

We would like to extend our condolences to our patron, Mary Cameron, whose grandson Ivan died in February. This is a huge loss for all the family.

## Planning Update

Over the past five months we have chosen our preferred site for the creation of the Swings & Smiles centre, near Newbury, and have been undertaking significant levels of informal consultation with West Berks Council's Planning and Highways departments, prior to the formal submission of our planning application. There have been a number of issues to overcome, relating to siting, design, and access. These have been discussed in depth between Sian, Susan, Derek and myself, and once agreed upon each item has been discussed at length with the relevant Officers in the council.

I am pleased to report that our new planning application is currently being drawn up, and will be submitted prior to the end of August. We are genuinely enjoying a greater level of informal Officer's support, which I hope will ensure smooth passage of our planning application through the due process. The council will have

thirteen weeks from registration, in which to decide our application, and I must urge you strongly to write in support of the planning application at the critical time. If you would be kind enough to email us at:

**[swingsandsmiles@donningtongroup.com](mailto:swingsandsmiles@donningtongroup.com)**

we will add you to our list of parties to inform once the application is submitted, and contact you to let you know where to direct your email of support. Alternatively, please telephone my colleague Beth Davies on 01635 550027 to leave your postal details, if you are not on email.

We will certainly be granted a chance to present our case in person to the planning committee, and any supporters who can make it to that meeting are encouraged to attend. The proposed new site is better than any others previously considered, and if we win on the night, the drinks are on me after the meeting! If that doesn't tempt you along, nothing will!

**Mark Norgate** MRICS  
June 2009

**Donnington**  
New Homes



## Adam Clayton

Adam Clayton, who was a great ambassador for Swings & Smiles, sadly died of a brain tumour last year at the young age of 23. He helped raise thousands of pounds and through his golf he promoted Swings & Smiles with such passion it reached all ages.

Here are just some of the fundraising activities Adam's friends and family have or will be achieving thanks to the legacy of a remarkable and selfless young man.

**Adam's Memorial Golf Tournament** was held on what would have been his 24th birthday at Donnington Grove Golf Club. Over £400 was raised with a further £300 from a pin shoot activity added to the coffers. Such was the popularity of the Golf Tournament 26 teams took part with more on a waiting list.

**Jamie Cox**, who is a very good friend of Sara, Adams sister, phoned Sian to tell her his plan to run a total of 44 miles over several races to raise money for Swings & Smiles. As this newsletter goes to print Jamie will have covered Stroud Beer Race (7.2 miles) and the Westonbirt National Arboretum 10k Trail Race with the Standish Woodland Chase (10miles), Woodchester Park (8 miles) and the Stroud Half Marathon (13.1 miles) to go. We are all rooting for you Jamie.

**North Hants Golf Club** having heard of Adam's death decided to have a charity hole which resulted in £600 being raised.

**Reading Half Marathon** – Mark Browning, Andy Stanbury, Chris Clacy, Selvie Dervisheva, Adam Glass, Richard Bewley, Samantha Bruce, Lloyd Lilley, Jack Peedell and Susie King all ran in Adam's memory.

**Clayton's Charity Pub Golf** – Kayla Piper, a close friend of Adam's, organised this event with Chris Clacy to raise money for Swings & Smiles. It took place over nine pubs in the Newbury area, each representing one of the holes. The participants had to swig their drinks down in the par number the hole represented. This proved to be a lively event and raised £265.

**Lynn's Frock Exchange** – Lynn Clayton, Adam's step mother, held a frock exchange in her home with her friends to start her pledge to raise funds for Swings & Smiles. The event was a big success raising £170.

**Baxter Health Care** ran a very successful cake stall in aid of Swings & Smiles in Adams memory and this was thanks to Kayla Pier nominating us as a Charity to benefit from the fund raising. The entire Customer Service team of Baxter Health Care got involved with baking cakes and biscuits to sell and they even managed to run a raffle as well! Both events raised £250.

**Theale Green Community School** – Geography teacher Alannah Piper and close friend of Adam nominated Swings & Smiles as the Charity for not sending Christmas cards. This novel idea raised £150.

**Donnington Valley Golf Club** – Gareth Jones and Debbie Goodsell the current men's and ladies' team captain respectively chose Swings & Smiles as their chosen Charity in Adam's memory. One of the fundraising activities will be the annual Charity Golf Tournament on 4th July

It goes without saying we thank each and every one of Adam Clayton's friends, family and associates who have and continue to raise money for Swings & Smiles. So far, a staggering £6,977 has been raised on his Just Giving website: [www.justgiving.com/adamclayton](http://www.justgiving.com/adamclayton)

Above all it shows that when we say 'Adam was a remarkable young man' it really does ring true. He touched so many people of all ages and backgrounds.

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## Malcolm Cook

Malcolm Cook, a Chef Manager with Charlton House Catering, ran his first ever marathon in the Flora London Marathon for Swings & Smiles – our first runner in the event!

He managed to complete the course in 4 hours and 38 minutes and raised a staggering £700 in the process. Not only that, he has decided to run the event again next year! Thank you Malcolm. As if that wasn't enough success for him, he was awarded Chef Managed Unit of the Year at Charlton House Catering's Annual Conference. Well done!

## Graeme Murty

Graeme works incredibly for Swings & Smiles and we were delighted to hear he was awarded the PFA Player in the Community, at The Football League Awards ceremony.

This is an extremely prestigious award which was presented at the The Grosvenor House in London and we are delighted for him. Not only is it well deserved but a true reflection of Graeme who has been tirelessly helping Swings & Smiles. Nothing is too much trouble for him and we are very lucky to have him on board.

For more details of the award please visit: [www.football-league.co.uk](http://www.football-league.co.uk)

# Marathon Challenge

Swings & Smiles has been asked several times about places in the London Marathon. Unfortunately, the earliest we could secure a place would be 2011 under the Silver Bond Scheme and then every three years from then.

However, we didn't let that beat us into submission and so we decided to run our own marathon (with a difference) within West Berkshire! The event took place in 4 gyms and included activities such as running on a treadmill, cycling, rowing and swimming.

Please go to our [April Blog](#) for the full details of this extraordinary event and if you feel you would like to participate in this or other events in the future, please contact Sian Cook who would be only too happy to discuss the possibilities with you.

In the meantime, here are a few highlights of the Marathon Challenge:

The rugby club **Progression Fitness** led by Kerry Cooper raised almost £700 in the process, which included some of the rugby players jumping on the bike to join in!

Derek Hardman, our Treasurer, couldn't praise the team enough at **Donnington Valley Hotel** as they completed an outside run, row, swim and treadmill. Their commitment to the Marathon Challenge and Swings & Smiles was heart-warming and they raised £200.

Emma Woodhead not only represented us at **Nuffield Health** but she competed alongside her husband Charlie who she hoped to beat. This was a fun event with balloons and banners to encourage the competitors, some of whom dressed up as fairies! Sadly, Emma did not beat Charlie ... but there's always a next time.

**Hilton Newbury North** really got into the spirit of things and Richard Briault managed to raise £200 all by himself. Ashley Thorne who works in the gym rowed 4000 metres, cycled 4 miles, swam a mile and ran 2 miles whilst Natalie Williams and Sarah Head walked from Reading to Newbury.

# Reading Half Marathon

No less than 18 runners ran for Swings & Smiles in the Reading Half Marathon. We are constantly amazed at the amount of support and the lengths people will go to help raise money for us and so a big thank you to all.

Here are just some of the results & highlights of our energetic supporters:

**Neil Jones** completed the course in 1 hour 23 minutes which is all the more incredible as due to a hip problem, Neil spent 2 years of his teens in a wheelchair!

**Andy Stanbury** set himself a target of 1 hour 30 minutes and managed to complete the course in 1 hour 28 minutes – fantastic!

**Dean** was disappointed with his time of 2 hours 20 minutes but we think he should be immensely proud – running for a bus is all most of us can muster so well done to you Dean.



**Chris Clancy** beat his time last year by 24 minutes – his time was 1 hour 43 minutes. There was a little bit of competition between **Selvie Dervisheva** and her partner **Adam**. He finished in 1 hour 40 minutes and Selvie completed it in 2 hours 10 minutes.

The 'Just Giving' site on the day of the race had already raised £5000. The final figure stands at £8000. Many of the runners who ran this year did so through knowing Adam Clayton. Thanks to you all.



## Reception for our runners

A huge thank you to Richard Wiltshire and Kim Chapman of **Hilton Newbury North** who hosted the reception for those who not only ran but also swam or cycled in various marathons and half marathons to raise money for Swings & Smiles.

At no cost to us, Hilton Newbury North served Bucks Fizz and delicious canapés during a very happy and uplifting occasion which was spent

with many people who have donated their time and energy to raise funds for Swings & Smiles.

Graeme Murty raced back after playing in a reserves match against Millwall to host the evening. We are very grateful to have such a dedicated and committed patron who has helped raise our profile enormously. We are certain his presence is the reason many of our events are so well attended. Here are some highlights:

**Neil Jones** received a special award for completing the Reading Half Marathon in 1 hour 23 minutes.

**Malcolm Cook** – our first Flora London Marathon runner came from Leighton Buzzard to attend the evening having only had one day to recover.

**Progression Fitness** received a special award for the Marathon Challenge. Represented by Matt Brookfield they ran and cycled 160 kilometres raising almost £700 in the process.

Once again thank you to all those who attended the evening and for those who also continue to support Swings & Smiles through their sporting events. Do let us know what you are up to; it's great to hear your fundraising stories.

# Star Quiz Night

Star, the Reading Football Supporters Club, held a quiz night in aid of Swings & Smiles raising an amazing £2,000. Thank you to all those who attended including our very own Volunteers Co-ordinator Jan Stiff. Here's what she had to say:

'What a night! We went as a family. The room was full of Reading FC fans as well as some of the players themselves. I was hoping to sit back and relax leaving the answers up to the rest of the family 'Team Stiff!' We all let each other down and didn't represent Swings & Smiles well. In fact we came last and were asked to come to the front of the room to collect our spoons.'



Never mind! In return, we made an excuse that we needed a photo for the blog and I got to place my arm around Marcus' incredibly muscular back. Lovely! We all had a great night and my wooden spoon takes pride of place on the kitchen wall.'



## Acres of Fun Nursery

Graeme Murty was asked to open Acres of Fun pre-school department in Hermitage. They had managed to raise £350 for Swings & Smiles through a Christmas raffle. This in turn was 'matched' as one of the parents works for Vodafone, doubling the total raised.

Sian Cook went along with Amy and had this to say, 'I arrived at 3.30 with Amy and saw the children in the playground. When I pushed Amy towards them I realised that a number of the children were standing in a row holding a card each which spelt 'SWINGS AND SMILES'. What a wonderful thing to do! I was completely overwhelmed by this gesture. How very thoughtful and a fantastic welcome. All the children (some dressed in Reading FC kit), staff and parents were thrilled when Graeme, Karen and Freya arrived a few minutes later.'

It was certainly a day Sian will never forget and cannot thank Nicola Walters of Acres of Fun enough for making everyone feel so welcome. It was a busy day as the opening was followed by a Teddy Bears picnic.

## White Stuff

Sian Cook received a call out of the blue from the White Stuff's new store in Reading saying they had chosen Swings & Smiles as their nominated Charity. This was mainly because Tasha who works at the store is an ardent Reading FC and Graeme Murty fan.

Shortly after the decision was made, the Government dropped the VAT rate from 17.5% to 15% and White Stuff donated the 2.5% difference on all sales in December to Swings & Smiles, raising a staggering £3,250!

Each White Stuff store has their own designated Charity and we were very grateful to hear that the Reading Branch was amongst the top donators.

As if that wasn't enough, over the Easter weekend White Stuff held a competition for each store where the customers had to guess the number of eggs in a jar. To kick start this, the Head Office donated £500 to each of their stores. What a fantastic approach and another big thank you to the Reading branch for choosing Swings & Smiles as their chosen charity.

If you would like to donate, please visit: [www.justgiving.com/swingsandsmiles](http://www.justgiving.com/swingsandsmiles). Thank you!

## AFC Newbury Boys and Graeme Murty

Graeme Murty kept his promise to AFC Newbury Boys to coach them for an hour. This took place at Newbury Rugby Club, despite Graeme being told just a couple of days earlier that his contract with Reading FC would not be renewed. This must have been a crushing blow to him which makes it all the more remarkable he was keen to keep to his commitment for their training session.

Graeme coached the boys for well over an hour and they had so much fun – clearly inspired by their hero and this was followed by some group photos and Graeme signing footballs, shirts and autograph books.

At the end of the session a cheque was presented to Graeme and Sian for £1,500, which was quite a shock as they had no idea this amount of money had been raised. This was raised at the annual penalty shoot-out competition where players from the under 7 and 13 squads got donations based on how many penalties they converted out of 10 chances.

## Charlton House Catering

The Charlton House Catering annual conference was held at Beaumont House, Old Windsor and Swings & Smiles were their chosen charity for last year. During the day, food and drink suppliers to Charlton House encouraged the 270 delegates to donate money to Swings & Smiles while entering the various competitions which included Wii Golf, raffles and a Wild West shoot-out. £372 was raised thanks to the generosity of the suppliers and employees getting into the spirit of fundraising.

Fruit and vegetable suppliers Reynolds Catering Foods donated £1 per kilo throughout May for all sales of pak choi and they also donated £27 from their swear box! Robyn Jones, CEO, announced at the conference that nearly £12,000 has been raised so far and that Swings & Smiles would continue to be their chosen charity for the coming year. This is fantastic news!

Some of the Charlton House units who provide restaurant facilities for companies such as T-Mobile, Network Rail, are as far north as Glasgow and Edinburgh. Yet the Charlton House staff wholeheartedly enter the spirit of fundraising for a cause, although not local to them, they can relate to. This is true of suppliers and employees of the companies Charlton House provide a service to. Many people are sympathetic to the Swings & Smiles concept and the need to improve facilities for children with special needs and their families.

With companies such as Charlton House, we are able to spread the concept throughout the UK.

**If you are a Company who are considering choosing a charity for fundraising activities, please contact Sian Cook who would be delighted to explain Swings & Smiles and how we can help you, to help us.**

## Mark Norgate

Mark Norgate who has donated land and construction for Swings & Smiles has gone a step further – well 95 miles worth of steps further. With his friends Neil Grundon, Adam Day and Stuart Lane, they set off from Glasgow to Fort William, by foot along the West Highland Way. This was a challenging and gruelling route, running the length of Loch Lomond and over Rannoch Moor which is described as Britain's remotest wilderness. Thanks to Mark and his friends who have raised an unbelievable £5,571!



# Thank you!

**A heartfelt thank you to all of the following contributors and supporters of Swings & Smiles who have selflessly given up their time to raise money for us. We are always amazed at the dedication and innovative ways you all help us to reach our target.**

**Step Up Wines**, a local wine merchant, hosted a private wine tasting evening in the Newbury Town Council Chambers. Nick, Paul and Mae-Lynne kindly adopted Swings & Smiles as their charity and for each case of wine sold that evening, they donated £5. Delicious wines were tasted, and the whole event raised £100.

**Budgens**, Wash Common – Manager Mike and his team have kindly donated wine and drink for several Swings & Smiles receptions. On top of this, Budgens have now started to charge for carrier bags at their check outs and have decided to use the money generated to set up a community 'good causes' fund. Swings & Smiles was the first local charity to benefit from this forward thinking approach linking together their environment and charity policies. Cheers, Mike!

**Keystones Carols** held a Carol Concert where half the funds raised went to Swings & Smiles. Hosted by our founder patron, Clare Balding, the evening was a huge success. The Kingsclere Singers, Kingsclere School Choir and Hannington Band were in top form. Thanks to Clare, Angela Clark, a good friend of Swings & Smiles, and Susan Langley.

**The Westward Ho Run** is organised by a local biker group who have chosen Swings & Smiles as the charity to benefit from this event. The group, who meet twice a month at the Fox and Hounds in Peasemore, left at midnight for a 180 mile journey ending in North Devon at 7am the following morning on their old British motorcycles. At least 40 bikers entered and the final donation will be revealed and presented in July.

24 people including our good friend **Sarah Ward** went round the village of **Hamstead Marshall** singing Christmas Carols! They raised £110.

**Stephanie Haley** organised her second fundraising Sunday Lunch in Porchester near Fareham. The lunch was a fantastic success and included a table quiz and raffle. Stephanie and her helpers who worked tirelessly throughout the lunch and raised £450.

**Rosie Knott**, a student from St Bartholomew's School, is part of a student group independently producing a piece of theatre for a public performance between 15–19 August at the school. The money raised from ticket sales will go to Swings & Smiles. Break a leg Rosie!

**Andy and Joy Dobson** have decided to have a year of celebration! Both will be celebrating their 50th birthdays and 21st Wedding anniversary in 2009. Already they have held a party for these special occasions and raised £111 for Swings & Smiles. Many congratulations to you both!

**Katie and Thomas** are the twin grandchildren of Amy's taxi escort, Sandra Goodman. Sandra has taken Amy to school for the last eight years and looks after Amy and all the other children as if they were her own. She is a big supporter of Swings & Smiles and volunteers whenever she can. The twins, who turned 18, held a party at The Cock Inn in Shaw, and with their guests raised £55.82.

**Progression Gym** at Newbury Rugby Club presented Sian with a cheque for £436. The money was raised by 27 determined people who donated a £1 for each pound they lost in weight by following a programme that contained exercise, nutritional and lifestyle advice. Amanda May and Jon Moyes presented the cheque on behalf of the club. You could say their loss, our gain! And we are very grateful.

**Hampshire Court Hotel** member Aaron Barber organised a Charity Fun Day in aid of Swings & Smiles. This included a five-a-side tournament, involving Graeme Murty, facepainting, a bouncy castle, refreshment stall and a raffle with fantastic prizes donated by Hampshire Court Hotel, who are based in Chineham, Basingstoke. The event raised an unbelievable £957.

If you would like to donate, please visit: [www.justgiving.com/swingsandsmiles](http://www.justgiving.com/swingsandsmiles). Thank you!

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