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Release is a Not for Profit Social Enterprise

Release is a not for profit social enterprise which has audited accounts every year. You can find our 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007 audited accounts on www.release.ie/about/accounts. Release has never turned a profit—unfortunately we are always on average €54K in the red.

Up until September of 2008, we charged €40 per hour, which is simply and unfortunately unsustainable. With the current economic meltdown, charitable funders no longer have the capital available to subsidise the costs to parents, as Denis O'Brien and others very generously did for all Dundalk parents currently participating in Release for free.

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Release Expands our Services in Rathfarnham and Dundalk

Release is delighted to announce the opening of Rathfarnham and Dundalk schools for children aged birth—18 years.

The Release Rathfarnham school is located just off the Firhouse exit on the M50 in Ballyboden Crescent. This is a wonderful location for Dublin, Killdare, Wicklow and Midlands residents.

Release Dundalk is located in the heart of the city on Castle Rd.

The January to April Session will offer eleven weeks of one hour classes from 12 January to 26 April. There will be one break during this session from 16-22 March. You will not be charged for the break. Classes will be held from Tuesday—Friday.

If your child has not yet been assessed, or their previous assessment is over eighteen months old, a Release assessment must be scheduled in to take place from 15 November to 21 December before your child can be eligible for Release.

The cost for the assessment is €350. Each one hour class costs €75. A €200 registration fee is due by 1 December. The eleven-week session costs €825 is payable the first day of class (minus the €200 registration fee).

The cost can be put on your Med1 Form and some private insurance plans will reimburse a portion of your outlay.

To Register:

If you have attended a Release Class before or have had a Release assessment recently:

To Register your child in Release please send a €200 check to Release, Registration, Solas Centre, St Gabriel's Rd., Dollymount, Dublin 3. Be sure to include your name, your child's name, contact phone number, address and email.

If you have not previously attended a Release Class: You must pre-register online on www.release.ie/prereg. You will then be contacted by a Release representative for further information and if necessary an assessment date.

Please note: Each school must have 75 children to continue and each class must have at least two children enrolled in order to go ahead. In addition, children who are not currently in school will most likely be placed on weekday classes.

As always, we will do our best to accommodate all our family's schedules; however, as this is group therapy, the benefit of the majority will take precedence.

The 1 December Registration Deadline is coming upon us.

To help you raise the funds to pay for your child's therapy we have hired Acara, a not for profit fundraising organisation to help each of our parents.

Here are some of their ideas:

Table Quiz: Get your thinking caps on! Hold a Quiz Night at your sports club, business or college.

Summer BBQ or Winter Feast: Whatever the season - get your friends together and have a special dinner party with every guest making a donation to your child's speech!

Dress Down Friday: Leave your business suit at home and have a Dress Down Friday in your office - with all participants making a donation to your child's speech!

Wine Tasting: Host a wine-tasting session in your boardroom or college - Cheers!

Hair today: How about hubby shaving his legs? getting his friends, family and work colleagues to sponsor him! Imagine how much money can raise with a good waxing. And check out page 4 to see what Conor and Jen did!

Mini-Marathon: Enter a mini-marathon, and get your friends to do it too, with all donations going towards your child's speech.

Go on a sponsored trek: Do you have nieces, nephews, sisters or brothers who would like to trek Brasil or Vietnam in aid of your child's speech? Acara has a wonderful opportunities.

For more information visit www.acara.ie or call 01.478.4505.

Aisling Murtagh Release Rathfarnham Special Needs Assistant tells of her experiences in New Delhi

In May 2008 I had the pleasure of working with Release on a volunteer basis providing speech and language therapy in ABACAS Kilnamanagh, a school for children with autism spectrum disorders. The experience was amazing and in the short time I worked with the speech and language therapist, Anna McLeod, and the amazing parents and children I learned so much. Although there were times that were challenging, the skills I learned through working with Release were to become invaluable in the months that followed.

In June I departed for New Delhi, India for a three month volunteer teaching placement with the Irish charity Suas. The primary objective of the placement was teaching in a slum community in Delhi. However two afternoons a week the ninety volunteers were encouraged to take up work placements within the framework of the Indian NGO, Prayas, with whom Suas work.

The opportunity arose for a recently qualified speech and language therapist and me to work with Chandanii, a twelve year old girl who lived in the Prayas girls' shelter. Chandanii had profound speech difficulties as a result of an undiagnosed hearing impairment.

Initially we worked with her on a range of sounds and syllables but at times Chandanii's frustration at not being able to communicate was simply heartbreaking.

Having learned Release techniques for working with children with severe communication impairments as well as how to work with initiative we were able to find a way to provide her with the voice she longed for.

We decided that the best course of action would be to create a communication book so that Chandanii would be able to 'talk' using pictures that represent objects and events in everyday life.

As I had observed Anna use images representing words and actions with non verbal children, the task of making the book fell to me. It took hours of drawing and translating but was an unimaginable success.

During the last week of my placement I presented Chandanii with her book. She was so proud of her book—especially the cover which sported a photo of Chandanii.

She understood immediately how the book worked and within half an hour was flipping the pages at speed to tell me when she was five she had been in a rickshaw accident, broken her leg and been taken to hospital.

She was also able to tell me that her favourite day of the year was her birthday.

This simple conversation was probably one of the most amazing I've ever had. It would not have been possible without everything I had learned working with the wonderful children and staff of Release.

My experience with Release went such a long way in India and made an untold difference to Chandani who was a thoroughly different child after we left.

I'd like to thank everyone in Release and especially the parents and children at ABACAS who taught me so much.

Inspire other parents and children with your story.

Visit www.release.ie/blog



End of Session Analysis—Research Update

As has been the case over the past three and a half years, Release has received top scores on our End of Session Analysis.

Thank you to all of the Release parents who have taken the time out to fill in this very important research. So many parents have noticed and recorded amazing results in their child's communication abilities and the joy of learning how to bring the whole family on the journey. You can download the End of Session Analysis on www.release.ie/news.

Some Favourite Quotes:

1. "**** has come on in leaps and bounds since attending Release. Her understanding of language is 100 times better. She now has more words than ever. Excuse my writing but she is sitting on my lap saying "That, Mama!" Thank you."
2. "Classes are excellent in promoting ****'s self esteem. I was not sure for first weeks how vital homework is. This is invaluable precious time. We were beginning to give up that he would ever say "bye" but now he clearly says it."
3. "I feel my child has learned an awful lot from the classes. They have helped me also to encourage him in the right way to help his speech."

Research Update

Dr Brassell will be returning to Release on 14 November with re-assessments beginning on 16 November—21 December.

Every family participating in the Dundalk school will be scheduled in for a reassessment over the next few weeks.

It is vital you attend this reassessment so we can successfully prove incorporating parents in speech and language therapy greatly enhances a child's speech and language skills.

Ask Christina and Conor if you have any questions.

Change the HSE's Mind

Despite the fact An Taoiseach Brian Cowan, and Minister for Health and Children Mary Harney, T.D. are fully supportive of Release, the HSE has still blocked all efforts for Release's inclusion in a pilot scheme.

We therefore need parent's help in convincing the HSE to take another look at our programme—so you as parents no longer wait years for minimal therapy, and have to resort to paying out of pocket expenses for private therapy.

Please write to the following people and ask them to review the Release methodology again, with the view to running a pilot in the near future.

James O'Grady
National Manager Disability, Services,
32-33 Catherine St,
Limerick

Laverne McGuinness
National Director of Primary, Community and Continuing Care,
Stewards Hospital,
Dublin 8.

Let's put and keep the pressure on the people who feel the services the HSE provides today is adequate enough for your children.

Release is a Not For Profit Social Enterprise cont.

For over five years, Managing Director Tara Cunningham has not been paid a salary. In addition, as you will see in our accounts, Tara and her husband Mark invested their personal savings on top of €50K equity against their family home.

In order to become self-sufficient—i.e. no longer require charitable donations for running the programme, research and scholarships for families who can not afford the service, we must expand our schools and therefore Release needs to hire an Operations Manager.

Tara Cunningham has received the Ashoka Fellowship, the highest worldwide honour in Social Entrepreneurship and has been appointed to the Board of Directors of Social Entrepreneurs Ireland along with Mary Davis of the Special Olympics and others.

We will continue to do our best to fundraise to subsidise costs. In the meantime, we strongly urge you to participate in fundraising for your own child's speech and to put pressure on James O'Grady and Laverne McGuinness of the HSE.



Jen and Conor's New Hair makes over €6000!

Jen along with seven other brave souls, including our own Conor Duffy, chopped off all their hair in support of The Mater Foundation's Cancer Research and to make wigs for disadvantaged children with medical alopecia.

A big thanks to Rory Cloonan who raise a HUGE amount for the Mater Foundation by cutting off his giant ginger afro!

www.locksoflove.org

Jenny's Picks of the Month

Early Sensory Skills

by Jackie Cooke:

<http://shop.downsed.org/>

Early Sensory Skills outlines the major principles and aims in the stimulation of sensory skills and details basic activities, everyday activities, games and topics to assist such stimulation.

Of particular interest to anyone working with young children, this book offers a compendium of practical and enjoyable activities for vision, touch, taste and smell. Useful for a parent group to use as a shared resource.

My Calendar:

www.childreach.co.uk

Fun daily activity. Moveable soft embroidered words and numbers. Shapes for seasons and weather. Great for learning numbers and days, dates, months and years.



Director Jenny says farewell to her long locks, and donates 16 inches!

The Socially Speaking Game:

www.thinkingtoys.ie

The Socially Speaking Game teaches and reinforces important social skills through the fun of a board game. This enjoyable game aims to encourage and reinforce effective social interactions as well as improving self-esteem, listening skills, receptive and expressive language, and problem solving. Suitable for ages 7+ and 2-6 players.



SNA Conor prepares for the 'big chop'

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Communication Intervention

Speech and Language Therapy
Oral Motor Therapy
Early Intervention
Occupational Exercises



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