

SUMMER 09

News

GOVERNMENT CAMPAIGN TO CREATE LEARNING CENTRE/ SUMMER CAMP PLACES
ASK US FOR HELP / SMALL PROJECT – BIG NOISE

Parliamentary Motion

Mindroom is calling on the Scottish Government to create the world's first multi-dimensional centre to help children and adults living with learning difficulties – by bringing facilities for research, education and diagnosis under one roof.

Mindroom founder Sophie Dow is asking Ministers to help create a hub where more research can be carried out, waiting-list-free diagnosis is available to all, and teachers can be trained to identify and support pupils with additional support needs.

Her calls follow the launch of a Mindroom survey last November, which revealed that the number of children in Scotland affected by learning difficulties may be about four times higher than officially listed. A survey of learning support teachers found more than 120,000

pupils, or one in six, dealing with problems such as dyslexia, ADHD, Asperger's or Tourette syndrome.

Sophie wants the Government to help fund an £8m centre. Her campaign is supported by leading medical experts, celebrities and MSPs. Jackie Baillie, convener of the cross-party group on learning disability tabled a parliamentary motion endorsing the charity's campaign and secured support from around 30 MSPs (more details on our website).

“There are more statistics about sheep, here in Scotland, than there are about children and adults with learning difficulties”

**Sophie Dow
Parliamentary Speech**



Did you know that today, in 2009, according to leading world experts, we know about **20%** of what there is to know about the brain? And of that 20%, we understand only **10%**

“I am very happy to support this fine charity. Mindroom’s efforts bring practical and much needed help to the families of people with learning difficulties..”

Alexander McCall Smith

Summer Camp Spaces

Camp Kasper, a unique summer camp created for young people with learning difficulties, will run in Scotland in July.

Camp Kasper, now in its second year in Scotland, is based at The New School, Perthshire – a residential school for children and young adults with additional needs. It aims to give youngsters the opportunity to experience a summer camp that enhances their strengths while accommodating their difficulties.

Participants take part in a variety of activities from river rafting to treasure hunting, but combine these with quiet time for reading or drawing. Youngsters are allocated ‘their own’ staff member and are divided into small groups according to level of difficulty, age and gender. When the camp is over, the participants continue to meet in their own online chat room.

As Camp Kasper is fully registered with the Care Commission, local authorities may use it as respite care and pay the £600 camp fee.

The camps were established by Mindroom working alongside Swedish counterpart Kasper Kollo. Anders Westerholm, who helped



bring the camps to Scotland, says: “We have run over 25 camps in Sweden, involving some 200 campers. The aim of the camp is to give campers two very special weeks with opportunities to make new friends, improve social skills and gain insight into their difficulties, while providing respite care.”

For full details of this year’s Camp Kasper contact Katie Reeves at katie_1182@hotmail.com



**Camp Kasper will run two summer camps:
3–16 July
18–31 July**

There are 12 places available. It costs just £600 for a two-week experience.



Mindroom Makes Big Noise

Mindroom is working with Sistema Scotland, the charity which aims to transform the lives of children from deprived communities with classical music.

Sistema Scotland introduces children, who might otherwise become involved in crime, substance abuse or anti-social behaviour, to making music within the structure of a symphony orchestra. The charity is based on Venezuela's El Sistema movement, founded by Maestro José Antonio Abreu who started teaching music to children from the slums of Caracas in 1975.

The first Sistema Scotland Big Noise Orchestra is in Stirling's Raploch estate. George Anderson explains: "A team of musicians work with about 200 children, from nursery to P4. We are committed to working with children from infancy through to their teens and beyond. This long term strategy differentiates Sistema Scotland from many other artistic and social initiatives."

Mig Coupe, Head of Mindroom Direct Help and Support Service, attended music sessions and offered advice for specific children. A small number initially found it difficult to cope in the main Big



Photo Credit Marc Marnie

Noise sessions. Mindroom helped devise individual sessions and introduced "buddied sessions" with good role models, enabling the children to work towards re-integration into the orchestra.

Mig has organised training and information sessions for the music teachers covering learning difficulties, teaching strategies, collaborative practice with the primary schools involved, and ideas for individual and group lessons.

Mindroom has been working with Big Noise Raploch to provide training and expertise about the learning difficulties affecting some of its young members.

Thanks for Support

Mindroom receives no statutory funding. It relies upon support from individuals and corporate sponsors.

Huge thanks to supporters like Janet Dunn who raised £105 for Mindroom by holding a raffle at her work, and to the Clydesdale and Yorkshire Bank Foundation for their £500 donation.

Melanie Johnstone is raising sponsorship for Mindroom by taking part in a series of running events culminating in the Glasgow Half Marathon in September. Good luck and thank you Melanie!

The Inveresk Sewing Group raised a fantastic £4,411 with a sale of their work.



You can support Mindroom while shopping online. If you shop through www.buy.at/mindroom



Mindroom's Judi Matheson says: "Thanks to the Inveresk group's amazing efforts, Mindroom is able to help children and families for more than six weeks!"

Judi explains: "All money raised by these supporters is used to run our Direct Help and Support Service. We work with children, families, schools and health professionals to give each child the best possible opportunity to fulfil their potential!"

Your support would be greatly appreciated. You can donate online through our website www.mindroom.org/donate or you can send a donation to our office.

Please contact Judi on 0131 317 1016 or judi@mindroom.org for more information about volunteering with us, or with any fundraising query.

Mindroom receives a portion of the proceeds for every purchase while you still benefit from any special deals or offers.

Mindroom's Direct Help and Support Service

Mindroom's Direct Help and Support Service provides support by phone, email and in person, around the corner and across the country, to parents and professionals.

It was launched three years ago and is run by Mig Coupe, a speech and language therapist with over 30 years' experience working with children.

"Responding to individual enquiries and providing immediate support and information is a priority here at Mindroom," she explains. "Some people who contact us may only need the answer to a simple question. Other enquiries may take weeks or months to reach the best possible solution."

Mindroom receives over 30 calls for help each month.

Consultations

Donna Johnstone contacted Mindroom about her son Callum (6): "We had not had much support previously and I was feeling desperate.

Mindroom is approachable and supportive, and has assisted us professionally and personally.

"It's great that the charity covers all bases, and understands the different aspects of learning difficulties. Their dedication and research into children's conditions is amazing.

"Thanks to Mindroom we've had some medical support, we understand why Callum sometimes behaves as he does, and we are coping better as a family."

There is no charge for the Mindroom Direct Help and Support Service. "We will go anywhere and talk to anyone. You pay only our travelling expenses," says Mig.

"I hope Mindroom is going to grow, because there are so many parents who desperately need their services. We have achieved things that I thought would not be possible."

Donna Johnstone, parent

Presentations

Mig regularly attends meetings held by community organisations, school support groups and parent groups to raise awareness about learning difficulties, and to promote Mindroom and the services the charity offers. Mig can also arrange staff training for personnel supporting people with learning difficulties at school, in institutions and in the workplace.

The service has developed a menu of training presentations. They address the most common questions and problems encountered but can be tailored to meet specific requirements.

The presentations are available to local support groups, specialist and mainstream schools, professionals, corporate or charitable organisations and cover topics from pre- and post-diagnosis to home strategies for families; classroom strategies and behaviour management for educationalists; and communication problems and systems for professionals.

If you think Mindroom can help you, please contact Mig Coupe on 0131 317 1016 or mig@mindroom.org

Contact Us

If you would like more information on mindroom, please email us at moreinfo@mindroom.org

If you have a specific or personal question please email mig@mindroom.org

Our Postal Address

Mindroom
PO Box 13684
Musselburgh
EH21 1YL
Scotland UK
Tel +44 (0)131 653 6235

Designed in kind by Graphic Partners,
Edinburgh www.graphicpartners.co.uk

Mindroom is a recognised
Scottish Charity SC 030472.
A company limited by guarantee
and registered in Scotland SC 209656