



# Contact reaches out

By Ann Vautier

East Finchley Neighbourhood CONTACT, a charity that has been helping the disadvantaged, elderly and disabled in the N2 area since 1985, is extending its services to parts of N3.

Thanks to a grant from the Pension Service Parnertship Fund (PSP), Contact can now reach out to qualifying residents of Church End and West Finchley, for a two year period beginning 1 April. The grant is part of a £13 million government programme financing local initiatives to improve take-up of older people's benefits, in particular those in hard-to-reach groups.

### Quality of life

Using local volunteers and core funding from the London Borough of Barnet, CONTACT provides elderly or disabled residents with many services including a twice weekly shopping bus, transport, gardening and odd jobs services, lunch clubs, social outings and befriending partnerships for the housebound. Liaison with health and social services, and CONTACT's support with form filling helps clients access assistance or benefits to which they are entitled.

### Giving your time

Established 20 years ago, CONTACT covered only N2,

but, as Good Neighbourhood schemes in adjacent areas have ceased to exist, there has been public pressure for CONTACT to help. To meet the increased demand for its services, CONTACT is seeking new management committee members and trustees. Individuals with experience in social services, elderly health care, finance, law or training in the voluntary sector are particularly welcome. However, those with no specialist knowledge but who are good organisers and communicators are equally welcome. Retired people, part-time workers from the caring professions or those wanting to contribute to a local charity, would be ideally suited. Only a few hours' work a month are required. Although all positions are unsalaried, full training is provided and all reasonable expenses paid.

For more information, please contact the coordinator at: East Finchley Neighbourhood Contact, 42 Church Lane N2, tel 020 8444 1162 email: contact42@efnc.fsnet.co.uk

# Heading off

By Diana Cormack

Although his name is not Joseph, headteacher Duncan Mills was presented with two amazing technicolour dreamcoats during a special farewell assembly at Holy Trinity CE Primary School. The children's performance of a selection of songs from "Joseph and His Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat" reflected the fact that the school was the first chosen to sing at the annual Ofsted inspectors' conference.

The assembly on 15 March celebrated the many achievements made during Mr Mills' five years there. The children had made their own record of these in a Golden Book, a feature he introduced to the school with a Gold Award system for outstanding work.

Many mentioned the ICT suite and interactive whiteboards in each classroom. Sport was a popular topic, with comments on his coaching from the footballers and the success of the athletics team at Cophall Stadium's annual meetings. Visits from well-known people were remembered, as well as school visits and school journeys he led. The Christmas production and summer concert were often commented on, as was the library learning centre and group room in the new extension, opened last autumn.

This special book of memories is one to be treasured, as is the other technicolour dreamcoat featured that day.

Duncan was given a marvellous coat marked with the name and coloured hand print of every pupil, plus fingerprints from members of staff. Each year group gave him a present and the Chair of Governors,

Sylvia Duthie, presented gift vouchers from parents, staff and governors.

Sylvia told THE ARCHER: "It is hard to find words to give a sufficient tribute to Mr Mills. His contribution to the school has been outstanding to the extent that we are now considered by Ofsted to be one of the finest schools in the country.



Duncan Mills in his amazing technicolour dreamcoat. Photo by Diana Cormack

He has touched so many lives - children, parents, staff; all owe him a huge debt of gratitude."

Year 6 pupil Eleni wrote, "We have loved you as our head teacher and if it was any of the pupils' choices I'm sure they wouldn't let you leave!"

Mr Mills is now headteacher at a larger Barnet school, Holly Park Primary, N11.

# RSPCA news

By Mary Atkinson of East Finchley RSPCA

### New animal welfare bill

In 2005 all RSPCA branches are campaigning for the public to support the new Animal Welfare Bill which will replace the Protection of Animals Act 1911 which is now sadly out of date. Fortunately our MP Dr Rudi Vis is keenly interested in animal welfare and therefore needs no lobbying to get him to support the bill. However, we do have at the clinic a resume of the new legislation we hope for, plus a printed postcard you can sign and send to the Prime Minister.

### Early intervention

In brief, the Bill will allow our inspectors to intervene if alerted to early signs of animals suffering. At present they can only offer advice which may or may not be taken. Please help us to press for this new

measure. The Committee is gearing up for our next fund raising activity ñ a Spring Fayre at the clinic on Saturday 14 May. More news of this in next month's ARCHER.

# Could you help the MNDA?

About 5,000 people in Britain are affected by motor neurone disease, in which the nerve cells that control the muscles degenerate and die. At present there is no cure.

The North London Branch of the Motor Neurone Disease Association is looking for volunteers. As well as fundraising, the branch, which covers the N postcodes up towards Cheshunt and Potters Bar, raises awareness of the association

locally and supports MND sufferers and their families. This involves open support meetings, financial support and volunteer visitors.

Two members of the branch committee wish to change their roles, so the position of chairperson and treasurer need to be filled.

Volunteers will be given a full induction, guidelines, expenses and insurance along

with coaching from previous post-holders and experienced organisers. Meetings are held about four times a year in north London.

If you would like to use your skills to help a small but enthusiastic committee that really does make a difference, then the MNDA would like to hear from you. To find out more please call Stef Cormack on 020 7801 8667 for an informal chat.

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