

Autscape

Annual Report

August 2005-August 2006

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Introduction

Autscape was created by autistic people with the aim of providing an autistic-oriented environment. At Autscape autistic people are fully included without having to adjust to the expectations of normal society. Presentations do not focus on how autistic people must be fundamentally changed in order to be acceptable. Autscape is a forum for autistic people to meet others and a positive and accepting environment.

Autscape 2005 was a great success. Over 50 people attended a variety of presentations from organization to parenting. Leisure and social activities were also an essential part of Autscape and these included shintaido, meditation, lively discussions (both structured and informal) and a music group. In the year since the event, the Autscape-Chat email list has been busy with people exchanging information, socialising, meeting new people and debating issues.

2006 is Autscape's second year. This year's conference will take place from the 1st to the 4th of August at the Ammerdown Centre, nr Bath, with the theme 'Building Autistic Community'. About 72 people are expected to attend, the vast majority of them autistic. Demand for places was once again very high.

Objectives

As stated in our constitution, Autscape's objectives are to:

- organize an annual retreat style conference in the UK for autistic people and their supporters.
- facilitate the widest possible access to the conference
- promote support and self-advocacy for autistic people, organized by autistic people and their supporters.

Over the past year we have advanced each of those objectives in a number of ways. Most importantly we have succeeded in mounting a second Autscape conference. The conference will have presentations which look set to be at least as exciting as last year's. Headlining the programme will be Wendy Lawson (who will focus on understanding the concept of 'typical') and Jim Sinclair (returning after some very popular presentations last year).

As well as supporting the top quality line up of presenters, the particularly generous funding received this year has enabled us to provide bursaries to a substantial number of

attendees on very low incomes who might otherwise have been unable to attend Autscope. We have also been able to take steps towards placing the organisation on a more secure footing for the future. For example, we have begun to investigate web services which we hope to purchase to ensure the future stability of the Autscope website – a key source of information about us for potential attendees and registration for those who have difficulty with forms.

One of the ways in which we promote self-advocacy is by ensuring that as much as possible of the organisation of Autscope is done by autistic people ourselves. During the year we welcomed new members to the committee and many of us have developed our skills. For example during the past year we have developed a formal constitution for Autscope and set up systems to help us function better as an organisation.

The People Involved in Organising Autscope (August 2005-August 2006)

Chair: Kalen Molton

Venue Co-ordination: Kazumi Honda

Treasurer: Seth Kneller (from August 2005 to April 2006), Charles Burns (from April 2006 to present)

Vice-treasurer: Charles Burns (from August 2005 to April 2006), Vacant (from April 2006 to present)

Secretary: Robin May

Fundraising/Bursaries: Yo Dunn

Printing: Phil Lee

Transport: Matt Joyce

Site Managers: Katie Hodges, Martijn Dekker

Grants awarded to Autscope August 2005-August 2006

We were extremely fortunate to receive generous funding this year from the National Lottery Awards for All (£5,000) and from the Three Guineas Trust (£6,000). We are very grateful to both grant-making bodies for their support of Autscope.

The Future

We hope that the momentum Autscope has created can be maintained. Our first priority is to ensure that Autscope 2007 happens. To make it happen we need more people to join in with the organisation, people who are willing to put in consistent effort all year round to make sure that Autscope takes place. Training and support is available and autistic issues are taken for granted! Roles can be tailored to individual strengths and difficulties. If you want Autscope 2007 to happen, please consider volunteering at the AGM. We look forward to new people joining in the organization of Autscope and continuing to develop this small corner of autistic space for the future.

The Autscope Organizing Committee