



19 May 2011

PARENTS AND CARERS POOL EXPERTISE TO CREATE THE FIRST ONLINE 'SPECIAL NEEDS HANDBOOK'

www.netbuddy.org.uk is the first online resource of its kind offering hundreds of simple, yet ingenious solutions to everyday issues encountered by parents, carers, teachers and therapists working with learning disability.

From brushing teeth to managing challenging behaviour, Netbuddy lists more than 1,000 practical tips and suggestions from people with first-hand experience of special needs. And the tip count grows daily as more people contribute.

Netbuddy Director Deborah Gundle, whose son has learning disabilities, said: "The idea for Netbuddy came about when my son was small. I spent so much time and energy solving day-to-day problems, which I felt sure other people had overcome before me. Then, one day it came to me – I should start writing down my ideas for other people to use, and encourage them to share their own."

Deborah's original plan was to write a 'Special Needs Handbook' but, as she started collecting tips, the idea evolved into an interactive website, where people could add suggestions and help create the resource themselves.

"People can come to Netbuddy for practical suggestions, they can talk to other people on the interactive forum and they can share their own break-throughs within a community that understands and appreciates the hard work that has gone into those successes," Deborah said.

In January, just four months after launching www.netbuddy.org.uk the site won a Media Trust 'Inspiring Voices' Award for its work in empowering the learning disability community through digital media. A month later, it was a finalist in the About.com Readers Choice awards.

"I think Netbuddy has hit a chord because there is nothing else quite like it," said Deborah. "It's all about people supporting each other in a very real, practical way. It is the perfect example of a community of people using the internet to create

something uniquely valuable for themselves.”

Below are just some of the comments Netbuddy has received:

“Truly a much-needed resource for parents who have special needs kids. Our days are just too focused on our children's needs that it rarely leaves us much time to research for solutions.”

“This is such a great idea. Nobody really knows how to cope with the day to day nitty gritty unless they've experienced it personally”

“What a brilliant idea. I wish there had been something like this when my son was younger, he's now 42.”

“I work for the Paediatric Occupational Therapy Service at Solihull Care Trust. My colleagues and I have discovered your website and we love it!”

Notes to Editors

For further information about Netbuddy, including photos, or to arrange an interview with the organisers, please contact Emma Sterland on 020 8 677 7820 or email: netbuddy@netbuddy.org.uk

Netbuddy is a non-profit organisation supported by trusts, foundations and private individuals. A registered charity (charity number 1127905), the organisers work from subsidised offices and rely on fundraising contributions to meet their costs. None of the information gathered will be used for commercial gain.