



Why Volunteer? By Simone Baker

Hi, my name is Simone Baker, and I am Vice-Chair of Disabled Parents Network. I have been involved with DPN from its start, and prior to that was a committee member of ParentAbility. I have one six year old daughter, Lois. I live in the South, in Reading.

My role for DPN is a very varied one!

As well as attending the 6 weekly Management Committee meetings, which take place in different locations around the country, as an office holder, I also attend regular "Officers" meetings with Sheila, John and Reesha. I also attend (with John Keep) joint Trustee meetings with several DPPI trustees about two or three times a year.

However, it isn't all about meetings!

I have been responsible for designing the DPN headed notepaper, compliments slips, information leaflet etc. Another of my roles is to organise external speakers for DPN (such as providing talks to trainee midwives about the experiences of disabled parents), and also to liaise with the media (people writing articles for magazines, or making radio or television programmes about disabled parents).

My main role at the moment is co-ordinating the DPN Roadshows, which are taking place throughout this year. This has involved securing the funding in the first instance, and more recently working with a company called "The Conference People" who have been assisting us with finding venues. I'm now concentrating on publicising the Roadshow events as widely as possible to involve as many disabled parents as we can.

One of the really great things I get out of my involvement and work with Disabled Parents Network is the support and contact with other disabled parents, especially my fellow committee members. Other disabled parents can really understand so many of the issues, and offer empathy and emotional and practical support.

The other aspect of the work is just how varied and interesting it is! Just last week, I was speaking on behalf of Disabled Parents Network to MP's in the House of Commons! Only five or six, and in a small committee room, but still

a fantastic experience. Last year I represented DPN at a Reception at 10 Downing Street, and met and spoke to Tony Blair! Of course, not all of the work is as high-flying or official, and those sorts of experiences wouldn't appeal to everyone.

Other things I really enjoy are working with Dean Thomas and Reesha Armstead on the website. Dean's done a great job with the new website. I now continually pester him to put new and up-dated information onto the site with regard to the Roadshows - but what a great way to inform and involve other disabled parents.

At times, my work for DPN does become more like a full-time job, but I guess the reason why I'm happy to give so much to DPN without being paid for it is all the other rewards the work brings, not least of all working with such a great bunch of really lovely people – and I really value that most of all!

For further information please contact Disabled Parents Network on:

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