

## **Autisme suisse romande – Club Charity 2009-2010**

Last month we were pleased to give you an introduction to the Swiss Charity Autisme suisse romande chosen by board members as the second charity for the coming club year. In August Joanne and I went to meet some of the volunteers who man the office in Lausanne and organise events for the charity.

This parents association works to support and counsel families touched by autism. Many of the volunteers are parents of autistic children. The families need support because of the stress caused by the constant attention and care required by autistic children. These children have communication difficulties, problems establishing social relationships, developing their play and imagination, accepting changes to their routines, and are unaware of the dangers that life holds.

The group's aim is to provide information concerning autism, the possibilities for treatment, schooling and support. They organise courses and conferences. They listen and support encouraging discussions between parents and siblings, arrange respite care and activities for the young people they are supporting.

This all comes at a price. Although the group does receive some funding it is by no means enough to cover all of the costs. The children need one to one support when they participate in organised activities. The costs for this are CHF 250 per day/child and CHF 400 per weekend. The highlight of the year is a week long camp that provides a variety of activities for the youngsters that with out the support of the group they could not enjoy. At the same time the families are given a respite enabling them to regain energy and give time to other siblings. Camp costs for 2008 totalled CHF 41,248.55.

We had a really interesting morning with the ladies from the charity and learnt a lot. They are committed to raising awareness and supporting the families and young people they are working with. They were extremely pleased that we helping their cause. All contributions from the club will make a huge difference to this worthy cause.

For more information and details of forthcoming fundraising concert in October visit: [www.autisme.ch](http://www.autisme.ch)

Gill Hibbs