Analysis of the Just Say Annual Conference

This year’s Annual Conference was held yet again at the Ripple Hall in Ripple Road on the 22nd February 2017. We have received 59 responses from the Evaluation Forms handed out on the day. The questions we asked and people’s responses are outlined below.

Venue: Did you like the venue?
Apart from one person who did not indicate anything, all 58 people stated they liked the venue.

Location: How was your journey?
57 people found their journey easy. One person stated it was difficult and again, one person did not indicate anything.

Chair’s Report: Did you understand it?
Over a half (54%) of the people indicated they understood it ‘A Lot’, 42% indicated ‘Just Right’ and only two people did not comment.

Jane Hargreaves: Have you been given enough information to understand how it affects your child?
47% of the people indicated ‘A Lot’, 37% indicated ‘Just Right’, 6% indicated ‘A Little’, 3% ‘Not Enough’ and 3 people did not indicate anything.

Viv Cooper: Do you feel more confident as a parent/carer about supporting child/young person with additional needs?
61% of the people indicated ‘A Lot’, 34% indicated ‘Just Right’ and 5% indicated ‘A Little’.

Amanda Hind: Do you feel you have a better understanding of autism and how it affects your child?
76% of people indicated ‘A Lot’, 20% indicated ‘Just Right’, 2% indicated ‘A Little’ with one person not indicating.

We can see that most of the people indicated ‘A Lot’ and ‘Just Right’ to all the speakers, with most of them enjoying Amanda Hind’s talk followed by Viv Cooper’s talk. Nearly all of the attendees liked the venue and its location being easy to get to.

Views of the Conference
The attendees found the Conference very good, an eye opener, very informative with the sharing and the contents of it being excellent and useful. They felt it was educational and have learnt more that day than the information they had before, feeling more able to plan for their child’s future as well as know when and where to ask for support.

They felt it was clear, interactive, well detailed with excellent opportunity for parents to voice their views. They also found it a very helpful, engaging event, with it being good and supportive for themselves, their child/children and families. They found the personal experiences shared useful and excellent. They have asked for more of this kind of gathering to feel more empowered to make effective changes in their child’s life.

They found the last two speeches ‘great’, very good, nice, understandable and interesting – Viv Cooper being very inspirational as parent carer and Amanda Hind giving good insight about autism from perspective of the child, adult and teacher. As indicated earlier, parents particularly enjoyed Amanda Hind’s talk and felt they could relate to her experiences with one parent commenting that they ‘wished our son’s ‘SENCO understood his needs more’. Another parent commented ‘Autism awareness is not enough, acceptance is key’.

As we saw above, people felt that the venue and its location were good and one parent was looking forward to its use in subsequent meetings. Also, comments on the food came as being good, lovely, enjoyable, excellent and fantastic.

**Conclusion**

As we can see this year’s Conference was another success. To sum it up, they felt it was great, lovely, excellent, fantastic, amazing, uplifting and they had a very good day. It was ‘excellent work’ and ‘well organised from the talks to the food’. Many attendees have given their thanks with a parent adding ‘keep it on’. The Conference has provided parents/carers an uplifting experience from the speakers as well the feeling that they have had a good time and wanting more in the future. To finish off, below are comments that they have made.

**Quotes from Parents**

“We absolutely need this Conference. It’s informative and a chance for social gathering. Amanda Hind was the BEST today”

“It makes me think I’m not alone in this, so thank you”

“I attend every year because ...it is good”

“Well organised, very informative, educative. Look forwards to next year’s Conference. Food (was) very nice”

“Another amazing forum with lots of new information. I love getting together with other parents and hearing and sharing our experiences and challenges. I look forward to the next meeting. Enjoyed hearing Amanda and Viv’s experiences and knowledge”

“The conference has helped a lot of parents to come together to understand their child’s needs”