



unsung heroes

The Queen's Award for
Voluntary Service 2008

The Beacon Friends Newsletter



March 2010



Announcing the start of our new service "STRESS BUSTERS"

Our group therapy Stress Busters programme started in Bramhall at the beginning of February. Six clients are taking part in this first group with an additional two more groups to be organised in the near future. Counsellors Sally Kirk and Clíodhna McPhillips are leading this new initiative. New clients are identified as suitable to join a group during their initial counselling assessment.

Beacon News

- *A big welcome to Sue Bright who is our most recent admin volunteer in the office. She is dealing with telephone enquiries, data entry, filing, sending out of information, and a whole host of other tasks on Wednesday afternoons. Her background in HR for the British Embassy in New York is proving very useful to Beacon!*
- *A record 37 new clients were put on our waiting list in January this year*
- *We have just published our 2009 Annual Report. Not only does it give you last year's analyses of all our services but also lots of great articles written by our volunteers and staff. If you would like one, call the office (Tel: 440 0055)*



Beacon AGM on Tuesday 16th March starting at 7.15pm at St. Michael's Church Hall, Bramhall. It only lasts an hour, which includes a presentation on working with Refugees and Asylum Seekers by Ashley Fletcher – Deputy Director (North West) of the Medical Foundation for the care of victims of torture.



Is there anything you would like to hear about?

Let us know and we can write an article.

Some fantastic 2009 statistics



- We helped almost 800 clients (adults and young people) last year
- We offered 2,875 appointments in 2009
- We estimate our volunteers gave 4,470 hours of their time
- There have been a series of 9 counsellor training events led by both internal and external counsellors and supervisors. We have run workshops on Creative Therapy, Loss & Endings, Time Limited & Brief Therapy, Alcohol & Addictions and Domestic Abuse, etc.
- For the first time in Beacon's history our training events were made accessible to external counsellors, and this has proved so successful that counsellors working for other agencies are now contacting us for information about our future programmes, and even joining as Friends of Beacon!
- Nearly half of all clients we saw last year were not in full time employment, and therefore not able to contribute very much to their counselling
- Stress was the biggest growing issue during 2009, with more than double the number than in 2008. This appears to relate directly to the impact of the recession, and makes the Stress Busters programme even more relevant.

A few recent Client comments.....

"A very professional service covering understanding from initial contact to end"

"My counsellor was lovely. A credit and a worthy asset to Beacon. Thank you for being there, I think I would have 'lost it' if you hadn't been".

"Thank you for a wonderful service".



Team Beacon, the Great Manchester Run

We are very pleased to tell you that we have a "Team Beacon" of 25 runners who will be taking part in this important and exciting event on May 16th. For more information for both runners and sponsors go to our specific fundraising page on the Everyclick website. www.everyclick.com

We would really like this to be a major fundraising event for Beacon and so we now need YOU (our loyal Friends and colleagues) to help us raise some funds. Our runners are looking for sponsorship, so let's see what everyone else can do to help them. All you have to do is just go to: <http://www.everyclick.com/beacon-counselling> to donate. Credit/debit cards can be used on this website. We attach more detailed instructions with this Newsletter. On the other hand, if you prefer, send your sponsorship cheque into the office with a note on the back saying "The Manchester Run". Don't forget to Gift Aid your donation! Many thanks.



The "Team Beacon" Supporters Cheering Group

- Do you have a family member running in the Manchester Fun Run?
- Would you like to see the spectacle of one of the premier running events in the UK?
- Have you sponsored a runner in this event?
- Or do you just want to have an exciting day out?



We propose to organise a "Beacon Supporters Cheering Group" to join forces on May 16th and to watch and cheer on our gallant runners. Sandra Bailey in the Bramhall office has "volunteered" to provide information as to where, and when, to meet etc. so phone her to express your initial interest. 0161 440 0055 or email Sandra@beacon-counselling.org

The Irwin Mitchell Foundation

At the end of 2009 Beacon was delighted to receive a donation of £250 from Manchester solicitors Irwin Mitchell. Our sincere thanks go to them for this very generous contribution. They have also offered some further support during this year, and they provided theatre tickets for 2 of our counsellors to see the play called "Blackberry Trout Face" at the Contact Theatre in Manchester. This was a play about young people, played by young actors, and so counsellors Yvonne Shelmerdine and Clíodhna McPhillips from our "B2 Service for Young People" were the lucky twosome to be given the tickets.

Clíodhna McPhillips writes about the play.....

"It was a brilliant night, the theatre was very small and the stage was very close, so we had a wonderful feel for the play. Actors and actresses were excellent, very authentic, and gritty and gave you a real feel for their situation, and their lives and what it was like to live through the horrors of Mum being a heroin addict, I brought my 16 year old daughter with us, who is studying Drama, and her opinion was the same - she thought it was excellent."

We send a huge thank you to Irwin Mitchell for both the donation and the theatre tickets, and we sincerely hope that we can continue our relationship with them into the future.



Continuing with our articles about parts of Beacon that perhaps you didn't know too much about – this time it's about our

Schools' Counselling Service

Our professionally run, self-financing, Schools Counselling was originally piloted in 1996 when we formed a partnership with our local secondary school - Bramhall High. The aim was to help young people aged 11-18 years. By 2009 we had expanded steadily into 9 more schools. During last year nearly 300 students benefited from our service. Our extremely stringent selection process means that we have selected a team of 5 excellent and very highly qualified counsellors to do this work. Link staff at each school refer appropriate young people to our service.

Our young clients bring a wide range of issues; relationship problems with parents and peers, family illness, anxiety, self esteem and bullying are just a few and our counsellors see them on

a one-to-one basis.

James has recently been focusing on building improved relationships with all of these schools, with a view to improving the service even further, and as a consequence a meeting was held just before Christmas with all the schools involved to obtain feedback information that he can use to improve procedures etc. This has now started to happen with volunteer Gordon Jackson presently creating a more detailed database for monitoring purposes. There is also a new evaluation form being introduced to the schools so that the impact of our work can be demonstrated more clearly. James is determined to make this service "The Best That It Can Be". Beacon is immensely proud of our Schools team of Ann Curley, Emily Ellarby, Kirsty Hill, Claire Pickering, and Yvonne Shelmerdine – they are simply the best!

The schools we work in:

Failsforth School
Highfields SBSS
Pendlebury Centre

Bramhall High School
The King's School in Macclesfield
The Stockport Academy

Reddish Vale Technology College
Marple Hall School
Stockport School

Positive Mental Wellbeing Tip



Anyone can feel low or get depressed so, if you need help, don't be afraid to ask. Seeking help early is the best course of action to help prevent a problem getting worse. Asking for help is a sign of strength and responsibility, not weakness.



FLAG – A new Information and Advice service for Stockport

This is a new independent service launched in Stockport in January, which will help people find out about all the adult health and social care services in the borough. FLAG (Local Advice and Guidance) is a project of Synergy Stockport and is part of a voluntary sector consortium, ensuring local residents have easy access to information and advice about all the services in Stockport. There are a wide range of services available, helping individuals and families maintain lives as well as supporting people when times become difficult. Many of these services are provided by the voluntary sector. FLAG has trained advisors who will be holding regular information sessions across the borough, where they can provide one to one support, or signposting people to the services or specialist information they need.

To use this free service, you can either call in or make an appointment at the new Town Centre base on Chestergate, or alternatively meet with a FLAG advisor at one of the many outreach sessions which will be held across Stockport. Details of these sessions will be posted on their website www.stockportflag.org.uk, also look out for notices in local venues. Alternatively, email info@stockportflag.org.uk or telephone their helpline number 0161 474 1042.

(Their next outreach session will be held on March 18th 2.00-4.00pm at "Simply Books" which is almost opposite our Bramhall office.)



Editor's Note:

In the last Newsletter we misprinted a factual note: Clodhna McPhillips has been working as one of our trained volunteer counsellors for our young people's service B2 for nearly a year, and not for just a couple of months

Friends Subscriptions now due

Thanks to everyone who renewed their subscriptions last year. The 2009 Friends subs total of £1,460 helped Beacon so much, and we want to do even better this year! This money means that we can offer counselling to vulnerable people who are unable to donate very much, if anything, towards their counselling. Please, please, please renew for 2010 and continue to receive our regular Newsletters and invitations.

Complete your renewal form attached and post/or hand deliver with your cheque (£10 minimum) made payable to Beacon Counselling to the Bramhall office, or what would help us even more is if you filled in a standing order form for as little as £3/month.

Beacon needs our Friends

In our next Newsletter

We tell you about our latest groundbreaking initiative – development of a counselling programme in six Stockport primary schools. Don't miss it!

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We are on the
internet...

www.beacon-counselling.org.uk