



unsung heroes

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service 2008



The Christmas Edition 2010 Beacon Friends Newsletter

New Counsellors & Supervisors



Beacon recently welcomed 7 additional new counsellors to our team. One of the interviewers commented that this seemed to be an outstanding group of new volunteers who will bring a high standard of professionalism to our organisation. Congratulations to everyone! We hope that their time with us will be rewarding and informative.

We are also delighted to report that Jean McLaren and Dianne Radford have joined our team of supervisors – this brings our supervisory team to 10 and our number of counsellors to 56!

Funding Successes

- We have just received funding of £10,000 recently from Awards for All (part of the Big Lottery Fund) to continue our partnership with Disability Stockport until October 2011.
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- Just before our Wythenshawe project had to close due to funding issues, we have been fortunate to receive a generous grant of £5,000 from the Zochonis Trust, a Manchester based fund. Zochonis helps North West projects and obviously found our Project interesting. Our sincere thanks to them - we are now able to continue this service for another year. There is another funding bid in the pipeline and which, if successful, will secure the future for this project.
- A great £200 donation has been received from the Oddfellows Society following a talk given by Beacon Supervisors Margaret Parker and Jed Bridge. Many thanks for their excellent work



Beacon stats

At the start of November 472 new clients had been added to our waiting list during this year.

Counsellor training programmes

Beacon recently organised 2 training days: "Special Safeguarding" and "Sexual Minority Therapy". Both programmes were fully booked, with non-Beacon counsellors taking part on the latter course.

Did you know?

- We have seen a 40% increase in client numbers this year compared to 2009.
- We recently received 2 x £100 generous donations from a couple of finishing clients who were obviously delighted with our service.
- A big welcome to Charlotte Baker who has joined our team of receptionists.
- We say goodbye and thank you to Amy, an Improved Access to Psychological Therapies practitioner working for MIND and who has been working in the Bramhall office 2 days a week. Amy has gone to work as a TAMHS coordinator at a school in Macclesfield.
- And we say a big "hello" to Ute Kreplin from MIND who is now working in the office on Mondays.

Beacon and the Great Manchester Run

"Team Beacon" will be running again on 15th May 2011!!



After our huge fundraising success this year we are organising another team and hopefully this will be even BIGGER and BETTER! We have 25 places to fill and only 11 of them left available, so if your New Year Resolution is to get fit, why not join our enthusiastic team. Want to know more? Have a word with the office staff. There are whispers that fancy dress may be worn! More info in future newsletters.



Shirley Townley

We were saddened to hear of the recent death of Shirley Townley. Shirley was our representative from the URC Church in Bramhall and she was one of the first members of the Beacon's Board of Trustees 25 years ago. She worked very hard for many years as a volunteer, both as a Trustee and a very reliable Receptionist and she was always delighted to do what she could for Beacon.

Grateful words from finishing clients.....

"I would like to send my heartfelt thanks for the help and support you have given me over the past months. I was apprehensive at first of sharing my feelings with a stranger and having counselling, but after the first few sessions I realised that opening up to someone who was not in my circle of friends and family helped me a great deal and brought a peace of mind that didn't think I would have again. Thank you for listening and for your advice".

"Beacon was a listening ear and support following a breakdown of a relationship and the subsequent slip into depression. A lifeline to me."

"Very much improved self awareness helps me to make better choices. This improves my self esteem and self confidence. The counselling provided helped me to heal and build a different career that will provide more positive opportunities and support others."



A few weeks ago Beacon organised its second Counsellor Forum. One of our new counsellors from Disability Stockport, Michelle Keifer, tells us of her thoughts about this event.....

On my arrival my beverage needs were quickly taken care of, and as I joined the circle I noticed some familiar faces and had a chance to put faces to names. The agenda was soon in progress, questions asked and answered, my coordinator Fiona and Janice, Rose, Diane and myself from Disability Stockport had the opportunity to talk about what is on offer there, such as working with vulnerable adults and providing a free service for unemployed people over 18 in the area. This resulted in Beacon offering a training day on "Safeguarding Adults" which was held last month.

One of the topics covered was how Beacon wanted to direct more paid opportunities for qualified counsellors, as James pointed out this profession isn't always recognised in this way, and he invited ideas for tackling this issue. Beacon is working towards being a part of the EAP (Employment Assistance Providers) which have counsellors contracted country-wide through companies that provide counselling for their employees (Investors in People). This is just a start and if things carry on like this, it looks good for the future.

I found the Forum a good chance to listen to other students and professionals at all levels and hear about their placements, what they are involved in for their M.A.'s which gave me much food for thought. I picked up some new skills such as using the Simplified Personal Questionnaire.

This is just a brief taste, the main feeling I had afterwards was one of being valued and welcomed as a relatively new Beacon trainee counsellor. I can highly recommend the experience. The next meeting is to be held at St. Michaels Church, Bramhall on 3rd February at 18.00-20.30.



Manager James Harper writes.....



There are so many great aspects to Beacon, and one that does not get mentioned enough are the dedicated team of volunteer receptionists. These volunteers enable Beacon to open late into the evening, sometimes as late as 9.30pm. The evenings are the most popular for people wanting to access counselling, as it fits around their work and family life more easily, and with no late appointments available through the NHS, this is often a lifeline for hundreds of people during the year. More than this, one of the most common pieces of feedback we receive from clients is the excellent welcome they receive.

I am so grateful to each receptionist for the time they give to Beacon, and for the welcoming and friendly atmosphere they create for the clients—it really makes a difference in their lives, and to the benefit they receive from counselling.



Receptionist Mary Riding now writes about a few of her thoughts on being a Beacon volunteer...

When I first joined Beacon as a volunteer receptionist in 2005 Beacon was based in Bramhall at the Village Surgery. Beacon had rather cramped rooms on the second floor with a small office and a couple of rooms for the counsellors. The “waiting room” was really just a couple of chairs on the landing!

Clients had to ring the bell outside the porch downstairs and the receptionist had to go down to let them in the front door. There was a lift, but it never seemed to be where you wanted it so it was often quicker to use the stairs!

At the end of the evening there was a sequence for setting the alarm for the whole building and locking the various doors, and the alarm itself was connected directly to the police. I remember one evening when I realised only at the last minute that the surgery manager was still in the building and I was all set to lock her in. So we were lucky not to have involved the police on that occasion – one of the difficulties when premises are shared.

When Beacon then moved to Moss Lane it was marvellous. Positively palatial by comparison, with many rooms and all to ourselves, but still stairs!! There must be something about Beacon wishing to keep us all fit!

The intercom system to the front door and the ability to open it by remote control is a great improvement. The number of rooms available for office counselling and other meeting has helped the expansion of the service to the level it has reached today.

I have always enjoyed my work with Beacon – meeting the counsellors and clients – and feeling that the service is so encouraging and worthwhile.

**WE WISH EVERYONE
A HAPPY CHRISTMAS
and all good wishes
for 2011**

Merry
Christmas



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