



unsung heroes

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service 2008

March 2009



The Beacon Friends Newsletter

STOP PRESS!!!!!!!

Beacon awarded £27,000 over 3 years to fund a new service

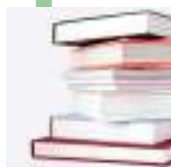
We have just heard in the last few days that we have been awarded a grant from the Stockport Council's Main Grants Scheme. This is to set up and run an adult counselling service from Adswood - a recognised area of deprivation in Stockport. Look out for more news on this project in our future Newsletters. In the meantime CONGRATULATIONS to James and to Alan Smith for his invaluable expertise and advice.

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A new Beacon library

We are developing a library for counsellors and clients at our Bramhall premises.



Following a very generous donation of 64 counselling books from Ann

Tunwell (a former Beacon supervisor), the office is re-designing the library and creating a new lending system that should help prevent books from not being returned.

Theresa Law - Winner of our 2009 Dorothy Boardman Volunteer of the Year Award

Theresa was awarded this recognition of her dedication to Beacon at our AGM. This prestigious award is for her outstanding voluntary work for us during 2008. Not only has she maintained her counselling role throughout the year but then took on many of the initial client assessment sessions enabling our waiting list of new clients to be whittled down much faster. Additionally, she then commenced training other counsellors in this work so that we now have a team of trained and experienced counsellors fully competent carrying out assessments. This helps to ensure that new clients have their needs assessed,

and then either transferred to the Beacon list for ongoing counselling or referred on to other relevant agencies.

Theresa says "I was stunned to win this award. As with all the other volunteers who work for Beacon you just get on with the job at hand, you don't tend to think that you will be singled out. However, it is a real honour to have your efforts acknowledged. Thank you to those who put my name forward".

Many congratulations to Theresa from us all!

Spotlight on a volunteer: Sophie O'Donnell sees us from two perspectives

Sophie has not one but two voluntary roles for Beacon. Last Spring she started working as one of our counsellors and also as one of our evening Admin volunteers in Bramhall. Previously she was Head of Training and Development for a retail company and now continues to deliver training through her own company. With her expert analysis and statistical background, her administration work with us has included updating policies for James and organising the retrieval and analysis of client counselling evaluation forms. She also contacts counsellors and clients, makes appointments, and keeps the data-base up to date.

She says "I love working for Beacon because I really appreciate Beacon's community based ethos, I am made to feel that I add value to the service and I admire the very committed people that I work alongside". From her counselling viewpoint she thinks that the support that our counsellor team get is outstanding, from the supervision to the background office work. She went on to say "the service seems to run like clockwork with tight infrastructure to support it compared to other agencies that I have worked for in the past". She remarked on what a lovely environment it is to work in with systems that operates fairness in a professional way. She went on to say that she thinks James is inspirational to work for, he listens to new ideas and initiatives she may have and tries to implement them wherever possible. He's always looking for ways to adapt our procedures to make things better and he is a real driving force.

Sophie considers that our receptionists are a wonderful addition to our service - they bring a warm, caring and welcoming environment, which is something that in her experience other counselling agencies just don't have. Sophie is a great asset for Beacon. She sees us from two sides – the counsellor and the administrator – and likes what she sees. And we like and appreciate Sophie. What a fantastic volunteer!

Her own words say it all – "there is something special about Beacon!"

Beacon's Feel Good Foods

Don't forget to let Olivia have your favourite positive mental health well-being recipe for her fundraising collection – send to office@beacon-counselling.org.uk or hand into the office with your name.

This collection is intended to be a mixture of healthy recipes along with those foods that have always been a 'feel good' meal such as something that keeps you warm in winter, or a recipe handed down through the family that has always picked you up when you feel down. Please join in the effort through contributing a recipe as Olivia would like to put a short story alongside those recipes that are family favourites. So, if you have a sentence about your recipe (amusing or heart warming) that you would like to include then please contact the office to let Olivia know.

Top tips for Positive Mental Health

Sharing your feelings with others and being listened to can help enormously. The very act of trying to put how we feel into words makes us think more clearly about a situation and can help cut the problem down to size. Counselling does exactly this as part of its therapy and which is how Beacon manages to help so many adults and young people. By talking to others, we can get fresh perspectives on what's happening to us – something that's usually in short supply if we're feeling the effects of mental health problems.



Beacon is on the air!

Stockport's Pure Radio station recently interviewed Yvonne Shelmerdine (B2 Lead Counsellor) and James about Beacon and particularly about Beacon2. This station offers local charities an opportunity to advertise their work to the local community. Yvonne was a real star and gave a brilliant explanation about counselling for teenagers, and how B2 might help. James provided back-up information about our services. The aim was to raise awareness of B2 to increase the number of referrals. This interview will be aired during March.



Farewell to Jackie Chang

GP and addictions counsellor Jackie Chang has worked for Beacon as a Trustee for many years, and among many other roles was our advisor on NHS matters and sat on the Liaison Group to advise on training and development. We are very sad to see her leave but we send our most sincere thanks to her and all good wishes for the future.

Our Mystery Bramhall Benefactor
Huge thanks go again to our anonymous local benefactor. A Bramhall businessman donated £500 to us recently. This is the third such donation from him during the last few years and we are delighted that he places such confidence in us.

An appeal from the office

Do any of our volunteers have any magazines that they can donate to our Bramhall waiting room? If you do then please bring them with you when next come to the office. A good way to recycle!

Trustee matters

The February Trustee meeting welcomed 2 more new Trustees, Pauline Hobin and Brian McCluggage, who have come to us via the volunteering website Reach. Pauline has responded to the request for a Treasurer and at this stage is a trustee. Her background as MD of a group of companies brings a range of useful skills to the board. Brian is a barrister in a large partnership in Manchester and his legal expertise in a range of areas more than fills the previous gap in this area of knowledge. We welcome them both and hope they enjoy being a part of Beacon.

The new sub-committees formed at the beginning of the year have now met and

many new initiatives are in the process of being planned and introduced. Among them the Policies Committee is studying 25 new policies and procedures some of which include: protecting vulnerable adults, high risk clients, rules on maternity leave and sick pay, risk strategy and management, environmental policies, service user involvement - and many more. 3 have been ratified already with another 3 for April. They are intended to further establish our current good practice and are an essential component of attracting future funding and contracts.

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*We are on the
internet...*

*[www.beacon-
counselling.org.uk](http://www.beacon-counselling.org.uk)*

Did you know?

Here are some interesting facts retrieved from our 2008 database.....

- Our receptionists gave 720 hours of their time
- Our admin volunteers gave 288 hours
- 600 hours were given by our Trustees, and
- 100 hours were given by specialist volunteers.

Along with 3050 hours of volunteer counselling means that over 4,700 voluntary hours were given to Beacon during last year. In monetary terms a conservative estimate of the value of this is approximately £160,000!

**THANK YOU ALL
SO MUCH!!!**

CBT TRAINING COURSE

During February and March, 16 of our counsellors have been attending a 5 day course on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. Feedback from participants has been very positive and they have commented on the professionalism, trainer knowledge, and enjoyment of the course. We were unfortunately unable to offer this training to all our counsellors this time, but we plan to offer it again later this year through a partnership with SCC and FCL counselling agencies.

Annual Report for 2008



Included with this Newsletter is our latest Annual Report. We are very proud of this newly designed document and we hope that you will take time to read it. Not only does it contain some outstanding statistics but also some interesting articles written by a few of the people who work at the heart of the Beacon service. Lots of colour and graphics make it our best yet! A huge thank you from James to Julia Larmer, the admin volunteer, who created the new look and design.

Friends subscriptions

Thanks go to everyone who have renewed their "Friends of Beacon" subscriptions for 2009. It's not too late to renew yours if you have forgotten. Just complete the form that was attached to our last Newsletter or just send your name, address and email address together with your cheque to the Bramhall office.