

unsung heroes

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service 2008



The Beacon Friends Newsletter

September 2010



Funding for more Stressbusters programmes

We've just been awarded £6,000 from NHS Stockport's Public Health Department to offer 4 further Stressbuster programmes. You may remember that we piloted the first of these group therapy sessions earlier in the year and it proved to be very successful. The new series of programmes will be starting soon.



Thanks from our local MP

After reading our last Newsletter, Beacon Friend and keen supporter Mark Hunter MP, sent us a message which will be included in the forthcoming "History of Beacon". Part of it says, "Beacon is without doubt a most worthwhile local charity, very professional and supportive to those who need their assistance when all other avenues have failed. I have nothing but admiration for all those involved and would ask you to once again pass on my thanks for the work they do in our wider community. I look forward to many more years of support for Beacon Counselling and its most important work".



Schools Info Leaflets

Our leaflets giving students information on our Schools Counselling have now been printed and distributed to all the schools we work in. The leaflets were a result of a competition for young people to submit their own designs and the winner came from The King's School in Macclesfield. We have never had our own Schools leaflets before and we hope that these will help students to see that they can access counselling help, provided by specially trained counsellors, in their own school environment.



Did you know?

- Up to the 30th June we have added 334 new clients this year to our waiting list.
- Additional counsellors will be starting work for us shortly at Disability Stockport.
- We are offering a training day in October for all counsellors on Eating Disorders.
- Because of our increased number of counsellors, client waiting times for the first session have now reduced from 26 weeks last summer to 8 weeks this year. We now provide the shortest waiting time for psychological therapy in Stockport.
- We presently work from 25 settings across the southern Greater Manchester area.
- We offer 3 times the amount of counselling to adults compared with 4 years ago.

Client Feedback

Some client answers from our question

“Can you suggest any changes Beacon can make to improve our

“The service and help received from Beacon and the counselling was excellent. I think no changes need to be made to improve the service”.

A card received recently said.....
“What a wonderful place, thank you for all your help”.

Another client handed us a cheque for £200 on her last visit despite her regular donations each session.

“The counselling has been a great help in getting me back to “normal”. It has allowed me to think in a different and more positive manner”.

“I honestly cannot think of any improvements that could be made. The service was excellent and has helped me get my life back in order”.

One new client reported after just his initial consultation that he felt so good afterwards that he was looking at life in a different way and felt he didn't need further counselling and was very thankful to us all.



A new printer for the office

After over a year of tearing hair out (apart from James!) and biting nails we have booted out the old printer in the office and filled the space with a brand new one that actually works! The old one had simply expired and so there were smiles all round when its smart successor arrived.

Spotlight on a Trustee

Alan Hewitson (Chairman) writes.....

“I joined Beacon in 2007 as a volunteer receptionist and then joined the Board in 2008 and since August 2009 I've been Chairman. My initial priority when I joined was to help a local charity and serve the community by quietly helping in its development. My ambition now as Chairman is to keep our organisation at the forefront of community counselling in South Manchester. We must develop our services during the next 3 to 5 years and look to form local partnerships if we are to succeed – but this will not be easy.

My background in insurance spanned 52 years, but outside of business I was heavily involved in education through Parent Teacher Associations. I served as a school governor for many years and ended up as chairman of the governing body. I was also secretary to 2 athletic clubs. This background has given me invaluable experience in running and controlling an organisation and which I hope Beacon benefits from today.

Although I am Chairman of the Board of Trustees I also serve on the Business Planning and Human Resources sub-committees and I also attend the meetings of the Liaison committee.

Finally, Beacon must build on its past success and continue to develop in the future, making the most of any opportunities that arise, however, any success we have is down in most part to all our volunteers who give so freely of their time.





James's thoughts as he approaches his 4th year as Manager

When I joined Beacon in November 2006 there were a number of challenging priorities; financial sustainability, raising the profile and introducing more effective monitoring and evaluation systems. This may not sound very exciting, but to me they are, because they form the building blocks of proving the worth of Beacon which so many people knew only anecdotally.

A few years on and there has been success in each of these areas. Much improved finances, clear evidence of the impact of Beacon's work, and greater recognition of the charity within the Stockport area. Though this is satisfying, I had originally planned to do this all in 1 year! As ever, I was a tad optimistic – it took 3 years in the end – but the last 18 months have been so much more satisfying, with the set up of the Stressbusters programme, the introduction of counselling in primary schools, the creation of an innovative group programme to build up children's confidence and self-esteem, the targeted service to adults in Adswood and Bridgehall and the new partnership project with Disability Stockport providing counselling to the unemployed.

What impresses me is that all of these innovations and projects and their success is down to the volunteers and staff that make up Beacon. To give you some idea,

Beacon provides 3 times as much counselling to adults as it did 4 years ago, provides help to over 300 young people each year, and this year will help over 100 children in primary schools, **so for the first time there will be more than 1,000 people helped within a year.**

Beacon has always been indebted to its counsellors, and I think this is perhaps more true today than at any other time in our existence. There are now 43 volunteer counsellors and 5 paid counsellors in the charity, which makes it one of the largest in the north west. The fact that there are so many counsellors enables Beacon to respond to a wide range of needs and circumstances; from working with children, to young people and adults. All of this happens in over 25 settings across southern Greater Manchester and supports a wide range of people with all sorts of difficulties. Beacon is so lucky to have such a talented and dedicated team of counsellors, as their work in large part gives Beacon its reputation for excellence. Whilst so many volunteers provide the service, they are ably supported by a range of other volunteers, receptionists, admin volunteers, trustees, publicity volunteers, and, oh yes, the newsletter volunteer! I would like to thank each of them for their hard work and dedication, and to let them know that hundreds and hundreds of people are better off simply because they were there for them. Brilliant!

"The longest journey starts with a single step"

Our Adswood Project – 1 year on

12 months into this project and we are beginning to have a feel for the success, or otherwise, of this service:

So far 271 sessions have been offered to 88 adult residents of Adswood and Bridgehall from 2 venues.

Our monitoring and evaluation procedures show that all our clients have reported reductions in the levels of anxiety, depression and psychological distress, coupled with increases in confidence, self-esteem, the ability to cope and improvements in the relationships of clients. This is despite our expectation that a lower level of success would be achieved because, as evidence suggests, people living in disadvantaged areas such as these will have a lower chance of success.

There was one unexpected problem however, the reluctance of residents who live in Adswood to go to Bridgehall and vice versa. However, we managed to find another venue at the ABACUS Children's Centre in Adswood which seems to have solved the problem. Another issue for us is the need to focus on the establishment of time limited counselling and also further promotion of the service is required.

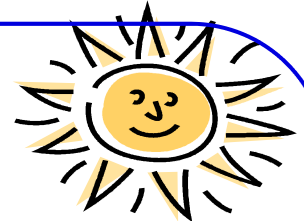




Is there anything you would like to hear about?

Let us know and we can write an article

The 5 ways to well-being
Simple things a day to stay sane - say scientists



Connect –

Develop relationships with family, friends and colleagues. They will enrich your life and bring support.

Be Active –

Sports, hobbies such as gardening or dancing or just a daily stroll will make you feel good.

Be curious –

Noting the beauty of every day moments as well as the unusual and reflecting on them helps you to appreciate what matters to you.

Learn –

Fixing a bike, learning an instrument, cooking – the challenge and satisfaction brings fun and confidence.

Give –

Helping friends and strangers links your happiness to a wider community and is very rewarding.

The 5 ways to well-being has been developed by the New Economics Foundation

Oh dear!

Just a lazy summer day in mid-August? Afraid not - first the water supply was turned off in our Moss Lane premises due to water repairs in Bramhall village and then on the same day there was a power cut! As Sandra reported "it was just a normal day at the office with 14 clients, 5 counsellors and no toilet all day!



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