

unsung heroes

The Queen's Award for
Voluntary Service 2008

August 2009

The Beacon Friends Newsletter



Funding Success!!!! 3 years salary for the new post of Office Administrator

The Funding Team has done it again - well mainly James this time! After several months of planning, application and interviews the Trustees of the CRH Charitable Trust have awarded Beacon with three years funding towards a new full time post of Office Administrator.

James and the Appointments Administrators (*sounds like a band from the 70's!*) can now have some much needed assistance in the running of the office and organising recruitment of new staff and volunteers etc. while he focuses on new funding, raising the profile of Beacon, the development of external networking and developing new relationships with local authorities and the NHS etc. as well as organising new projects, such as development of group counselling work for schools and adults, and the promotion quality assurance and risk management, etc.! Beacon has grown so much in recent years that we now have twice as many counsellors and clients that we had in 2005 along with more rigorous monitoring and evaluation work, which means the Appointments Administrators are a lot busier too!

This new post will, of course, bring a new dimension to the running of the office in Bramhall. We will be able to reach more clients and our aim to have 40 volunteer counsellors soon will mean that Beacon will be the largest voluntary sector counselling service in this area. We also plan to have more responsiveness and even higher standards in our services.

(*This Charitable Trust Fund was started a few years ago when the Cheadle Royal Hospital and its grounds were sold. The Trustees prefer to award funding to services in their local area which primarily help local people suffering with mental health issues.)

Now back to our August Newsletter -

The focus this month is on our Bramhall office and the members of staff who work there. At present we have 1 full time manager with overall responsibility and 4 part time staff whose focus mainly on the Appointments Systems and the day-to-day finance issues. They are assisted by 2 volunteers who each work 2 hours a week.

Sandra Bailey (morning Appointments Administrator)

*"I joined Beacon 24 years ago
Is it really that long?
How time does go!
A busy office with no time to spare.
But we all do the job because we care.
Clients, Counsellors, Supervisors, Receptionists too
We try to look after them – and usually do.
A smile to a client puts them at ease
We try our best to everyone please.
Appointments to make, and phone calls too
Now there's an increasing
number of stats to do.
We work as a team to get
the job done
That's why working at
Beacon, for me,
Is second to none."*



Barbara Polanska (Friday Appointments Administrator)

"I originally worked for Beacon a few years ago but had to take early retirement because of ill health. However, when I was feeling better I was very pleased to return because I love working with all the Beacon people. I really enjoy putting something back into the community and it's good to be using the old brain cells too!"

Margaret Smith (afternoon Appointments Administrator)
sent us a recipe.....

"A Recipe for a Successful Counselling Agency"

38 Counsellors
18 Voluntary Receptionists
4 Admin Volunteers
8 Supervisors
12 Trustees
5 Office Staff



Smart Professional Building in Bramhall
10 secondary schools and community locations
Beacon Friends
(The above weights and measures may vary)

Take a very large handful of varied and various volunteer counsellors and melt together with several schools counsellors.

Add to this a team of experienced, encouraging supervisors.

Bind together with members of the office team
And watch this mingle and rise over time.

Roll out the trustees on top to form a tight crust of training, money and strengthening.

Bake in the oven very slowly, being attentive to detail.

Sprinkle with the expertise and dedication of admin and reception volunteers and the end result -

A successful professional counselling agency with an excellent reputation.

It is a pleasure to be associated with so many caring people who give so freely of their time and expertise



Sam Smith (Finance Manager)

There are two main reasons why I like working for Beacon – the people and the work.

There is a lovely atmosphere at Beacon and everyone is friendly and helpful. I have previously worked in some dreadful places where there was little trust or support and Beacon is such a contrast!



Despite being a small charity, Beacon faces the same financial issues that all organisations have to address, and the challenge for me is to support the trustees and the organisation with the financial skills needed to survive and prosper in these difficult times. There is plenty of variety in my work, with lots of complex and technical problems to address, as well as doing the routine and mundane recording and reporting, which I have always enjoyed. The overall sense of satisfaction is enhanced by knowing that what Beacon does is so worthwhile.

James Harper (Manager)

I've been asked for a one sentence response to this so here it is! I am keen make a difference in society through the work I do, and Beacon Counselling enables me to do that through the whole team of volunteers and staff – it really is an honour and a privilege to work for such a fantastic team of skilled and dedicated people. (Just about did it!)

Of course, we mustn't forget our Admin Volunteers who ably assist our staff. Hilary Kelly organises our library and inputs and retrieves statistics and Julia Larmer is the graphic designer for most of our documentation. The latest addition to the team is Fran Forrester, who is doing sterling work on Monday afternoons working with Margaret Smith.

Our New Chairman - Alan Hewitson

Alan began working for Beacon in early 2007 as a receptionist in the Bramhall office and later that year won our prestigious Dorothy Boardman Volunteer of the Year Award. He joined the Board of Trustees to bring a representative voice on behalf of our volunteers and staff. He says he really enjoys his Beacon work and he feels his role this year is to ensure the planned projects are undertaken as smoothly and as efficiently as possible and that everyone works as a team. He leads a large Board of 13 people who also make up 8 different sub-committees with the manager. Alan serves on 2 of them – Business Planning and Human Resources. Alan has lived in Bramhall for 27 years and was a Chartered Insurer, and is now retired.

A library resource for counsellors and clients



Following the donation of over 60 counselling books by Ann Tunwell, then new reference library is up and running. Admin volunteer Hilary Kelly (and Appointments Administrator Sandra Bailey) have organised a new borrowing system because in the past some of our books have never been returned. There will now be a £10 deposit for each book borrowed which will be refundable on its return to the library. Many thanks to Hilary for doing such a wonderful job of setting up the new library and lending system.

Thanks

**go to all our
Beacon Friends**

We have received over £1,100 in subscriptions so far this year. Thank you all so much. Year after year this has proved to be a great way to help support our services. If you haven't yet sent us your contribution it's not too late!

**25th
Anniversary
1984 - 2009**

Our 25th Birthday party

Nearly 70 people came along to a successful evening at the Bramhall Tennis Club. Lots of food and drink to consume and a live Jazz Band contributed to the friendly atmosphere. Incidentally, may be one or two people noticed that Alex Chattington, the double bass player, works as one of our evening Receptionists. Huge thanks go to Trustees Kathryn McGuire and Jo Tipa for organising this event, which also raised £440!!!



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COUNSELLING**

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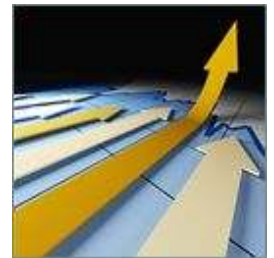
Did you know?

- Our latest project of adult counselling at Adswood/ Bridgehall is now up and running and has a small waiting list
- Our Annual Open Forum this year will be on Saturday 17th October at St. Michaels Church, Bramhall and is open to everyone. We will be updating our Business Plan as well as discussing new ideas. Do try to come along and watch out for more information on this event in future Newsletters.
- Two of our Supervisors have recently moved on from Beacon and have been replaced by 3 new ones, who are Theresa Law (a Beacon counsellor for nearly 9 years), Jed Bridge and Ashley Fletcher. Both Jed and Ashley are experienced Counsellors and Supervisors within the voluntary sector.
- We are to shortly open a new venue in Family Action, Benchill

Waiting List—Record levels

The current Beacon waiting list stands at a colossal **120** people.

This is due, we believe, to the impact of the recession with increasing levels of anxiety and depression amongst the local community. As a consequence Beacon intends to increase our Counselling team soon, as well as the increased number of Supervisors.



Another of our positive mental health tips



Listen Up!

Nobody enjoys watching someone they're close to going through a difficult time but what can you do about it? Often, the very best help a friend can give is simply to encourage them to talk and then listen in a supportive way. Try not to interrupt too much and don't feel that you have to give advice or try to solve their problems for them.

Do give gentle encouragement for them to seek appropriate help - such as counselling (Beacon Counselling preferably!). Listening to other people's problems can make us feel better about own lives too.

And finally.....



This is what Olivia found on her holiday!
Does anyone know where it is?
(Unfortunately no prizes!)