



unsung heroes

The Queen's Award for
Voluntary Service 2008

The Beacon Friends Newsletter

April 2011



A contract with Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust

We have just negotiated a time limited contract with Pennine Care for Beacon to deliver 350 hours of 1-to-1 adult counselling for 50 people. This will be delivered by 7 of our counsellors centred in Disability Stockport headquarters and the object is to assist Pennine Care reduce their Stockport waiting list of new clients.

Pennine Care - established in 2002 - provides mental health services to a population of almost 1.2 million people throughout the boroughs of Bury, Rochdale, Oldham, Stockport, Tameside and Glossop. This organisation works in partnership with Local Authorities, Primary Care Trusts, Health Authorities and the independent sector and is committed to providing fully integrated, continually improving and locally accessible mental health services in community settings. Service user and carer involvement is a priority for the Trust to facilitate the development of services that are appropriate, accessible and responsive. Beacon is delighted to be involved in this contract and we hope that this initiative could help us gain other contract work in the future in the Stockport area.



Bupa great **manchester**
run 2011

Our "Team Beacon" runners are in training for the run on
Sunday May 15th.

We have spaces for 3 more runners - so why not join them (and the fun)
and help to raise some much needed cash for Beacon.

ALSO MORE SPONSORS ARE NEEDED PLEASE
Click on our website www.beacon-counselling.org.uk
or call 440 9166 for all your info.



The UK financial cuts and what they mean for Beacon

The current financial cuts that we are all facing are also having a dramatic affect on charities. Funding opportunities are reducing, and in some cases closing, and many clients are reluctant or simply unable to contribute substantially to the cost of their counselling. Overall, this is having a massive impact on the voluntary sector and it is anticipated that about 40% of the charities presently operating in the Greater Manchester area will close down in the next 12 months. This financial turmoil could potentially have a very large impact on Beacon.

However, we are not taking this lying down! Manager James reports "the external environment Beacon is working in right now is pretty grim, with so many charities facing closure and statutory sector services being cut or closed, it might be tempting to batten down the hatches and wait it out. Beacon is not going to do this because the need for our services has never been greater, with the levels of depression, stress and anxiety rising every month. We are taking a consciously positive attitude by seeking out the various opportunities that are presenting themselves, thus giving Beacon the best chance to respond to the increasing need. The charity is better placed than ever before to continue its success and we have a greater capacity to provide support than ever before, so the next couple of years are an exciting challenge that we are embracing!

Debby's memorable phone calls.....



When Debby tried to offer a new lady client her first ongoing appointment, the client said that she felt her initial assessment (where no real counselling takes place) was enough, and that she now felt able to take action to get her life sorted and she didn't really feel the need for continued counselling. Debby feels it reaffirmed her belief that by getting your problems out – either in writing or by telling someone - deflates the situation and puts everything more into perspective.

Secondly, while taking a call from a very articulate lady who asked to go on our waiting list, Debby explained that it might be sometime before she could get an appointment, the lady replied “she had waited over 50 years so a few months wouldn't make much difference”. However, by the end of the conversation she said that just making the call had lifted a great weight off her shoulders.

Our own counsellor Anna Reilly reports from Cambodia

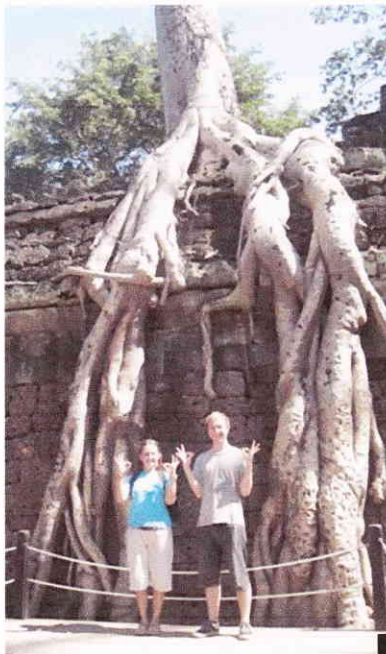
I want to say a big hello to all my friends, supervisors and colleagues at Beacon. After 4 months of volunteer English teaching in Siem Reap, Cambodia, I'm now on my travels for another few months before coming home. I decided to apply to teach abroad as I really wanted to see what another way of life is like – luckily I was able to get a sabbatical from work. Having worked at a Stockport high school, I'm fairly confident working with young people and really enjoy getting to know them – which I think is one of the most important things about teaching.



Anna teaching

Cambodia was a huge cultural shock – very much still a developing country and it's common to see children begging and selling things in the tourist areas. However, perhaps the hardest things to get used to were the heat (up to 40 degrees) and the insect bites! I lived in a house with other volunteers from loads of countries – and just like at Beacon we bonded really quickly.

I taught alongside a Cambodian teacher who I found out was a Buddhist monk for twelve years. He will remain a friend and was wonderful to work with – kind, keen to learn more about English and teaching methods and so friendly. The students ranged from 12 years to adults and came to our school after they'd been to government school or to work.



Anna & friend at a temple at Angkor.

Many of the young people had also been helping their families at home or in the rice fields so were really tired but still came to learn English. I was sad to leave and on my last day got more presents than I could put in my backpack – which felt really special from young people who don't have a lot. Of course, it wasn't all work. Siem Reap is a bit of a tourist town and we did our fair share of partying as well as seeing the surrounding areas – the famous temples at Angkor, waterfalls, a landmine centre and lakes. I learnt a lot about the atrocities which happened during the Khmer Rouge period, but in general it seems that people want to get on with things and help the country to develop.

I finished teaching a few weeks ago and then set off on my travels. Already I've visited the forested-hills of North Eastern Cambodia, spending a night in the jungle, and the Mekong town of Kratie where you can see endangered freshwater Irrawaddy dolphins. I'm now in Dalat, Vietnam, preparing to head off up the coast, then travel through Laos and Thailand. With any luck I'll make my flight back home at the end of April and look forward to catching up with everyone then.

Very best wishes to everyone.

Anna Reilly

Sandra Bailey tells us about Our Unsung Heroes and Heroines – our receptionists



Beacon could not survive without our Evening receptionists!

The guidelines of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) state that a counsellor should not be alone in a building when counselling is taking place. At Beacon there are usually several counsellors working at the same time but, as they are in separate rooms, if an emergency took place they would be unaware.

Our voluntary receptionists usually do one evening a month at our Bramhall office. They use the entry phone system to let clients into the building and show them into the waiting room. There are refreshments available in the kitchen and if a client is early they offer them a drink whilst they're waiting. They inform the counsellor that their client has arrived and record any donation that the client gives in the diary. They make another client appointment, if appropriate, but also make a note if the client has ended their counselling showing that new client is needed for the following week. The receptionist finish off their session by locking the money away, making certain that lights are off and the doors are locked and then setting the alarm as they leave – all pretty important and responsible jobs.

Occasionally, a few of our receptionists have requested extra administrative jobs to fill in their time during counselling such as photocopying, data entry, etc. and this has been invaluable to the office staff.

A few receptionists have been with us for very many years and we are very grateful to them for turning up each month and all of them are extremely reliable. We know that if they're unable to come on their allotted evening they arrange their own swap and then inform the office of the new arrangements.

Our receptionists are exceptionally special to us and without them we just wouldn't be able to offer our counselling service to the Stockport community.

A huge and grateful thank you to you all.
Sandra



Sandra Bailey

New people, new initiatives.....

- Hello and welcome to new volunteer counsellors – **Zoe Lister, Laura Cutts, Andrew Kearins, Jim Hall, Assia Bandukda, Diana Stockford, Briony Martin, Mary Wallace and Margaret Etchells.**
- Our volunteer graphic designer has produced an information work pack for our Schools Confidence Programme.

- We recently organised training for 7 facilitators from 5 primary schools to enable them to lead the Schools confidence program.
- We have also completed a training session with 5 members of staff from the schools we work in.
- We also welcome **Rebecca Lockett** who is working as one of our receptionists and **Tom Elliott** and **Rachel O'Hart** who are helping us in the office . These volunteers are gaining experience of a counselling organisation, whilst training to become counsellors.



AGM highlights.....

After the usual reports from the **Manager** and **Treasurer**, we listened to an interesting talk on compulsive gambling by two representatives from GamCare.

The winner of the Dorothy Boardman Volunteer of the Year Award was **JULIA LARMER** for her fantastic work as graphic designer of our newsletters as well as her sterling work on the Annual Report – in addition to her main role as volunteer counsellor!

Merit awards were presented to **MICHELLE KEIFER**, counsellor at Disability Stockport and **GORDON JACKSON**, admin volunteer at Bramhall.

Certificates of long standing service were awarded to receptionists **MARY RIDING** and **GWYNETH HILL**.

OLIVIA HUNT received a gift and thank you card as she steps down after 16 years with Beacon.



Our Congratulations go to -

Counsellor Gabriela Raica who has recently graduated from Keele University, and
Counsellor Victoria Wilshaw who has gained her Diploma for Counselling from Stockport College.



Beacon stats

Our statistics reveal that it looks like we are as busy this year as last with a total of 170 new clients during the first 3 months.

By mid-March we had 45 people waiting for initial appointments and 44 clients waiting for ongoing sessions.

The number of young people we helped in Stockport schools increased massively last year to 530.

Grateful client comments.....

- ✓ **“A very professional organisation that has a warm welcoming atmosphere and a pleasant degree of informality”.**
- ✓ **“Beacon is a safe place to be. It helps you to see the bigger picture and gives you the tools to cope with everyday life”.**
- ✓ **“Counselling has enabled me to feel positive within myself and given me direction. I also know that it’s okay to feel sad sometimes”.**

And finally..... a counsellor came into the office recently and reported that their client had just had a “light bulb moment”.



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