

# Beacon Friends' Newsletter

February 2008

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In this issue read about a change of Chairman, some recent statistics, a new Supervisor, our AGM, some information about depression and much more.....

## Thank you!

For your support in renewing your Friends subscription. As you know, this funding goes straight into the running of our service.

## Chairman Joan Tsalikis steps down



Joan recently stepped down as Chairman of the Board of Trustees. She has worked tremendously hard for Beacon in very demanding times, successfully steering us through financial turmoil and expanding services with her own brand of calm and down to earth determination.

Joan says *"being Chairman of Beacon for the last six years has been a privilege and a pleasure. In this time I have been both challenged and rewarded by the nature of this position and enjoyed seeing great strides made in the development of*

*this excellent service. I have personally enjoyed being involved with the wonderful bunch of people who make up Beacon, it is real "team work" in action.*

*It is good to leave on a high note, with the service expanding and an excellent Manager at the helm. I wish our incoming Chairman, Kevin Gaston, success in his new role. I am very happy to be leaving the position in such capable hands".*

Joan has always been passionate about our work and we owe her a great debt of gratitude. Joan will continue to be a Trustee.

## New Chairman Kevin Gaston

Kevin is semi-retired. He has worked as a University Lecturer at the Manchester Business School but now is an independent teacher and organisational consultant. He has been one of our Trustees for several years and during that time has shown great enthusiasm for Beacon's work.

## **Desperately Seeking Receptionists**

*Our Bramhall receptionist list is very depleted right now and our existing volunteers are having to work more often than usual at the moment to help out. PLEASE, PLEASE, can you ask your friends and neighbours if they know of anyone who is looking to do worthwhile voluntary work. It's only 2 hours a month, pleasant working conditions in a central location, training is given and you will be really appreciated for your efforts. Please contact Sandra on 0161 440 0055 as soon as possible.*

## **Emergency First Aid Course**

9 staff and volunteers attended a "Save a Life" Course in January organised by the British Red Cross. We were a little disappointed that none of our receptionists were able to come along because it had been organised primarily for them, however, it was most interesting and everyone enjoyed the experience. You never know when this skill will help to save someone's life.

## **Annual General Meeting**

Beacon's AGM this year takes place on Tuesday 11th March, starting at 6.30pm in St. Michael's Church Hall, Bramhall. **Everyone is welcome!** Come along to hear our Chairman's report for 2007, what we achieved last year, and who has won the prestigious "Dorothy Boardman Award for Voluntary Service to Beacon". This is open to all Beacon volunteers.

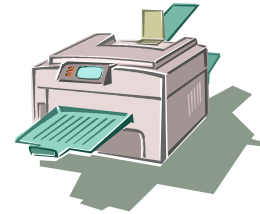
We are very pleased to announce that Elysabeth Williams (Stockport Primary Care Trust's Senior Health Promotion Advisor: Mental Health) will be giving us a short talk on "Promoting Positive Mental Health" - so come along and

show your support - it might be a more interesting evening than you thought. James has published our Annual Report containing loads of information which includes various articles written by some of our volunteers and staff. This report will be available at the AGM.

## **Goodbye Liz Dooley**

Receptionist Liz has now retired from Beacon to spend more time with her family. Liz has worked for us for very many years and was actually one of our first volunteers and she could always be relied on to never let us down. Thank you Liz for all your hard work and dedication and we sincerely hope we shall continue to see you at our social occasions.

## **Photocopier/printer/scanner for the office**



Everyone in the Bramhall office was delighted recently to take delivery of a new "all singing, all dancing" printer. The old one had been giving us a lot of grief for a long time and needed replacing. It will now be possible for us to do most of our own printing in-house and thereby saving us lots of money!

## **Local MP's Support**

Mark Hunter MP for Cheadle has written to us again recently repeating his offer of help and support. Mark is already a "Friend of Beacon" and we really appreciate his continued interest in our work.

**News about James Harper**  
**Beacon Manager, James, is just about to commence a part time degree-level Diploma in Management course.**  
**Good luck James!**

## Facts and Figures

From September to December 2007 our monitoring reveals:

- ❖ We saw 147 adult clients – 6% up on the previous quarter;
- ❖ 75% of them were female;
- ❖ 47% were unemployed, part-time workers, students or retired;
- ❖ 70% were referred to us by their NHS doctor.

## Waiting list

During the whole of 2007 we saw over 650 adults and young people but despite that we still had 90 people on our waiting list at the end of the year.

## Depression in the News

(over 25% of our clients come to us for help with this issue)



Society as a whole is getting better at recognising depression, an expert has claimed. According to Dr. Jim Bolton, a consultant psychiatrist at South West London & St. George's Mental Health Trust, there is no evidence to suggest that depression is becoming more common, but it is being recognised more.

Dr. Bolton says "Depression becomes an illness when normal sadness is more severe and goes on for longer than we might expect and also if it begins to interfere in our everyday functioning so that we cannot carry on with our normal lives – such as going to work or being a parent".

The expert recommended a healthy diet and regular exercise as lifestyle factors that can have an anti-depressive effect, as well as avoiding too much alcohol. He also highlighted the benefits of talking with other people – family, friends, counselling and psychotherapy".

(Source: [www.netdoctor.co.uk](http://www.netdoctor.co.uk))

## More counselling for young people

From January we increased our School Counselling Service to 10 schools. We now work from 8 in Stockport, 1 in Oldham and 1 in Macclesfield.

We also work with young people outside of school from 2 community locations.

## Prudent Cost-Cutting

A recent modest cost-cutting exercise by James and the Finance Committee has resulted in reducing the cost of each counselling session for us. In 2005 each hour cost £35.27 but in 2007 this amount was reduced to £32.39. Congratulations – it's unusual these days to pay less for a better product.

## Recent "end of counselling" client comments



**"I was in total freefall, never felt so bad. You are angels for being there for someone like me. Totally satisfied with every aspect of Beacon. Thank you again and God Bless you."**

*"I'm still not feeling the best, but I'm well on the way, and you have helped me have the courage to go forward in my life."*

**"Immensely grateful - everyone was so pleasant and helpful. Real help in a crisis"**.

***"The people answering the Beacon phone were always helpful and understanding"***.

## A new Supervisor

We now have 8 Supervisors with Roger MacDonald joining the Beacon team at the end of 2007. We now have 37 counsellors so it was felt necessary to increase the support we give them. Roger has been one of our counsellors for a couple of years so he is thoroughly familiar with our personnel and procedures etc. Our team of very experienced Supervisors work closely with all our counsellors guiding and advising on case notes for each of their clients. They also ensure that all our counsellors work to the Code of Ethics of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy. Beacon greatly values its Supervisors for their expertise and support.

## New Trustee

*We welcome Mahesh Shah as the latest member to our Board of Trustees.*

## Beacon's Gala Dinner

Have you bought your tickets yet for the "Beacon Dinner" at Marple Golf Club on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> April? Everyone is welcome to this casual evening of good food and enjoyable company. We only have a few tickets, so first come first served. Please contact Sandra or James at the office.

*(Can anyone donate a Raffle prize for this event please?)*

## And finally – another piece about depression, but on a lighter note.....

Chocolate causes certain endocrine glands to secrete hormones that affect your feelings and behaviour by making you happy. Therefore, it counteracts mild depression. Your stress-free life helps you maintain a youthful disposition, both physically and mentally. So eat lots of chocolate!!

*(Source: The Book of Divine Indulgence by Elaine Sherman)*



*"We work towards positive mental health"*

## **BEACON COUNSELLING**

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B2 Youth Counselling enquiries 088830 32759