

Beacon Friends' Newsletter

January 2008

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HAPPY NEW YEAR!

FRIDAY OPENING

Since the start of Beacon in 1984 we have never had the opportunity to open our doors on Fridays. However, this has now changed and the start of the year saw our extended hours at the Bramhall office. We can now offer additional hours of counselling on that day.

We also welcome back to the office Barbara Polanska who will be working on Fridays in future. Barbara was our afternoon Administrator a couple of years ago so she is very familiar with our administration procedures and we are especially pleased to see her back into the Beacon fold after an extended period of illness.

Our secret Santa

For the second year running an anonymous Bramhall businessman made a Christmas donation of £500 towards our funds. This money has gone towards a much needed new colour printer/scanner/photocopier for the office which will help us save considerable printing costs and raise our profile by:

- *Printing new Beacon information leaflets*
- *Scanning good mental health well-being tips and other information directly onto our website*
- *Printing the new-look Annual Report etc.*

We are thrilled that this local benefactor continues to support us in such a generous way.

TICKETS FOR OUR GALA DINNER NOW AVAILABLE



DATE - Friday 18th April 2008

START - 7.30pm

PLACE - Marple Golf Club

COST - £25 per person (note small reduction in cost)

AFTER DINNER SPEAKER -

(Graham Smith - Manchester United's Training and Personal Development Officer)

**3 COURSE DINNER
& luxury Raffle**

To get your tickets phone Sandra now on 0161 440 0055.

**BUY THEM NOW TO AVOID
DISAPPOINTMENT**

Beacon 2

Our service for young people continues to grow and from the beginning of January our counsellors started working in King's School in Macclesfield and also in "The Mill" in Bramhall Village - a youth centre for local teenagers which offers facilities such as café, games and the internet..... and now a youth counselling service.

One of our counsellors writes

A chance conversation with Olivia in the office resulted in a request for me to write a short piece as to why I have worked for so long as a counsellor at Beacon. I started working for Beacon in October 2001 and have been with them for six years. I first heard of Beacon's existence, and its excellent reputation, as a student looking for a placement, and I was also impressed by the rigorous interview and selection process. I have always experienced Beacon as being very professional and by its commitments to its clients.

I enjoy being part of a large diverse team of people with a similar ethos that "people matter". It's only in recent years that I have really appreciated the different skills that each individual contributes, from the voluntary receptionists, office staff, and fund raisers to name but a few. As a counsellor I value the support and experience that I can tap into in the form of in-house supervision. An important element for me is Beacon's commitment to its counsellors and being able to invest in us by providing a range of additional training. As the organisation expands and if it still manages to look after the welfare of its volunteers as well as its clients there will always be a sense of loyalty to a service which provides a valuable service to the community.

[Theresa Law](#)

Early success for our Publicity Man

Within the first 6 weeks of John Bennett joining us he has had nine articles published about Beacon. The Bramhall Community Newspaper and the AboutMyArea, Bramhall Scoops and The Media Trust websites have all accepted and featured stories such as our John Lewis Partnership funding for training, the Wythenshawe Project and other recent funding news. Well done John - and positive publicity for us.

Thank you Buckland Harvester

£ £ £ £ £

A huge thank you to financial services company [Buckland Harvester](#) who work in the centre of Manchester and who sent us a surprise cheque for £100 over the Christmas holiday. This donation was in lieu of them sending out corporate Christmas cards. Their funding is primarily to assist our Beacon 2 service which counsels young people in Reddish.

The "Wythenshawe project"

After our initial 3 months trial working in 2 children's centres in Benchill and Woodhouse Park we are pleased with the uptake of this new service. Following a review, the pilot scheme will now continue for another 3 months.

A message from James

We have now reached a landmark figure of £50 raised from [EveryClick](#). This may seem a small amount, but it has been raised without any of us doing anything! How can this be, you may ask? Well, [EveryClick](#) is a search engine just like Google, Yahoo, Ask, etc. but instead of keeping its hands on all the profits, half of the income goes to charities. Many thanks to the 9 people who have already signed up to [EveryClick](#). Now, if we can get another 9 people, then we could raise £30 a month instead of £15. If you are unsure on how to sign up, then just email me, ring me, write to

me, or just send smoke signals! It's free - there are no catches - and you don't get any junk emails.... so why not?
Thanks – James Harper.

General news

❑ Our team of counsellors have the expertise to work with several types of therapies including: Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Person Centred, Gestalt, Integrative, and Psychodynamic. Our philosophy (based on research evidence) is that the most effective counselling is provided by counsellors who work in an approach that matches them, rather than having a “one size fits all” approach.

❑ During the quarter July-September 2007 over 60% of our new clients came to us on the recommendation of their GP.

❑ At the end of November 2007 we had a waiting list of 81 people.

❑ Our 3 Year Financial Plan has recently been approved by our Trustees. Apart from giving a clear vision of our future, it will be used as a practical tool for setting targets on our performance that can be monitored on a monthly basis. It will also increase awareness of finances, improve risk management through early warning of any crises and improve governance through fuller and more accurate information.

❑ The annual cost of mental health problems to UK employers has been placed at nearly £26 billion by researchers. A report by the Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health suggests that every worker costs British businesses an average of £1,000 a year, including time off work and lost productivity. The Centre further states that “that if employers take effective action to improve the well-being of their staff they will reap the rewards for their efforts”.

❑ Manager James Harper now works full time in the Bramhall office.

❑ We now work in 13 venues throughout Stockport and South Manchester.

Client's comments

"I still have a bad day, but feel able to cope with them in a more logical way now".

"The combination of medication and excellent counselling sessions brought back all my old self-confidence".

Sorry - but it's time to renew your Friends membership

January is your Newsletter subscription anniversary and so if you continue to be:

- * *Interested in our work,*
 - * *Enjoy receiving your Newsletters,*
 - * *Want to know what we've been up to and what we are planning for the future,*
 - * *Want to help shape our future,*
 - * *Want to enjoy yourself at our social occasions,*
 - * *Or just want to help financially towards the running of a vibrant and professional local charity that is making a real difference in Stockport -*
- then **PLEASE** renew your annual subscription to **BEACON FRIENDS**. (See attached information sheet). Your contribution will be greatly appreciated. Our work is important, and research shows that talking therapies can help tackle mild to moderate mental health issues at grassroots level before they can become overwhelming for an individual.

More Counsellors

After rigorous interviews we are delighted to announce 6 additional volunteer counsellors who have joined our team. We welcome Jo-Anne Doherty, Fiona Douglas, Janice Kost, Nicola Oldham, Polly Chillingworth and Julie Virgin and hope they all have a rewarding and interesting time with Beacon.

Anne Sejrup (Beacon's first administrator) remembers how it all began.....

Nearly 24 years ago a special meeting of the Bramhall & Woodford Council for Churches was called to ask if anyone would be interested in helping to start a local counselling service. Anne Sejrup, a local resident, already a trained counsellor working with the Samaritans, felt drawn to this idea and couldn't ignore this appeal and so volunteered to "give it a go". Eleanor Sykes was selected as Chairman – a wonderful feisty 80 year-old lady who helped to start Marriage Guidance (now Relate) in 1938 – and the two met one day in the middle of Bramhall. They sat in Anne's mini car and talked about the way ahead and in the words of Anne "Beacon was conceived in a mini". Anne instinctively knew this would be a good partnership – she had the right credentials, a counsellor with an admin background – and Eleanor with her vast experience in the world of psychiatry was a "wise old bird".

Anne started Beacon from home firstly on an entirely voluntary basis. She was also part-time Secretary of the Manchester Samaritans, who gave her an honorarium of £1,000 p.a. However, she soon felt that Beacon's need was the greater as the workload increased and she was unable to do both, so eventually Beacon took over this payment. One year, however, during one of our many financial crises, we were unable to pay the £1,000 so Anne very reluctantly announced she would have to resign. However, the money mysteriously appeared anonymously shortly afterwards and Anne is convinced that Eleanor had come to our rescue (as indeed she did on several occasions thereafter).

The original service started with just one counsellor working at Robins Lane GP practice and leaflets were printed for all the GPs in the area and there was also a small advertisement in the local newspaper.

Clients soon came flooding in. More counsellors were recruited and one of these was Margaret Parker who still continues to work for us as one of most experienced Supervisors. Many of the original counsellors were untrained volunteers and most of them went on to attend counselling courses organised at that time at the Manchester Cathedral.

Beacon began to spread its wings and worked in GP surgeries in Cheadle Hulme, Reddish and Shaw Heath. The service was funded by modest client contributions together with the donations from the churches. Everything was done on a shoestring and everyone worked as volunteers.

13 years ago Anne retired and she now says "I look back with tremendous pride and I'm delighted that I was involved in such a worthwhile venture". She continues to be an avid supporter of our work and is a "Beacon Friend".

I'm sure everyone would join me in thanking Anne for helping to start Beacon all those years ago. We are considerably larger these days, but we haven't forgotten our past, and without people like Anne and Eleanor Beacon could never have helped the thousands of Stockport people who have walked through our doors seeking our help.

BEACON COUNSELLING

We are making a difference in Stockport

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