

unsung heroes

The Queen's Award for
Voluntary Service 2008

The Beacon Friends Newsletter

June 2010



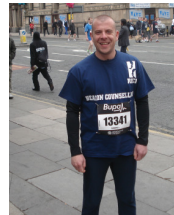
Record Fundraiser for Beacon at the Great Manchester 10K Run!!!



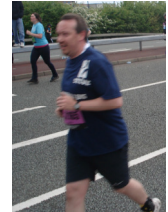
Jo Dionysiou and
Natalie Harper—that
speedy running is
just for the camera!



The team—or most of them!



Rick Bennett—and now
it's time for a pint



Steve Whammond
The top individual
fundraiser!!!

36,000 runners took part in the race this year and our fantastic “Team Beacon” of 25 fundraising runners did us proud!!! All successfully finished the run in under 1 hour 36 minutes, and everyone managed to obtain fantastic amounts of sponsorship. The fastest on our team was 15 year old James Stanion in an incredible time of 46:17. Our quickest fleet-footed counsellor was Nicola Oldham in a devastating time of 51:54, closely followed by Polly Chillingworth in a heart stopping 56.31.

WELL DONE TO EVERYONE WHO TOOK PART!

Counsellor and ‘in-house graphic designer’ Julia Larmer sent a message afterwards.....

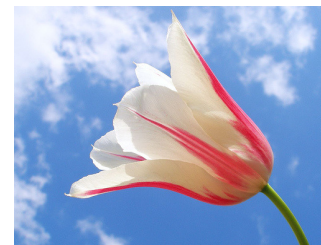
“Thank you for your kind support and encouragement with our 10K challenge. The good news is....we did it! Husband Tim and I crossed the line together with a time of 65:43”.

Manager James sends this special message.....

“Thank you to all the runners who trained and raised funds for Beacon Counselling at this year’s Great Manchester Run. This was our most successful ever fundraiser and raised £4,000 for Beacon’s services. A fantastic effort by all”.

Continuation of Our Wythenshawe Project

Although it looked increasingly likely that this successful service would have been forced to stop at the end of August because our funding was coming to an end, we now find with a little “belt tightening” we can last out until the end of the year. This gives James some extra time to build on local Wythenshawe links and apply for additional funding.



A Beacon Newsletter for Schools

We are now producing a Newsletter for all the schools involved in our Schools Service. There will be one edition each term and it will go to the Head Teachers, liaison teachers, school nurses and other staff who are interested in the mental health welfare of young people. It will contain information on our schools service, which schools are included, new counselling programmes and how Beacon operates, as well as information on Beacon’s other services. Some representatives from the schools had mentioned to us in the past that they felt isolated and unaware of what else Beacon did for the local community, so our hope is that this informative newsletter will make the schools feel more included under the “Beacon umbrella of services” and up to date with what else we are doing.



Our New Venture Disability Stockport and Beacon

On 1st May we commenced working with **Disability Stockport** on a brand new trial project offering counselling into the very heart of Stockport.

Disability Stockport, is a large well known local charity, and has its headquarters in the middle of Stockport. Until recently they had organised their own counselling service to their clients but had found their administration challenging together with their range of other services, so they approached Beacon to join forces with them for a 6 months funded trial. This project marks a development of the collaborative work we've done with this charity on other projects. This also means that not only will we be helping their clients, but our own too, in a very conveniently located centre.

5 Beacon volunteer counsellors will be offering this service led by Fiona Douglas as part-time Coordinator. Fiona is one of our more experienced counsellors and has been involved with our Wythenshawe project since early 2008. She will be working 2 days a week from the Disability Stockport headquarters. Fiona says "my aim is to develop, promote and extend the existing counselling service within Disability Stockport. To create and facilitate a team atmosphere amongst the counsellors, and to support them to ensure that we are able to deliver a caring and professional service to all our clients".

We are particularly pleased to be involved in this innovative project and we send a warm Beacon welcome to volunteer counsellors Jim Coleman, Evie Dean, Michelle Keifer, Olwyn McEwen and Rob Taylor and we all hope you find this experience enriching and fulfilling.

Spotlight on a Trustee

Some of our readers have requested more information on the members of our Board of Trustees.....

Who are they?

What part do they play in our development?

And how relevant are their backgrounds that can benefit us?

So we have pleasure in featuring one member of the Board in each of our future Newsletters. Our first profile is on **Joan Tsalikis**

Joan has worked as one of our Trustees for 10 years and was Chairman for about 6 of them. She serves on the "Young Beacon Committee" and is also the lead on the "Liaison Committee" who work closely with our Supervisors. Her interests have always leaned towards children and young people because of her extensive teaching background.

She originally trained at Teacher Training College and then went into primary school education, firstly at a school in Bristol and then as a supply teacher at Woodlands Special School in Offerton. At her first post she met a particularly challenging 7 year-old boy who, in her own words, "sparked a desire to help him". Joan says "he interested me more than anyone else in the class, he obviously needed more help than the average child, and I

was intrigued to learn how I could help him. He was the catalyst that started my future career pattern".

Joan went on to train with the Dyslexia Institute and with this knowledge taught special needs children at Ramilies School in Cheadle Hulme. Joan says, "I have always been interested in children and I soon realised that challenging kids are extra interesting. With my "special" teaching background I feel I can bring valuable experience to our Young Beacon Committee and I'm now especially delighted that we are just beginning to open up counselling opportunities in some of our Stockport primary schools. Counselling young people empowers them to put their problems behind them and gives them life enhancing self-esteem".



2010 Facts and Figures

208 new clients were added to our waiting list during January to April and we offered 1,295 hours of counselling.

Did you know?

- New counsellor interviews took place in May and 4 additional volunteer counsellors are being included on our team. They are currently going through the induction and CRB checks before meeting their supervisors and starting to offer counselling.
- We will be working closely in future, in an advisory capacity, with representatives from the Methodist Church in Bramhall on their mental health project.
- Chairman Alan Hewitson and Manager James recently attended the launch of the Greater Manchester Well-being Consortium. This aims to help smaller voluntary organisations in bidding for contracts with primary care trusts and local authorities. We feel it's important for small organisations like us to give ourselves the best chance of obtaining funding through contracts and becoming a member of this grouping should give us a valuable leg up in this area.
- James also attended a training day on the Law of Funding Tenders. It seems that contracts offered by the state to the voluntary sector are often not fully understood by small charities. This training pointed out the pitfalls when applying for funding, how to identify them, and the best ways to deal with them. So perhaps what appeared initially as a pretty boring subject turned out to be a very useful day for our funding team.
- After a successful pilot we have now received further funding from Target Mental Health in Schools (TAMHS) to continue our Primary Schools Programme.



First Stressbusters Pilot Programme completed

The first of our three stress management programmes has now finished. This took place over 8 weeks with a group of 6 people. 10 clients had originally agreed to take part, but on the last minute 2 changed their minds and 2 did not attend. Each participant had been selected from our waiting list and forwarded on to a Stressbusters Assessment to confirm their suitability, availability and commitment. Funding was provided by Stockport Primary Care Trust Public Health Department to train 6 experienced counsellors in delivering this specialised service. Each course is organised by 2 of our counsellor facilitators.

At the end of the first course we organised very careful and detailed monitoring and evaluation because we were keen to understand the outcomes and impact for the participants, and also to gather feedback on how future programmes could be improved. Each participant completed our own evaluation questionnaire as well as 5 additional mental health monitoring forms. Continuous



feedback during the programme was taken from both the facilitators as well as from the Supervisor.

James has now written an interim report about all these results, but briefly, the participants found the course to be a success and found:

- their stress levels reduced,
- their ability to cope in the future increased,
- they gained greater confidence and motivation to make changes in their lives.

2 more programmes will run in the coming months, but early indications show that these courses are proving a useful service to the public by helping participants to make improvements in specific areas of their lives.

A Stressbusters client emailed us recently: *"I'd like to thank Sally and Ciodhna for all their work during the Stressbusters sessions. Although I admit that I had (openly) declared myself somewhat skeptical at the beginning of the course, I found it a useful and productive exercise. I'm sure a major part of this is down to the facilitators".*

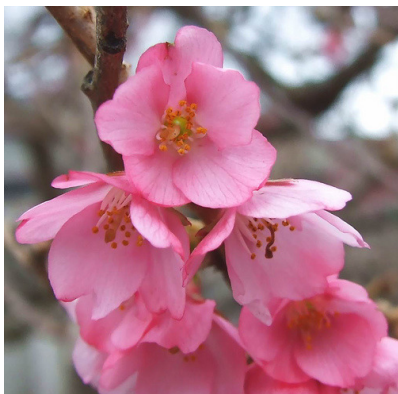
Another Beacon Positive Mental Health Wellbeing tip....



Get involved..... don't stand on the sidelines. Find a way to get involved and make a contribution, however little, at home, at work or in the community. People are often happiest when helping others.

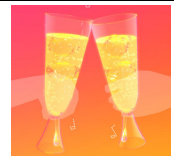
Beacon Strategy

We are starting the process of writing a Strategy for our organisation. This may sound distant and unnecessary but it is important for us to have a conversation about our future direction. The Trustees will be discussing this shortly, after which there will be consultation with all involved with Beacon about our future direction, mainly through this year's Open Forum. From there, the final version will be produced and work will start on taking Beacon forward.



Our very own "In House Poet Laureate" has been at it again!

Sandra Bailey has penned one of her world famous "odes" to honour our great receptionists.....



I'd like to say to our loyal happy band
Of receptionists who are the best in the land.
Thank you ladies and gentlemen too
For the hard work that you all do.
Without your help we wouldn't be here,
So I raise my glass and wish you good cheer.
(It's a cup really – but that doesn't scan!)

Debby's Diary.....

May 10..... Well, the interviews for new counsellors went well on Saturday, although one guy didn't show, or even phone. The best ones have been offered a role, but I think we will have to start thinking up some nicknames - we now have 2 Sues, a Julia and 2 Julies, a Joanne and 2 Joanna's and a Lawson and a Lawton. Help - we could do with a Tasmin, a Quentin or even a simple Pauline!

May 24..... The weather is always frustrating! First the snows in January, then volcanic ash affecting everybody's holiday arrangements, so counsellors were suddenly available when their plans (and their planes) had been thwarted..... and then they were not available when they were supposed to be back. So more calls to clients to re-arrange their appointments. And now high levels of sunshine are wilting some of the occupants of the office, necessitating an ice cream run early afternoon!

Are you clearing out?

We have a few things on our "wanted list" so please don't throw away.....

Stones (different shapes, colours and sizes)

2 large wooden plates or baskets – for containing the stones (on a coffee table)

Cushions / covers

Artificial or dried flowers and vases, or small resilient plants for the counselling rooms.

(can't guarantee how often they will get watered)

Please drop off at the office!

Maybe with a call first to let us know you are coming

BEACON COUNSELLING

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**We are on the
internet...**

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