

VOLUNTEERS' NEWSLETTER

December 2008

Please welcome ...

...Val Coomber, who has joined us as a volunteer in the Women's Group and Art Workshop.

Sue Collins has been on placement with us as a SPA and hopefully will continue as a volunteer with the Art Workshop.

We hope also to welcome Samantha Hull and Roberta Gilkinson at Rainbow; they are currently going through the induction process.

Farewell and thanks

Ade Adegbembo is no longer able to volunteer at the Bridge – we thank her and wish her all the best as she studies for a law degree. Although Pearl Hobson is staying with us at the Bridge, she will be leaving the Women's Group and Art Workshop. She has been with these groups from the start and all involved with these projects owe her a debt of gratitude. Pearl is not retiring but going to work in projects nearer her home.

Honorary Treasurer

Mike Molnar was confirmed as our new Honorary Treasurer at the AGM – welcome!

Training Course

The new and improved course will be available from the beginning of February 2009.

Registration cards

...at the drop-ins and workshops – please try and ask all new members to fill in a card – we really do need this information.

Health & Safety

In the New Year there will be some new Health & Safety procedures in the drop-ins, involving checks of the premises and recording of these checks. There will also be information memos which volunteers will be asked to read and sign. It will just be a matter of everyone getting used to some simple processes at the start of each session. Some of us may need to arrive a little earlier so these tasks can be completed.

Last Minute Christmas presents?

Don't forget about going through www.easyfundraising.org.uk to visit the sites you want. Then a percentage of what you spend will be given to whichever of their registered charities you choose. The Croydon APCMH is registered with them - hint!

New Day Care Services in Croydon

You may have heard rumours about these new services in Croydon. People whose current service may change should be offered an assessment of their needs. Our drop-ins are not affected by the planned changes.

We have tendered for some new drop-in work but will not know about this until possibly the end of January. If our tenders are successful we will be looking for volunteers. I should be interested to know from any of our present volunteers if they are interested in increasing their commitment. Days and times are not known but the venues will be in Purley and Thornton Heath.

Because of the huge amount of time that we have dedicated to this tendering process, I hope you will forgive the lack of Christmas card this year. Nonetheless, we wish you a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year but not in multi-colour on this occasion!



An email from Andrew Wilson is reproduced .
Please read and think about how this can make our teams more effective.

from Andrew Wilson APCMH Workshop Nov
8th 2008-11-21

It is really important that

- we work as a team,
- that we are aware of the whole drop-in,
- that we support each other with the various tasks,
- if members want to help, that is great, but without creating undue pressure.

We focussed on how we might work more effectively in cooperation with each other. We acknowledged that we can remain within our own comfort zone, and that this might not always be helpful for other volunteers and our members.

We looked at ways in which we might be more

aware of each other needs.

We used material from the Janki Foundation team development programme to discover what **qualities and values** build up cooperative working, and decided that an effective team relies upon: Good communication: expressing our needs: setting respectful boundaries: establishing comfortable working relationships: clarity about roles and expectations: agreeing core values, whilst allowing space for diversity: acknowledging each person's contribution: awareness of other people's needs: flat structures within the organization: respect from statutory bodies for volunteers and their commitment: acceptance of our limitations: challenging complacency: addressing current needs.

We agreed that we seek to avoid hierarchical structures and competitive attitudes, and to provide real value. We underlined the need for safety, ongoing monitoring of our work, consistency, respect, reliability and continuity. We are often the holders of people's stories.

Looking to the future we saw our targets as: maintaining our open-door policy, setting no expectations on members but empowering them to make their own choices at their own pace. This approach militated against any process of assessing 'outcomes'. We want to provide non-intrusive, confidential support, and work to increase the input of members, whilst avoiding funding-led models. Members' choices are our priority. We want to increase our volunteers' base, and projects, and make others aware of our vision and aims. At the same time we realize the importance of working within our own resources. We wish to utilize everybody's resources in a coordinated, structured and practical way, and to encourage members to voice their opinions.

In an exercise where we drew 'before and after' cartoons we explored situations that weren't working, and ways in which difficulties could be resolved.

Before: We discovered that blocks to cooperative work included:

Non-communication, seeking complete control, resentment, bringing personal baggage into the present, whether we are aware of that or not! Lack of self-awareness; masks and self-concern that ignores others needs. Feelings of uncertainty, disempowerment, not being heard, explosive anger, discrimination, 'bossiness' perceived or real!; scape-goating, not accepting personal responsibility, and not taking responsibility for others, gossip and sidelining.

Ways to move forward: mediation, sensitive challenge, counting to ten! Patience reflection, getting help, talking it through, support, using the structure, choosing the right time and place to deal with problems, a positive attitude, a creative attitude, re-iterated messages, affirming the good, the courage to accept our own part in any problem, not reacting immediately, giving ourselves time and space, open dialogue.



A Reminder of the Diary Dates

15th December	Rainbow party
19th December	Bethlem Carol Service—3 pm
19th December	Open Door party
21st December	Bridge party
22nd December	Women's Group and Creative Workshops closed for 2 weeks.
26th December	Open Door closed

The office will be closed for the weeks beginning Monday 22nd Dec. and 29th Dec.