

Positive Lives

Your Voice Counts

'Your voice counts' was the title for the service user feedback event held at Alton Towers. The venue, undoubtedly, helped to attract a good turnout from both North and South Staffordshire. But there would be no lunch or fun until the work was completed. Despite a late start and audibility issues caused by the noise from a white-knuckle ride next to the hospitality tent, the agenda was efficiently managed and all problems overcome. Everyone quickly settled down and focussed on the job in hand. Staffordshire Buddies staff facilitated group discussions about personal experiences relating to GPs, Social Services and the GUM clinic, as well as Accident and Emergency Departments and the Charity itself. As each group was made up of individuals from across the county addressing each theme in turn, the resulting range of observations was very wide. This rich bank of first-hand knowledge helped to inform the constructive criticism produced by each group that was fed back to the entire assembly at the end of the session. Hopefully, these observations will serve to highlight what is working well and what needs to be changed to improve services.

The advertised 'cold-buffet' lunch turned out to be quite a spread with several hot dishes and carrot cake for afters. Lunch also provided an opportunity for networking and peer-support with individuals renewing old acquaintanceships and establishing new ones. Alton Towers offered an excellent range of options for the remainder of the afternoon. Those in need of an adrenaline rush were able to get on to white-knuckle rides without long queues, whilst those wishing to continue their lunchtime conversations had plenty of comfortable settings to do so. At least one person took the chance to explore the old buildings and extensive gardens. Even the sun made an appearance adding to the healthy benefits of being outdoors. Positive Lives looks forward to the written report on what was unanimously considered a highly successful event, which ought to be repeated.

Maurice Greenham



Also in this issue:

Esprit women's group

Becoming a Buddy

Childrens Activities

World AIDS Day 2008

Maurice's Angle



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This publication is available in
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Cover Photograph: Maurice Greenham
View of old original buildings at Alton
Towers taken on the day of 'Your Voice
Counts!'

Be thankful for each day

I may never see tomorrow,
There's no guarantee,
And things that happened yesterday
Belong to history.

I can't predict the future,
I cannot change the past,
I have just the present memories
to cherish as my last.

I must use this moment wisely,
for it will pass away,
and then be lost forever
as a part of yesterday.

I must exercise compassion;
Help the fallen to their feet,
be a friend unto the friendless,
Help to make their life complete.

The unkind things I do today,
May never be undone,
and friendships that I fail to win,
May never more be won.

I may not have another chance
on bended knees to pray,
I thank God with a humble heart
for giving me this day!

Staffordshire Buddies Service User

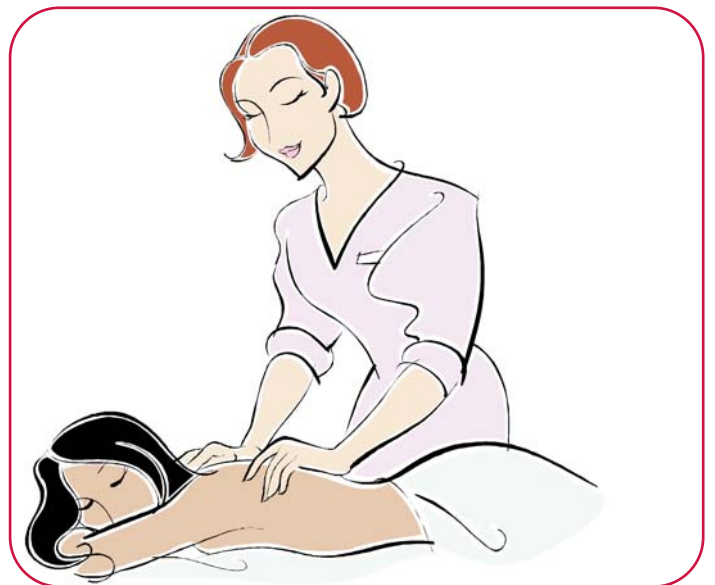
Esprit women's group

Some of our women clients had expressed a desire to visit a spa, so a group of us went off for a pampering and relaxing day Spa Day.

A newly referred client attended who had never experienced anything like this before in her own culture, so the rest of the group looked after her throughout the day.

We had a very relaxing time, spending the day between the Turkish relaxing room, sauna, steam room, Jacuzzi and pool. We also had facials, and back and head massages. We didn't even have to change and leave this relaxing environment for snacks and lunch, as they were served in the suite.

As we relaxed we discussed such important issues as health, relationships, education and other social events, in a warm and friendly atmosphere. Telephone numbers were exchanged with the intention of keeping in contact and meeting again, either at the Hanley centre or elsewhere. We went home relaxed.



“ I am so happy I came for the activity because I was terrified of attending these kinds of groups, this has given me the courage to come to the drop in. ”

Staffordshire Buddies new client

“ It was nice to be pampered but I was shocked at the nudity of some of the ladies ”

Staffordshire Buddies Service User

“ I enjoyed the treatments but it would have been better to start with swimming before the massages. ”

Staffordshire Buddies Service User

What is a Buddy, and how to become one.

Buddy Volunteers offer regular support to a person living with HIV/AIDS.

Days and times of work: Negotiable, according to client needs and volunteer availability. In general a buddy volunteer is expected to see a client they are linked to at least once a week.

Location: Community based.

Time commitment: Regular minimum commitment of four hours per week, plus time for group supervision and support.

Co-ordinated by: The HIV Services Manager, responsible for the overall co-ordination and development of this service. Individual volunteers are co-ordinated by the HIV Services "key worker" responsible for the client(s) concerned.

Individual Supervision: As required from HIV Services "key worker" for the client(s) concerned.

Group Supervision and Support: Four times per year with HIV Services Manager or designated member of the HIV Services Team

List of duties:

- Establish and maintain regular contact with a designated client or clients. This will typically mean regular one to one work with the client in her/his home and regular contact via telephone and/or e-mail.
- Proactively develop activities with the client that reflect her/his specific needs and interests.
- Work cooperatively and sensitively with the client's family, partner and professionals involved with the client's care as applicable.
- Attend group supervision and support sessions four times per year.
- Work within the Buddy Service Procedures.
- Maintain records of visits and issues raised and feed back relevant matters to the HIV Services "key worker" responsible for the client concerned.

Essential Requirements:

- This role is open to probationary volunteers and members only.
- Excellent awareness of issues related to living with HIV/AIDS.
- Clear understanding of appropriate boundaries and a willingness to work within them; ability to implement high standards of confidentiality.
- Good communication skills.
- Non-judgemental. Confident and mature outlook on life.
- Stability; no recent or expected major life changes.
- Willingness to be telephoned by clients on home phone.
- Honesty, reliability, emotional resilience, persistence and commitment.
- This role requires an enhanced CRB disclosure for work with vulnerable adults and children.

Desirable Requirements:

- Driver with own car.

Training for this Role:

- To become a buddy you must have completed all six modules of the core training and an interpersonal skills day.
- A role specific induction and training day must be attended before commencing in this role. These are run at least once per year or whenever the service needs a new intake of volunteers.

Reporting Requirements:

- Buddy volunteers are asked to complete a buddy service record form monthly for each client they support. Completed forms are returned to the HIV Services key worker for the client(s) concerned.

We are very fortunate to have some people who have dedicated their time to be with us as Buddies.

When I came out of the hospital I needed lots of help, I was allocated a Buddy. I was happy with my Buddy, she took me shopping and to various hospital appointments. I was also taken to visit a recreation centre. I am happy to let go of my Buddy for someone else because I am now well and capable of doing things by myself. It would be nice to have had a younger Buddy.

Staffordshire Buddies client

I would like to thank Staffordshire buddies for introducing me to a buddy, also thank the buddy themselves for taking time to be with people in my situation. It takes a special person with a special kind of heart to take on this role of a buddy year after year looking after our needs. Thank you very much for your kind generosity of giving your personal time. Keep the good work up.

Staffordshire Buddies client



A Buddy's story

When I trained to become a Buddy with Staffordshire Buddies people were dying from AIDS rather than living with HIV. I learnt about bereavement and loss, enduring powers of attorney, living wills, what to do after a death and funerals. I was encouraged to face my own mortality. It was not long after I became a probationary volunteer that I was linked to a client as a Buddy. I knew the theory, but nothing prepared me for the reality of buddying this newly diagnosed and troubled young man. Young enough to be my son. To begin with it was an emotional roller coaster, being with him on the bad days when he didn't want to speak to anyone but wanted to be with someone, and as he organised his funeral and entrusted the funeral arrangements to me. I was struggling, so I decided to see our HIV counsellor. During our conversation she asked me a simple enough question, something along the lines of what did I want to get out of the Buddying relationship, and what I wanted was to support this client through these troubled times until he was ready to move on. Putting that into words really put Buddying into perspective for me, (thank you Jenny). I continued Buddying him and have such fond memories of our time together. We had so much fun and he DID move on. Ten years on we're still in touch, he's well, happy, successful, and I'm so glad and feel honoured that I was given a chance to play a part in his life. The nature of Buddying has changed since then. Thankfully, these days anti-HIV treatment means that many people with HIV will live longer lives and clients look for Buddies to help them lead independent and fulfilled lives. The role of a Buddy is to provide practical, emotional and social support to the client, to help avoid crises, to relieve isolation and to help build confidence amongst other things. Buddying is not always easy, doesn't always have a happy ending sometimes it doesn't work, sometimes it's only for a short while, other times it carries on indefinitely. I've always found Buddying a particularly satisfying volunteer role, but recognised early on the importance of support whilst carrying out this role, so I was especially pleased when Staffordshire Buddies relaunched the Buddy Service, complete with regular Buddy Support Group Meetings.

Maureen

Children's Activities Summer 2008

This August, as well as the usual day trip for the children we ran another Family Day. We visited Drayton Manor Park.

This day was aimed at families who struggle to access the services we offer at the Hanley and Lichfield Centres, because of school times, childminding issues etc.

A simple but very filling picnic was provided along with drinks, crisps, fruit and other goodies.

Eleven families enjoyed and benefited from this day out.

Dates for future Children's Activities:

September:

Tuesday 23rd: After School Activity 4.30 - 7pm

October:

Wednesday 29th: Half term all day activity Times TBA

December:

Saturday 6th: Christmas Party 2 - 4pm

Sunday 14th: Panto visit

For further details please call Joanne Kemsley
Positive Families Worker on 01782 201255

WORLD AIDS DAY 2008 Raising Awareness In The Potteries Shopping Centre

Once again Staffordshire Buddies have been lucky enough to get two days in the Potteries Shopping Centre to raise awareness of World AIDS Day.

We will be there giving out red ribbons and balloons, and hopefully raising money for our Emergency Fund. (100% of any monies collected will go directly to people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS).

So, if you are in Hanley on either Friday 28th November or Monday 1st December please call in to the Potteries Shopping Centre and look out for our large red ribbon displays.

Our aim is to get as many people as possible wearing the red ribbon around World AIDS Day, so please support us if you can.

For further information about World AIDS Day events in Staffordshire, please visit our website:

www.staffordshirebuddies.co.uk or
contact us on 01782 201251.

World AIDS Day 2008 Invitation

Everyone involved with Staffordshire Buddies, be they friends, service users, staff or volunteers is cordially invited to contribute to make WAD 2008 - the 15th anniversary of the founding of the charity - extra special.

The chosen theme is 'A time to remember'

If you would like to participate in events like the vigil, the joint production with the New Vic Theatre or any of the WAD church services, please let us know.

If you feel uncomfortable about appearing in public, you can record anonymously a memory, a story, a poem, a song or any relevant comments that you would like to make. (Recording sessions at the Hanley Centre during November drop-ins).

If you want to take part in the event at the New Vic please let Maurice Greenham know (via the office) by 8th November. Please note that those taking part in the Staffordshire Buddies Vigil will automatically be included in this event.

Everyone who has taken part in the past found the events enjoyable and lots of fun. Remember, memories can be happy they don't have to be sad.

Messages for the events team can be left at reception

dis poem by Muta Baruka

dis poem
shall speak of the wretched sea
that washed ships to these shores
of mothers crying for their young
swallowed up by the sea
dis poem shall say nothin new
dis poem shall speak of time
time unlimited
time undefined
dis poem shall call names
names like
lumumba
kenyatta
nkrumah
hannibal
akenaton
malcolm
garvey
haile selassie
dis poem is vex
about apartheid
racism
facism
the klu klux klan
riots in brixton
atlanta
jim jones
dis poem is revoltin against
first world
second world
third world
division
manmade decision
dis poem is like all the rest
dis poem will not be amongst
great literary works
will not be recited by poetry
enthusiasts
will not be quoted by politicians
nor men of religion
dis poem is
knives...bombs...guns...
blazing for freedom
yes dis poem is a drum
ashanti
mau mau
ibo
yoruba
niahbingi warriors
uhuru...uhuru
namibia uhuru
uhuru
soweto
uhuru
afrika!
dis poem will not change things
dis poem needs to be changed

dis poem is the rebirth of a
people
arising...awaking...overstanding
...dis poem speak
is speakin...has spoken
dis poem shall continue
even when poets have stoped
writing
dis poem shall survive...u...me...
it shall linger in history
in your mind
in time....
forever
dis poem is time
only time will tell
dis poem is still not written
dis poem has no poet
dis poem is just a part of the story
his-story...her-story...our-story
the story still untold
dis poem is now ringing... talking
irritatin
making u want to stop it
but dis poem will not stop
dis poem is long
cannot be short
dis poem cannot be tamed
cannot be blamed
the story is still not told about dis
poem
dis poem is old
new
dis poem is copied from
the bible
your prayer book
the new york times
readers digest
the c.i.a. files
the k.g.b. files
dis poem is no secret
dis poem shall be called
boring
stupid
senseless
dis poem is watchin u
tryin' to make sense from dis poem
dis poem is messin up your brains
makin u want to stop listenin to
dis poem
but you shall not stop listenin to
dis poem
u need to know what will be said
next in dis poem
dis poem shall disappoint u
because...
dis poem is to be continue
in your mind...
in your mind...
in your mind...

Christmas party

All clients are invited to Staffordshire Buddies Christmas party at WRVS on the 23rd of December starting from 2.30pm to 5pm. For catering purposes please let Priscilla or Steve know if you are comin by the first week of December on 01782 20125.

Asylum seeker & refugee group

In June clients went to see the Exodus Show in Manchester. This was part of Refugee Week. This was an event that recognised the different cultures and problems that refugees and asylum seekers come across in their daily lives in the UK. We welcomed some new clients that had not attended this type of activity before and they were very grateful to have had the opportunity to attend. The clients enjoyed watching various bands play a diverse range of music, and hearing poetry being read by people from different ethnic backgrounds. They sampled food from an array of assorted menus. They sang and danced and completely immersed themselves into the day's activities. They also made new friends from different countries. The clients said that that this was a good opportunity for them to have met in a relaxed environment and it made them feel closer to each other because they got to know how others felt about being Positive.

Priscilla

First of all, congratulations to Priscilla, editor of the last edition of Positive Lives, and to all those service users whose contributions helped to reflect the publication's name more truly. It would be great to have more stories and comments that give insight into living with HIV in Staffordshire.

Studies

Since the last edition, I have completed my French and German Open University courses. In order to gain more confidence with German that I was finding difficult, I enrolled on an unofficial OU Summer School in Jena in East Germany. It was really intensive: with speaking, reading, listening and writing German from early in the morning to late at night. However, it was also great fun...partly because there was a wide range of activities, but mostly because I was able to share the ups and downs with a bunch of fabulous people that made everything so tremendously enjoyable...I don't think I have laughed so much in a very long while.

Holiday

I was persuaded to stop worrying about my End of Course assessments and go holiday...and I'm so glad I did because a week under hot Turkish sunshine with my best friend did me a world of good. We arrived at night and when the driver pulled off the main road and headed along rough forest tracks up into the mountains... thoughts of being kidnapped entered into at least one person's head. However, we were deposited safely at a secluded, peaceful haven in the mountains above Oludeniz and Fethiye. The views from the restaurant were amazing and a trip to the local market the following day immersed us into a totally different culture and pace of life. With such hot weather, it didn't take much persuasion to get me swimming in the clear blue waters of the Mediterranean and the well-kept swimming pools at the Ocakkoý holiday village. On Wednesday I went on a cultural trip to see ancient Lycian rock tombs, as well as Greek, Roman and Ottoman ruins. Lunch was fresh fish grilled trout served with a traditional pomegranate sauce and nice selection of salads in a family run open-air restaurant in the mountains near Saklikent.

Afterwards we visited the carpet makers association before the final stop at the Saklikent Canyon, which is the second longest canyon in Europe. Rock falls, pools of uncertain depth, mobility problems and time prevented me from covering much of its 14 kilometres length; nevertheless I saw some spectacular rock formations and sublime views as well as making friends. We were hoping to go Kayaking, but the trip was cancelled because of insufficient numbers...so



instead, we went on a canoeing excursion on the Xanthos river in the Patara National Park that includes a magnificent beach home to flocks of goats and a good place to swim. The only thing that marred the holiday was the appalling kerfuffle at the Jet2.com check-in desks at both Manchester and Dalaman airports...the queues were horrendous and the procedure ponderously slow. Be warned!

Web-watch

The latest episode of 'Live With It' is now viewable via The Body's website:

<http://www.thebody.com/livewithit/index.html>.

This is the 4th episode of a brilliant animated series about the lives of a small group of HIV+ people in New York. Julio's story ends with a cliffhanger as he drives us to meet the 'invisible' member of the group. I've enjoyed all four episodes and can't wait for the next one.

Health

The recent DfA review made me examine all the problems that I tend to dismiss, but in fact have to cope with everyday. For people diagnosed HIV+ since the late 90s, the chances of developing complications like disfiguring lipodystrophy or painful peripheral neuropathy caused by long-term HIV and certain antiretroviral drugs are slight. On the other hand, long-term survivors from the 80s like myself have to deal with serious consequences as best we can. The good news for all of us is that the range of anti-HIV medications increased over the last couple of years with second generations of existing classes of drugs, as well as new options for people in need of salvage therapy: Entry Inhibitors Maraviroc and Vicriviroc joined Fuzeon, alongside Integrase Inhibitor Isentress that offers a completely new class of drugs. This year seemed disappointing by comparison until news was published of successful trials with another new drug class: Maturation Inhibitors.

Home

Well, I am currently sharing my house with two industrial de-humidifiers, which make it seem more like a factory. It turns out that the damp in the dining room was not caused by water from a damaged bay-window roof. I had that repaired but the damp simply got worse... water started to dribble down the wall! Unbeknown to me, the mains water supply to the kitchen passes over the dining room through old lead piping that had sprung a leak. Once that was fixed, the wetness in the dining room and the bedroom above had to be dried out. I've moved into the front bedroom. The saga continues.

Hope you had a good summer – keep well.

Maurice

maurice's

angle