

Positive Lives



The full colour version of this supplement to the usual Positive Lives can be downloaded from our website at

www.staffordshirebuddies.co.uk

Spring '09 supplement

Hanley Christmas party

Clients, volunteers and staff were all invited to this Christmas party, 60 invitations were sent to all clients on the mailing list and those that do not accept mails were told verbally and a telephone reminder conversation followed. The Christmas party took place on the 23rd December 2008 between 2pm and 5pm at the WRVS in Hanley. Indian and English food was served.

Clients arrived on time with nibbles at 2pm and food served at 2.30pm. The social gathering turned into an exceedingly well attended drop in. Everyone appeared to have enjoyed the party and there was plenty of food for all and some took doggie bags home! New and regular faces mingled and got into the Christmas spirit. The purpose of this party was to give everyone an occasion to meet each other and get to know each other better, clients, volunteers and staff. They talked to each other and engaged in meaningful conversation about food, health education and friendships.

Presents were given to everyone and games planned for this day were standing up bingo, play your cards right and there was a raffle. The clients involved each other in the activities and everyone joined in with enthusiasm. Playing your cards right certainly put a smile on people's faces and was one of the most hilarious games, even with some of the children present did not stop the games going on and some of the children participated by shouting the words "higher" or "lower".

The evening provided a social outlet for existing clients and volunteers enabling them to catch up. There were also new clients attending for the first time who had concerns about disclosure. By meeting existing clients at this event their fears could be openly discussed in a non-judgemental environment. I would like to thank all the staff for the help they gave in organising the Christmas party. I'm sure everyone agrees that this was one of the best out of the many Christmas parties we have had: it catered for the old and the young.

Priscilla



What a grand turnout! The annual Staffordshire Buddies Christmas Party drew one of the largest gatherings yet of people from all generations and backgrounds – clients, volunteers, staff with friends and families. The food was plentiful and delicious, offering both Indian and British dishes accompanied by a varied range of drinks. Everyone got a gift, and there were prizes too in Priscilla's Stand-up Bingo and the raffle. In addition we had a team-game quiz (men versus women) with Steve Manley as quizmaster and rule maker. Above a background of recorded Christmas music, people mingled, chatted, laughed and from their gleeful sounds, lots of little children were having a whale of a time: altogether a joyous and fun occasion. Well done to the organisers for all the hard work that must have gone in to the preparation.

Maurice

World AIDS Day 2008 Events

On Sunday 30th November a service of hope, thanks and remembrance took place at Holy Trinity Church Burslem.

The service opened with an opportunity to see a section of the UK AIDS Quilt panel number 30. This was kindly loaned by George House Trust Manchester, who houses the entire UK AIDS Quilt. The significance of using this particular section was the date, 1993. 15 years ago on 1st December 1993, Staffordshire Buddies was established as the only HIV Charity in Staffordshire.

Alongside the Quilt was our own names project – a "Quilt of Light" that recorded the names of local people lost to HIV/AIDS, as well as commemorating and paying tribute to



volunteers who played a significant part in the work of the Charity. The service itself allowed space for personal

reflection and a time to remember those loved ones lost to HIV. There was the customary small number of people, but this made the occasion even more personal and allowed people present to contribute in their own special way – in the lighting of candles, bringing musical tracks to listen to or specially chosen pieces of prose or poetry to read. In the evening of Sunday 30th November, a WAD service was held at Stoke Minster. This service was led by the Rev Phillip Searle and included a prayer of an African woman as well as a Declaration of Hope written by Archbishop Desmond Tutu. During the lighting of candles, the Minster choir sang. Maurice Greenham gave his personal story of living with HIV and also

mentioned the pioneering work of the Staffordshire Buddies group of children and young people.

On Monday 1st December at Keele Chapel a WAD service was held. The service was conducted by



the Rev Charles Clapham, the new Anglican Chaplain. It was innovative, containing a screening of a special Christian Aid video for WAD from an African perspective. There was time to listen to the amazing Revelation Gospel Choir and commemorative candles were lit. Maurice Greenham talked about living with HIV.

At 5.30pm on Monday 1st December, a group of people made their way to Fountain Square Hanley, where the 11th WAD Vigil was held. People gathered around the traditional remembrance tree, with the WAD Candle lit. The Vigil included readings that touched on some of the themes used for WAD over the last two decades. Following the readings there was time for people to reflect on their own memories of friends, family or colleagues who are no longer here with us. People were invited to write messages of remembrance on the WAD luggage labels that were attached to the big Red Metal Ribbon.

In the evening at The New Vic Theatre Basford, a joint performance from New Vic Borderlines and Staffordshire Buddies took place.

The Stephen Joseph Studio doors opened at 7pm to allow people to view the UK AIDS Quilt and the "Quilt of Light". At 7.30pm people gathered in their seats and watched the production. The solo performance from Tom was fabulous and very brave as he opened the show.

The Young Peoples Theatre Company along

with Staffordshire Buddies members worked right up to the last minute to prepare an outstanding piece of drama, which made the audience laugh, but also passed on powerful message around HIV.

In the specially concocted team Quiz Game, we were honoured to have the King and Queen from the Arabian Nights' cast as celebrity contestants. This was an item marked by spontaneity and improvisation that seemed to excite and amuse contestants and audience alike. Hopefully it also put across or reinforced some basic principles about HIV/AIDS.

We would like to acknowledge the support given by the New Vic Management who agreed to have red ribbons and collecting tins placed in the Main House, and also in each current programme the theatre noted its association with Staffordshire Buddies to mark WAD.

Other events for WAD are covered separately throughout the newsletter.



I would like to give to my thanks to Sharon and everyone on the Events Team, without their dedication

some events wouldn't have been possible. Maurice you are indeed a star, you too Paul- I'm sure KRG would be very pleased to see the Vigil was in such capable hands. And I'd also like to mention Maureen, a member of the Events Team who due to ill health could not be part of this year's activities and I know how disappointed she was by this.

There are many other people who have been involved with WAD 2008, too many to list, but you know who you are and thank you!!!

Sarah E Beech
Core Services Manager

Raising Awareness in the Potteries Shopping Centre

On 28th November and 1st December Staffordshire Buddies and Health Promotion were in the Potteries Shopping Centre raising awareness of World AIDS Day and encouraging people to wear the Red Ribbon in support of people everywhere affected by HIV/AIDS.

Volunteers, Staff and Friends of Staffordshire Buddies were also giving out information about World AIDS Day, particularly events taking place throughout Staffordshire, as well as accepting donations. This year we raised over £620 all which will go towards helping people in Staffordshire affected by HIV/AIDS.

By the end of both days it was great to see so many shoppers and Shopping Centre staff wearing the Red Ribbon. I would like to say a huge THANK YOU to everyone involved, whether in the Centre, counting money or helping to prepare leaflets etc.

Well done everyone, I hope you enjoyed it!

Sharon Baddeley



Happy New Year

The Christmas "Drop In" in Lichfield turned into a very festive affair, with the building being turned into a grotto of delights for all who attended. In a change from the usual outing at Christmas, this year Fiona and her little helpers organised the annual get together to take place at the Lichfield centre, and it was the most well attended activity in the history of the South Staffs drop in, with new and regular faces mingling and getting into the pre-Christmas spirit.!

Father Christmas made a surprise visit, delivering secret presents which certainly put a smile on a few people's faces. I would like to thank Fiona and her little band of helpers for organising such an enjoyable afternoon/evening for all those who were able to attend.

Having been involved in the "Drop In" in Lichfield since it first started, it's brilliant to see how the group has developed, how much people appreciate the space, the chance to access therapies from Lyn, have a coffee and a catch up, and also talk about what's been happening. Although we meet fortnightly, there is a definite atmosphere of warmth and friendliness, and a sense of camaraderie, so if you've never been and are interested in calling in, or you haven't been from a while and fancy catching up with us, then please don't hesitate to get in touch with Fiona or myself at the Lichfield Office on **01543 418770**.

The Lichfield Drop In is held every other Thursday from 3pm – 7pm at the Lichfield Centre.

Matt Wills
Lichfield office

'BEAT THE COLD' could help save you money

I have been involved with various LGBT communities and a number of HIV and AIDS issues. What I have found is that it can be quite difficult to obtain information in a comfortable and understanding environment, regardless of the information required. For the last three months, I've been working for a charity called Beat the Cold. We offer energy efficiency and money saving advice for residents across the whole of North Staffordshire with the goal of reducing the incidence of cold-related illness and fuel poverty.

So precisely what sort of advice do we offer? Well, there are many ways in which householders can save money and stay warm and well in their own homes. For example, if you're a resident in Stoke-on-Trent or Newcastle-under-Lyme, you are eligible for heavily discounted loft and cavity wall insulation. If you are in receipt of certain benefits, are deemed fuel poor, or if you're over 70 you could get insulation installed for free.

We also offer advice on your actual fuel bills and help you find the best fuel company. There are many different options available to you and if you fail to take them up, you could be giving your money away.

Do you have problems with your central heating boiler? If you approach us at Beat the Cold, we'll check to see if there are any grants available to help you with the costs of repair or replacement. Again, if you're on a low income, in receipt of certain benefits or over the age of 60, you could be eligible for financial help.

If you think you could benefit from some free advice from one of our Beat the Cold advisors, please phone us on 0800 389 2258 or email me at jules@beatcold.org.uk.

Jules Hill,
Affordable Warmth Advisor,
Beat the Cold