



Celebrating success - after receiving qualifications

FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

During the last year we have re-defined the aim of our family support services to make it clearer and more sharply focussed. It is to increase the resilience of our service users so as to empower them to cope more effectively in the situation in which they find themselves. Adopting that aim has enabled us to meet the needs of our befriended and mentored families more effectively. The content of our programme of activities in the family centre has also been upgraded to help us to achieve our aim. Among recent highlights of the programme have been a two part creative writing course and two sessions led by Relate which focussed on developing the communication skills and increasing the assertiveness of family centre members.

We are really excited to be running an 'Incredible Years'

Parenting Course in collaboration with Southwark Children's Services.

Hinke Chakraborty, Senior Parenting Practitioner, Southwark Children Services says:

"We at Southwark Children Services are delighted to be working in partnership with Prisoners' Families and Friends Service to present The Incredible Years Parenting Programme to some of their service users. The programme is a 12 week course, which is designed to promote parents' self confidence and which builds on parents' existing strengths. The course gives groups of parents the opportunity to share experiences, to learn from one another and to discover some new principles for parenting. The programme offers practical support

and ideas in a friendly, non-judgmental, non-threatening setting where the group learns together. All the parents who attend are developing new tools to keep in their parenting tool box and are finding the learning process a positive experience. 11 parents have registered for the programme and on 16 December we shall hold a graduation ceremony at which the parents who have completed the course will be awarded a certificate."

We have developed a close working relationship with Red Kite Learning

Harj Bansil, IAG Advisor, Red Kite Learning, says:

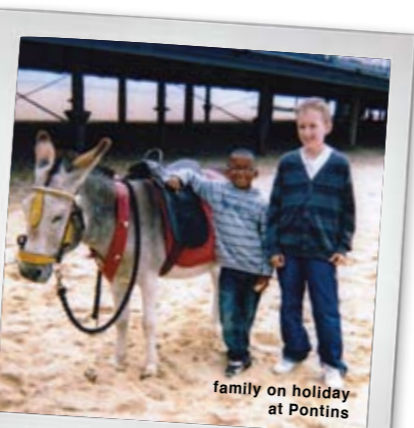
"Last autumn we at Red Kite Learning Centre started working jointly with Prisoners' Families and Friends Service (PFFS) helping some of their service users to identify and take up suitable learning and development opportunities. PFFS first met us to explain the circumstances and needs of their service users. They then accompanied their service users to an introductory meeting at the Learning Centre where they found out about the opportunities which were available to them. Some PFFS volunteers also approached us for help and signed up with us. I was appointed to be the designated point of contact for everybody who had been referred by PFFS. I carried out an initial interview to assess each person's individual needs and then together we planned the most appropriate way to meet those needs through

completing an action plan. We aim to equip individuals with skills and to empower them to make informed choices for themselves. We offer advice and guidance in relation to possible employment, training and /or education opportunities. We support individuals to access pre-employment workshops, including goal setting, confidence building, CV writing, interview skills and we help individuals to recognise their skills.

Six people had completed courses by July. I attended the Swan Centre barbecue in July at which I watched the chairman of PFFS congratulate all those who had participated in training sessions and award certificates to those who had completed courses. It was a pleasure to watch the students real sense of achievement. I have found the PFFS service users a pleasure to support. They are focussed on moving forward and I find it very rewarding to take any steps I can to support them in achieving what they want to do. All service users have been polite and I have found them keen to acquire new skills. I look forward to continuing to help others to do so in future."

The Summer Holidays

Every year during the summer holidays in August we take families for a week by coach to one of the Pontins sites in Lowestoft, Suffolk. We always book half board which includes breakfast and dinner allowing the families to relax and concentrate on having fun with their children.



family on holiday at Pontins

Annual Report

CHAIR'S REPORT



I am sitting down to write this report the day after the announcements in the Spending Review. Whatever the effects of cuts will be on the judicial system, we can be confident that the work which we do in our organisation will be as relevant and necessary as it has always been in providing support to the families and friends of prisoners.

Our ambition this year has been to ensure that we provide our services to as many as possible and with the greatest care and quality of service. As you will

see from this report, we have been providing assistance to an increasing number of people and we have stepped up the amount of training we give to our loyal volunteers.

Our Court Service has extended to more courts in London as well as to three prison visitors' centres. This service provides, through volunteers, immediate help and guidance to the dependants of those entering the prison system.

We have developed a new family support strategy under the leadership of Margaret Vallance at the family centre and through our befriending service; this new work is focused around those using our service working towards achieving agreed outcomes. This strategy has been developed in partnership with our users. We have produced a system of monitoring and evaluation to ensure that we are indeed meeting the needs of users and I am very grateful to Ruth Buchanan, one of our

trustees, and Valerie Clyne, one of our volunteers, for the work they have done in this area. We are preparing a monitoring and evaluation report which will be available at the AGM.

As part of this plan we have been very lucky to have had the support of our neighbours, Red Kite Learning, in allowing our users to attend courses at their offices providing educational and training opportunities. It was a privilege for me to present certificates to those who had completed courses and to share their sense of achievement and worth. The promotion of self confidence and self esteem is a vital part of our support. We are hoping to build on the success of this project in the coming year.

We have also maintained our relationship with Greenwich University. We are on their list of approved providers for student placements on their MSc in Therapeutic Counselling Course. The students mentor families with more complex problems. This allows us to provide a good quality and much needed service to families and also to provide opportunities for students to gain the work experience they need for their course. In addition, we have been fortunate enough to retain the services

of one of our mentors, who worked for us last year. She is a trainee counsellor and studying for her PhD at the City University.

As always the funding of our work has been a challenge but we have managed to meet our target at the end of the year. We are as always grateful to the trusts who have provided funds to us and we are currently considering a broadening of the ways of seeking funds and different funding sources under the leadership of Shane Holland one of our trustees. Our Case for Support document, to encourage individual donors, has been prepared and will be launched at our AGM.

Our treasurer, Mike Slade is retiring after 5 years service to us for which we are very grateful. Tricia Nicholson is joining us as our new treasurer and as a trustee and we are looking forward to working with her.

The next year will provide many and various challenges but I believe that our dedicated staff and volunteers are fully able and qualified to deal with whatever is placed before them. **Peter Droop**

"VOLUNTEERING AT THE FAMILY CENTRE HAS HELPED MY OWN CONFIDENCE AND UNDERSTANDING. IT HAS HELPED ME TO DO A PEER MENTORING COURSE"

Family Centre Volunteer



Court project trainees

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2009/10

Peter Droop (Chair) • Penny Clow (Vice Chair) • Anne Dunlop (Secretary), Mike Slade (Treasurer) retiring October 2010 • Tricia Nicholson (Treasurer co-opted October 2010) • Anne-Marie Brown-Douglas, Gloria Johnson, Jackie Manning, Gretta Reilly, Steve Jones, Shane Holland, Ruch Buchanan

From left to right: Alan Hooker, Margaret Vallance, Theresa Francis, Rebecca Trethewey, Julie Howlin, Rachelle Gold



DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Prisoners' Families and Friends Service is a specialist community based service that keeps prisoners' families at the heart of what it does. Our services strengthen families and enhance their life chances. Service users are involved with the running of the organisation and are always consulted to find out how best our activities and services can respond to their needs.

It is thanks to the hard work, dedication and commitment of our

small staff team and volunteers that our services have developed in the past year.

Julie Howlin provides essential administrative and IT support to our very busy office. She keeps our website up to date and ensures that information on it is accurate. In addition to this very important work, she is always on hand to offer support and guidance to families. She is now starting a BACP Level 4 in counselling, which will further assist her and the organisation in our work with families. She has also done a lot of work to write and format our new monitoring and evaluation reports, and other

publications.

Margaret Vallance has re-focused the programme of activities that we offer at the family centre and helped to secure new funding for this area of work. She has also been the driving force behind setting up our new mentoring work at the family centre, with 7 new mentors starting in September 2010. This new work is going from strength to strength.

Theresa Francis works closely each week with the families that come to our family centre. She coordinates all our sessions, activities and day trips throughout

the year. She organises all the catering for the lunches we provide and is ably assisted in this by Michelle Passmore, our family centre volunteer.

Rebecca Trethewey and Rachelle Gold both joined us towards the end of 2009, after both working as court project volunteers. They have developed and extended the court project in new and exciting ways. Not only have they extended our volunteer support and guidance to 16 courts throughout London, but have now extended this service to three prison visitors' centres in London. They have completely refreshed the initial training provided for prospective court volunteers, and improved the ongoing training, support and supervision that we provide for them.

Our newest member of staff is Marcia Johnson, our Family Support Services Administrator who joined us in July 2010. She is providing much needed administrative support to assist Margaret and Theresa in their work with families and the volunteers who support them.

It would not be possible to provide the services that we do without volunteers. A very special thanks must go to the many volunteers who have worked with families throughout the year.

GOODBYE

This will be my final annual report as I will be moving out of London and leaving Prisoners' Families and Friends Service in November 2010. It has been a huge privilege to meet so many prisoners' families in the time that I have been here and to work with such a dedicated team of staff and volunteers. PFFS does extremely important work and helps so many families each year. I wish everyone involved with the work of PFFS all the best for the future. *Alan Hooker*

“ TO ALL THE VERY CARING AND SUPPORTIVE PEOPLE AT THE SWAN CENTRE. THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR THE TREMENDOUS SUPPORT THROUGH WHAT HAS BEEN A DIFFICULT AND CHALLENGING JOURNEY. IF I HADN'T HAD YOUR SUPPORT, I WOULD HAVE NOT GOT THROUGH ”
Swan Centre member



Top and bottom: Sponsored Walk

FUNDRAISING IN 2010

In the year since our last AGM (Nov 09-Oct10) PFFS has been fortunate in receiving grants from 32 Trusts of varying sizes. In addition, 20 individuals (some anonymous) made generous donations to our funds. The Sheriffs' and Recorder's Fund was able to help 10 families with essential needs as did the Newby Trust and others. BBC Children in Need once again generously covered the holiday costs for 12 families and the Surrey Dispensary helped with the cost of outings. A successful sponsored walk, involving families, volunteers, staff and supporters' took place in September. Thanks to everyone who took part in it.

Among those we have to thank for their generosity are: AB Charitable Trust; the City and Metropolitan Welfare Charity; the Mercers Company; the Willow Tree Trust; the Odin Trust; the Inner London Magistrates; the Company of Launderers; the Drapers Fund; Woodroffe Benton Foundation; City of London Justices; Albert Hunt Trust; Trusthouse Charitable Foundation; Good Gifts; Coutts Charitable Fund; Wates Foundation; the London Borough of Tower Hamlets; Butchers Company; 1772 Charity; St. Hugh's Church; Leigh Trust; Noel

Buxton; Henry Smith's Charity; Sir James Roll Charitable Trust; Lankelly Chase Foundation; Nationwide Foundation; City Bridge Trust; Tudor Trust; Souter Trust.

We are particularly grateful to the City Bridge Trust and to the Tudor Trust who are providing, for the next 3 years, the funding of new and developing work in the Family Centre.

At Christmas time we are always immensely grateful for the gifts of toys from several Churches (Carshalton Methodist; Norbury Baptist; and St Johns, Amerham). Sheriffs' and Recorder's Fund also were able to provide food vouchers for everyone.

We are optimistic that those who have funded us in the past will continue to do so and ensure that our vital work continues despite the current economic climate. *Anne Dunlop*



DEVELOPMENTS IN THE COURT PROJECT

It has been a rewarding and dynamic year for The Court Project, having extended our service to Isleworth Crown Court, South Western Magistrates Court, the Old Bailey and 3 prison visitors' centres. We are also planning to offer support at Tower Bridge and Brent Magistrates Court, five prison visitors' centres and local police stations towards the end of this year.

Diversifying our work into areas where families and friends of offenders are markedly isolated and provision of help is virtually non-existent has led us to reassess the recruitment, training and supervision of our volunteers, in order that they can fulfil their role to the highest possible standards. Our training course is designed to offer a generic overview of work in Crown and Magistrates Courts.

“ I ACTUALLY WAS SURPRISED AS I ACHIEVED MORE THAN EXPECTED DURING THIS TRAINING COURSE AND IT HAS BEEN A GREAT LEARNING EXPERIENCE IN SUCH A SHORT SPACE OF TIME. ”
Court Project volunteer

Speakers include our own service users and members of court staff. We emphasise the issues affecting families and hope our volunteers gain a good grounding in the workings of the Criminal Justice System through our initial training. Regular ongoing supervision sessions give volunteers an opportunity for further training in relevant areas such as signposting and professional boundary issues. The sessions also offer a supportive setting for volunteers to discuss their work. As a result, our volunteers are increasingly referring new families into PFFS services.

Our evening training events have been extremely well attended by our service users as well as court and befriending volunteers. Outside speakers have included representatives from the Parole Board, Prisoners Advice Service and a Judge from the Old Bailey. The knowledge of the Criminal Justice system gained from these sessions has proved motivating for volunteers and empowering for all those who have attended.

We will continue to improve upon the quality of the service provided by the Court Project and aim for excellence in the volunteering experience we provide. In the current climate where volunteering is considered an important route into employment a significant number of our volunteers have been offered work due directly to their work with us.

“ THE COURSE EXCEEDED MY EXPECTATIONS. I FOUND IT EXTREMELY USEFUL AND FUN. ”
Court Project volunteer