

Past editions of PLUSPoint can be downloaded from our website at www.plusperth.co.uk

FIRST WORD

Many of you will be relieved to hear that SAMH and other leading mental health organisations from around the UK have submitted a joint response to the recent consultation on Disability Living Allowance. Comments included; any DLA reform should be based on supporting disabled people to lead fulfilling lives and not be primarily concerned with reducing costs. Also access to the new benefit must reflect the needs of people with mental health problems and must be fair and equitable. We really hope this is taken on board and will keep you up to date with any more news we receive through PLUSpoint. As intimated in last months newsletter PLUS have organised an 'Impact of Benefits Changes Workshop' on the 31st March at the Gateway 1.30-4pm. All welcome.

Please contact us to let us know you are coming as numbers are limited to 60.

To keep up to date with developments on the DLA reforms contact: www.samh.org.uk

Enjoy this months edition. In fact why not take your PLUSpoint outside to read and enjoy the benefits of the lovely Spring weather at the same time!

Closed for Annual Leave

The PLUS office will be closed for 1 week for Staff Annual Leave from 7th March.

Normal service will resume 14th March.

TIMEBANKING - PROMOTING INTERDEPENDENCE RATHER THAN INDEPENDENCE

PLUS volunteers manned an information stand at a 'Personalisation' event organised by the Council in the Perth Concert Hall in the middle of February. One of the speakers at the event Nick Andrews, visited our stand and was interested in the work we do to promote recovery and citizenship: people taking greater responsibility within their communities. As a result of the meeting he later contacted PLUS and linked us to the Rushey Green Timebanking Project which has been running for 10 years. For those of you who are unsure about Timebanking the following, taken from the Rushey Green website, may be useful. <http://www.rgtb.org.uk/>

What is a Time Bank?

A Time Bank deals with an alternative currency - time; not money. For every hour you spend helping someone, you are entitled to an hour's help in return. It's about neighbours helping neighbours. Help can be in many forms - performing practical tasks, befriending someone, running errands, sharing food grown in the garden, etc.

How does it work?

Each person's time "credits" are credited to their "account" in the Time Bank. People can then withdraw time from their account when they

would like help with something themselves. These transactions are done via a co-ordinator / broker who keeps all the accounts and matches people who want help, with someone who can help them. When the task is complete, the accounts will have a record of the number of hours traded by each person.

Why is it a good idea?

All tasks have equal value - an hour spent helping someone with computer skills is worth the same as an hour spent keeping an isolated person company, walking a dog, or helping someone fill in a form.

Time Banks often involve people who would not normally volunteer - e.g. a housebound elderly person. In this system such a person could offer help by (for example) making regular phone calls to befriend someone in a similar situation. In the Time Bank system everyone is equal - everyone is both a giver and a receiver.

Perth & Kinross Voluntary Sector are to be looking at Timebanking in P&K with the support of the local authority. A trip to Rushey Green is being organised.



Pictured PLUS Volunteers and delegates at the 'Personalisation Event' in the Concert Hall.

PLUS

77 Canal Street, Perth PH2 8JJ Tel.: 01738 626242 Email: plusperth@msn.com

www.plusperth.co.uk

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CONFERENCE REPORT

Scottish Recovery Network National Gathering

Thursday 10 February 2011, Crown Plaza Hotel, Glasgow

SRN's sixth national conference took place with around 400 delegates from around Scotland joined the SRN team and guest speakers Professor Richard Warner and Rona McBrierty for a fascinating day of discussion and information sharing. Five folks from PLUS were fortunate enough to get a place at the event which proved to be extremely worthwhile.

The event was also viewed online by hundreds of 'virtual' delegates. Guest chairperson was Gregor Henderson, and poet in residence, Jo McFarlane, delighted and entertained with performances of her work throughout the day. Richard Warner, Professor of Psychiatry and Anthropology at the University of Colorado made quite an impression with his newly published work 'Recovery, Employment and Empowerment'. He found working on a recovery basis emphasized optimism and the importance of work and user-involving services. Very interestingly his research showed that recovery is greater and mortality is lower in the developing world. This aligned with the statistics that a far greater no of people experiencing schizophrenia in third world countries went on to get back to work than in countries such as the UK. He also talked about the empowerment components of self esteem and self-efficacy; power, community activism, sense of control and righteous anger. A very interesting and informative talk indeed. All presentations are available on the SRN website.



Photographed with Jo at the event are Alistair Traini and Marilynne Kubath.

PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

On Thursday February 10th myself and four others from PLUS started the day early by catching the 8.00am train to Glasgow for the 2011 Scottish Recovery Network (SRN) National Gathering. The SRN was established in 2004 and its main purpose is to promote the concept of recovery at a national and local level, and to support mental health services in Scotland in adopting recovery orientated practices.

This year's gathering was an opportunity for members to come together and consider the next steps for the promotion and support of recovery in Scotland.

Simon Bradstreet has been with SRN since 2004 and introduced the day by stating that we are involved in something that is collective and interactive. Recovery is a process, built on growth and learning but is not necessarily easy or quick. We then heard from the Keynote speaker Professor Richard Warner from the University of Colorado. His talk was based on findings from a study undertaken in two different countries in the post second world period. People with schizophrenia in a country with disability benefits, housing benefit and living on their own rather than no benefits or living within a supported family environment appeared to have poorer mental health. This could lead to stereotyping and social avoidance rather than social support where an individual may gain insight leading to an inner confidence and a growth in self-esteem.

Then and throughout the day we were privileged to hear various poems by Jo McFarlane the Poet in Residence. She has produced six books to date and reads excerpts around Scotland. Rona McBrierty was the second Keynote speaker and she spoke on 'My never ending journey'. As someone with personal experience of mental health challenges and how 'they tried to treat me' she knows it is never too late to take back personal responsibility, Take action, learn new skills, take self-care. Now Rona helps others by developing a training portfolio and has worked as a consultant in training for SRN and Health & Mind.

She also works internationally and says we all have regrets but we have to move on. At the end of the day I had lots to think about on the journey home. There were around 400 members at the Gathering. I wonder if any steps have been taken already!

NATIONAL NEWS

THE CENTRE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE BREAKS THROUGH.

'Breakthrough Britain-outcome based government' is a brand new document published by The Centre for Social Justice looking at tackling Britain's deepest social problems. They believe that the surest way the Government can reverse social breakdown and poverty is to enable such individuals, communities and voluntary groups to help themselves. The CSJ was founded in 2004, as the fulfilment of a promise made by a government minister to Janice Dobbie, whose son had recently died from a drug overdose just after he was released from prison.

www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk

NEW SOCIAL ENTERPRISE PROMOTES WELLBEING THROUGH NATURE

Environmental Explorations is a new social enterprise based in Aberfeldy which uses nature to promote wellbeing. It was launched in the International Year of Biodiversity 2010 and has been set up on the back of 26 years experience in the environmental sector and from working with many individuals from a variety of backgrounds over this time. Environmental Explorations offers a range of activities and outdoor workshops based in local green spaces. The aim is to promote more opportunities for people to utilise green spaces and personally develop in doing so. For more info see www.environ-explore.com

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Project Ability + Scottish Mental Health Arts & Film Festival 2011

Deadline: Friday 12 Aug 2011

Exhibition: 7th October – 19th November

Project Ability is pleased to announce a call for submissions for collected; a collective exhibition in Project Ability's gallery in Trongate 103 Glasgow as part of the Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival 2011. We are welcoming submissions in any medium and on any theme. The only restriction is size: all two dimensional works must measure 20cm x 20cm and all three dimensional work must measure 20cm x 20cm with the third dimension measuring a maximum of 20cms. The finished work must be 20 x 20cm including any frame or mount.

Work can be submitted by individual artists or collaborative partnerships.

The call out for exhibitors is to highlight the collective spirit of Project Ability as an organisation and the relationship between creative activity and wellbeing. Adopting a small scale for submissions we aim to provide a challenging platform to communicate wider ideas around mental health.

'MAKING A DIFFERENCE' CONFERENCE

Glasgow Film Theatre on 16th March 2011

In Care Survivors Service Scotland's 'Making a Difference' conference is free of charge to survivors of in care abuse. It is a support service for adults who suffered childhood abuse in care. The conference will celebrate the achievements of the service to date and offer an opportunity to hear how the organisation has made a difference. It will also be an opportunity for delegates to meet other in care survivors and for ICSSS to hear from those attending to help shape the future direction of the service. For more information or to book a place email conference@incare survivors.org.uk or call Caroline Wilcox on 01324 679052.

Helplines

Breathing Space	0800 83 85 87
Depression Alliance Scotland	0845 123 23 20
Samaritans	08457 909090
Cruse Bereavement Care	0844 477 9400
Saneline	08457 678000
Eating Disorders Association	0845 6341414
Mental Health Out of Hours	08454242424
Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide	0844 561 6855
Pet Bereavement Support Service Support Line (8.30am – 8.30pm)	0800 096 6606

LOCAL NEWS

PLUS VOLUNTEER TRAINING

Begins Monday 14th March

The first of a series of volunteer training days for PLUS members will take place on Mon 14th March. During the sessions members who are interested in giving up some of their time to help achieve the PLUS objectives will learn about the history of the organisation alongside the recovery and service user movements, what the mission, aims and objectives of PLUS are and information and training on the types of volunteer work which may suit them, ranging from manning public stands to keeping our website up to date.

The first session begins at 1.30pm. If you are interested in joining in please contact the office.

FOOTBALL COACHING AT MRH

Starts Tuesday 15th March

For people who have used mental health services this 6 week coaching initiative will help put the zest back in your football! The sessions from 4.30-6.30pm are free of charge and take place next to the Group Recreational Therapy dept at the front of the hospital main building. Contact John McDonald on 01738 562303.

NEXT PLUS MEMBERS MEETING

Tuesday 22nd March

The March PLUS members meeting will take place on Tuesday 22nd March at the Gateway, North Methven St, Perth at 1.30pm. All members welcome.

STAFF TRAINING

Afternoon 25th March

PLUS has organised an afternoon of staff training on the 25th March from 1.30pm – 3pm. This is due to a growing number of requests from service providers, quite often students, wishing to find out about PLUS. PLUS volunteers will provide an insight to the mission and purpose of PLUS in their own words. The afternoon will include some media resource and personal perspectives. To book a place telephone the office.

WEDNESDAY GROUP MEETING

At Wetherspoons 30th March

The Wednesday group is designed for people with mental health problems who require support to access social activities. The next event is a meal at Wetherspoons, Tay St, Perth

Contact John McDonald on 01738 562303.

ARTISTS TO RUN NEW COURSES

Beginning 1st April

Perth Museum and Art Gallery is offering a new programme of artist-run day classes for adults this spring covering the popular subjects of watercolour, portraits and sketching.

Complete beginners are warmly invited as well as those with more experience. The classes will run from 10.30-3.30pm each day and booking is essential. All materials are included in the price. Portrait day is Frid 1st April, cost £25; Watercolour day is Sat 2nd, cost £20; sketching with a pencil is Saturday April 30th, cost £20. Tel 01738 632488 for a booking form.

ROYAL BINGO TEA AND RAFFLE

Thursday 28th April

PLUS Entertainments Committee have set a date for a bingo tea fundraiser and social at the Kinnoull club on the eve of the Royal Wedding. Tickets priced £5 will be available from the office at the beginning of April. Price will include a stovie supper. Raffle prizes gratefully accepted.

ST LEONARDS BANK AND BAROSSA CMHS MOVING TO A SINGLE SITE AT PRI

By 30th June

St Leonards Bank and Barossa CMHS are to be moving to a single site within Perth Royal Infirmary. The new address will be Lower Level 1, Maternity Block, Perth Royal Infirmary. There is no exact date for moving however this will be by the end of June 2011. The whole area will include our own entrance, clinic rooms, group room, meeting room, and a staff area. There will be no changes to how the service works.

Lindsey Griffin team manager has said that she will keep us up to date with the move and let us know formally when this is to happen. She has already asked the staff at the bases to begin to let people know. Once all the moving information is confirmed there will be a wider communication exercise to let everyone know.

MRH UPDATE

17 months until the new Murray Royal is complete!

Progress so far :

The Roof work is well underway on the **Psychiatry of Old Age** building, the external brickwork and installation of windows have begun and even the internal ceilings are starting to go up. The main **HUB** building is next in the sequence, with the concrete wall and steelwork now complete and work on the upper floor due to begin shortly. At **Rohallion (Secure Care)** the walls are going up and work is underway at the lift shafts. The steelwork will be going up in the coming weeks. At **General Adult Psychiatry**, last in the sequence, some concrete floor slabs and steelwork are in place and this will continue over the next month when timber kit walls and roofs will start to appear. Progress at the new **Birnam Day Centre**, which was so spectacular last month, continues, with all the timber work now in place. The main car park will be just below the new Birnam, and the retaining walls and levels are complete, ready for the car park to be finished in the coming weeks.

Any problem due to building work?: For calls between 8am and 6pm you should phone the Site Office: 01738 456010 For out of hours emergencies call 01698 266616 (Izon Security, who will transfer calls to the Control Room).

COMEDY NIGHT MILNATHORT TOWN HALL

February 2011

What an amazing time! The Kinross Ladies Circle put on a fabulous night of fun, food and frolics in the Milnathort town Hall at the end of feb all in the name of a good cause – PLUS Perth. We laughed ourselves sore at three great comedy acts and one fearless compere who ripped us to shreds for most of the night. Sitting at the very front there was no place to hide as the insults flew back and forth, but all taken in good jest. It definitely helped to know all that joviality was in aid of PLUS and, for the second time, as we have already received proceeds of £800 from the Ladies Circle comedy night Portmoak Hall last November. Three cheers to chairwoman Julie (left) for nominating us and pictured with PLUS people Susan and Annette and one enormous cheque!



UNIVERSAL COMEDY

Universal Comedy work in partnership with Health, Mental Health, Social Care & Employability Organisations, using comedy to benefit anyone with ill health, mental ill health and those who simply need to rediscover the lighter side of life!

Founded in 2004 by people with ill health, we have supported nearly 3,000 people in their recovery, using comedy to take the focus off any ill-health problems, mental health and life problems, meet new friends, challenge the 'label' and create new positive identities.

Some of our partners include: *Glasgow East Regeneration Agency, Bipolar Scotland, Lanarkshire and East Dunbartonshire Associations for Mental Health, Lothian Recovery Network.*

Workshops and courses are programmed to suit participant's needs and we can work anytime & anywhere in Scotland. Our Comedy Graduates move on to voluntary work, further learning, employment and assist in Peer Support.

Next performance is 24th March, 7.30pm, CCA, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow. Contact 'Universal Comedy' on 0141 564 1200 or www.universalcomedy.co.uk.

SINGING GROUP FOR DEMENTIA SUFFERERS

A new recreational singing group has been set up for people with dementia and their families and friends. The second and third of three taster sessions being held at Glenalmond College are on Mon 7th & Mon 14th March 1.30-3pm. Emma Woods, one of the organisers said "Singing groups have been shown to help people with dementia, who can often learn and remember songs even when they struggle with other aspects of their memory, and this provides valuable stimulation".

The benefits of using a more holistic approach for people with dementia is becoming widely accepted and practised and there has been an increase in organisations who offer something different from traditional methods of treatment. Hearts and Minds, a national charity who run the Elderflowers programme using professional clowning techniques to improve the lives of dementia sufferers are one such initiative. They recently visited Perth and operate across the whole of Scotland. <http://www.heartsandminds.org.uk/elderflowers.html>

The singing group is being set up in association with Alzheimers Scotland, with no bookings or charges involved.

For more info email or phone Fiona Mathews. fmathews@alzsscot.org (Tel: 01738 562358)



An Elderflower in action, part of the national charity 'Hearts and Minds' who use clowning to improve the life of people with dementia.

IS SOMEONE TREATING YOU BADLY

There is a new Act (Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007) in Scotland that introduces ways to support and protect adults who are seen to be at risk of harm. This could be physical, psychological, sexual and financial harm or neglect.

An adult may be at risk of harm because they are unable to safeguard their own well-being and are affected by a mental or physical disability or illness.

Councils must make the necessary inquiries and investigations to establish whether or not further action is required to stop or prevent harm occurring.

If you or others you know are being treated badly and you would like to talk to someone please contact the Community care access team on 0845 3011120.

JUST OUT

HENRY'S DEMONS: LIVING WITH SCHIZOPHRENIA, A FATHER AND SON'S STORY

by *Henry Cockburn*

On a cold February day two months after his 20th birthday, Henry Cockburn waded into the Newhaven estuary outside Brighton and tried to swim across, almost drowning in the process. The trees, he said, had told him to do it. Nearly halfway around the world, in Kabul, Afghanistan, journalist Patrick Cockburn learned that Henry, his son, had been admitted to a hospital mental ward and appeared to be suffering a mental breakdown. Ten days later, Henry was officially diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia. Thus begins Patrick and Henry's extraordinary account of Henry's steep descent into mental illness and of Patrick's journey towards understanding the changes it has wrought. With remarkable candour, Patrick writes of the seven years since, years Henry has spent almost entirely in mental hospitals. Patrick also provides a fascinating glimpse into the conflicted history of schizophrenia's diagnosis and treatment and shows how little we still know about this debilitating condition. The book also includes Henry's own account of his experiences. In these raw and eerily beautiful chapters written from the hospital, he tells of the visions and voices that urge him on and of the sense that he has discovered something magical and profound. Together, Patrick's and Henry's stories create one of the most nuanced and revealing portraits of mental illness ever written, and a stirring memoir of family, parenthood, and the courage it takes to persevere and emerge, at last, whole.

AT THE END OF THE DAY

The Core Economy

Family, neighbourhood, community are the Core Economy.

The Core Economy produces: love and caring, coming to each other's rescue, democracy and social justice.

It is time now to invest in rebuilding the Core Economy."

Edgar Cahn

Founder of Time Dollars.

I've Learned ...

"I've learned that no matter what happens, or how bad it seems today, life does go on, and it will be better tomorrow.

I've learned that you can tell a lot about a person by the way he/she handles these three things: a rainy day, lost luggage, and tangled Christmas tree lights.

I've learned that regardless of your relationship with your parents, you'll miss them when they're gone from your life.

I've learned that making a "living" is not the same thing as making a "life."

I've learned that life sometimes gives you a second chance.

I've learned that you shouldn't go through life with a catcher's mitt on both hands; you need to be able to throw something back.

I've learned that whenever I decide something with an open heart, I usually make the right decision.

I've learned that even when I have pains, I don't have to be one.

I've learned that every day you should reach out and touch someone. People love a warm hug, or just a friendly pat on the back.

I've learned that I still have a lot to learn.

I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

Maya Angelou

Maya Angelou is an African American woman born in 1928 most famous for her poetry and acclaimed book "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings". The book tells the story of her life from her childhood in Arkansas to the birth of her child. In 2011, President Barack Obama awarded her the nation's highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom.