



Parity Teen Scheme

Our Easter and Summer Teenage Activity Schemes continue to grow as increasing numbers of teens from all over Hampshire, Surrey and Berkshire join the programme which allows them to decide how they will spend their free time over the holidays.

This year, Hart Council Chairman Brian Blewett, whose daughter Rachel uses Parity's day services, visited the scheme's base at Fleet Baptist Church near the end of the Easter holidays. Amazingly a good number of the teens were available for a photo despite their non-stop schedules! (Continued p.2)

Green Fingering Friends



The Farnborough and Camberley day centres are now enhanced by beautiful raised flower beds near their entrances, put together in May and June thanks to a team effort between SC Johnsons Wax and garden designer Linda Andrew.

The wooden containers made from railway sleepers are at wheelchair height so Parity students can have the opportunity to enjoy a close view of the plants and be involved in caring for them. A pergola also built by Johnsons Wax for Parity in recent years has been re-installed over the Whetstone Road garden and the concrete tiles re-used to make a very attractive space for outside activities on sunny days.

"It's made a huge difference. The students now have somewhere attractive to sit when they want to spend time outside," said Parity Services Manager Alison Cooper, who worked with Linda Andrew and Johnsons Wax staff in coordinating the project.

The plants are easy to care for and chosen for safe sensory properties. We look forward to holding an opening event at Whetstone Road as soon as finishing touches have been made.



Run for Parity

Many thanks to the organisers of the Fleet 10K, Fleet and Crookham AC, who have chosen Parity as the nominated charity this year. The race takes place on Sunday 14 October.

This is a two-lap race around the roads of Fleet, starting and finishing at the Civic Hall. There is also a 5K Fun Run.

Entry forms are available from the events page on www.parityfordisability.org.uk and you can also contact the Parity office for details.

New instruments for Camberley Day Centre

Camberley resident Mrs M Wilkins has made a donation to Parity's Camberley Day Centre for the purchase of several new instruments, including a beautiful chromatic xylophone. This has also been borrowed by the music therapy service for external work with a group of people who also have challenging and complex disabilities. Mrs Wilkins said she chose Parity because such a high proportion of donations goes directly towards Parity's services, and not to administration costs.

PAT Testing Help

A big thank you to volunteer Brian Cusden, who has made a dent in Parity's administration costs by taking over the annual Portable Appliance Testing. Through a course at Farnborough College of Technology, Brian is now qualified to carry out safety tests on our electrical appliances and equipment. He also very generously paid for the testing kit and has saved Parity over £800 this year.

Parity Teen Scheme

Continued from Front Page

Many thanks to volunteer drivers Rod Dowden, Roger Grocock, Jeremy Kayll, Tony Malyon, Peter Meldrum, Neil Rorie and Colin Slatter, as well as Parity's Paul Roper and Owen Durrett, who kept everyone on the move.

The teens have also been making increasing use of rail services, and station staff have for the most part been extremely helpful. We are optimistic that, as more people with disabilities choose to travel by train, station staff will become more and more familiar with providing assistance and using ramps.

The Summer Teen Scheme is in full swing as we go to press. They are enjoying a somewhat newer minibus, purchased to replace the much, much older one. After a fond farewell, it was driven away to the 'home' for retired vehicles. We'll provide an in-depth report on all the Summer antics in the next issue.

Benefits of Massage

Some of Parity's students have started Indian Head Massage as a therapy, with very positive results thanks to the capable hands of specialist Lucille Metcalfe.

"Working with Parity has enabled me to build on my experience working with disabled people," she said. "I enjoy building a relationship of trust with the clients."

Indian Head Massage can be likened to a full body massage because it concentrates on all the pressure points in the head that affect the whole body. As well as the head and face, the massage concentrates on the upper back, upper arms, shoulders and neck. It can be done with or without essential oils, and can be performed anywhere, normally in a seated position.

Lucille has had very positive feedback about the students she visits, including improved sleeping patterns and calm demeanour after treatment. "One of the benefits is the relaxation that it gives," Lucille said. "It also helps circulation, which is especially good for people with low blood pressure, and stimulates the immune system and the detoxification process."

Lucille qualified for a diploma in Indian Head Massage through the School of Natural Health Science, London, and offers a mobile service.

"I have always been interested in massage," she explained. "When my daughter started school I made the decision to start my own business. I particularly wanted to give something back to my local community."

Student James Richens, pictured below with Lucille, is one of her satisfied clients. Anyone interested in more information can contact Lucille on 01252 674600 or email lucille.metcalfe@ntlworld.com.



In Memory of Sophie Biggs

By Sue Smith, Keyworker, Camberley Day Centre

We had mixed feelings when we heard on 2nd July that Sophie Biggs had died whilst on holiday. We were upset at her passing but were pleased that she had been able to spend her last days with her family, in a place she knew and they had all come to love.

Sophie had been coming to the centre almost exactly 10 years and during that time she had won many people's hearts. Although small in stature she had an ability to draw you to her and enrich your life by her presence. Sophie had Retts Syndrome which caused her to suffer various complaints for most of her life but she remained a pleasure to be around and added a sparkle to the centre.

Even when Sophie was suffering, she had a great sense of humour which often involved winding staff up, particularly new members of staff. On one occasion when a member of staff was being assessed for their NVQ over lunch time, Sophie refused point blank to eat anything until the assessor was leaving and then she chose to eat all her lunch! At some time or another, you would undoubtedly be caught out by Sophie as she enjoyed herself and amused others. Then there was the "look" or the "cold shoulder" and you knew you had displeased her and at such times she refused to talk to you.

There will be those who remember taking Sophie on trips to such places as Hampton Court and Kensington Palace and her wonder as she looked around the place with wide eyes, taking everything in as she always did. Not much got past Sophie. But she also had that endearing habit of turning off and falling asleep when she was not interested in what you were doing. As we remember Sophie, we will all hold dear those times when she laughed (usually at our expense), when she had that twinkle in her eye, or when her presence lit up the room.

We will miss you, Sophie, but our lives are richer for knowing you.

To donate in memory of Sophie, please contact Parity or visit www.justgiving.com/sophiebiggs.



Staff Changes

Best wishes to Music Therapist Diane Whelan who after four years with Parity has moved to a full-time post developing a new service for an NHS Trust supporting adults with learning disabilities.

Best of luck to Camberley Day Centre Coordinator Ria Higgins who after 6 years with Parity is now at Care Management Group, who run residential homes. Senior Keyworker Helen Morris is now Centre Coordinator while Ian Hoole has taken on Helen's role. Senior Keyworker Kelly Jarman has given birth to a beautiful girl, Chloe Louise. Congratulations to everyone, and welcome aboard to new Keyworker Sarah Pead. Good luck also to Keyworker Chris Irvin who left for a fresh challenge in the construction industry. At the Farnborough Day Centre, Keyworker Barbara Touati Evens is now back after giving birth to a beautiful baby boy, Ayon. Our best wishes to Keyworker Belinda Finlay who is leaving after 6 years with Parity. Last but not least, thank you to Lauren Trotman and Chris Powers who provided cover in the day centres over the summer.

About Parity for Disability

We are a local charity providing vital services, information and support for children and young adults with multiple disabilities, their families and carers throughout Hampshire, Berkshire and Surrey. We believe every person with multiple disabilities should have the opportunity to reach their potential and be included in their community. Parity runs two day centres in Farnborough and Camberley for adults aged 18-40, Easter and Summer Teenage Activity Schemes, and a music therapy service that operates on-site and in homes, schools and other locations. We are dedicated to ensuring that profoundly disabled people have access to a quality of life that everyone deserves, and our philosophy of Equality, Dignity and Rights is the driving force behind all that we do. Please visit www.parityfordisability.org.uk to learn more.

Government Disabilities Consultation

Earlier this year, the Government Office for Disability Issues requested views on the issue of 'Equality for Disabled People: How Will We Know We Are Making Progress?' Parity sent its response relating to issues faced by people with profound and multiple disabilities.

Our response pointed out that because people with profound levels of disability are not able to participate in these types of discussions, their needs are easily overlooked. Issues voiced by people with disabilities who are able to be very vocal are much more likely to be taken into account.

The government document asked for input on how equality for disabled people should be measured and for details of the primary features of equality, as well as information about early years and transition from childhood to adulthood. Parity's full response to the

consultation can be viewed on www.parityfordisability.org.uk/Awareness.htm. To receive a hard copy of the document, please contact the Parity office on 01252 375581.



FUNDRAISING NEWS

Parity Day

Building awareness of the issues faced by people with multiple disabilities is an important part of Parity's work. On Tuesday 27 March we held the first Parity Day, intended to be an annual event that we hope will eventually involve much of the community.

Volunteers including Trustee Kelvin Smith worked hard in the months beforehand encouraging pubs and other organisations to hold any event, large or small, on or near the day that would raise funds and that would also lead more people to ask about the work that Parity does. We were very pleased to have the support of several organisations for the fledgling event. Staff at Farnborough College of Technology's student bar donated takings from a 'penny mile' and money from the pool tables. Cooperative Funeralcare held a coffee morning at its Aldershot and Alton offices, while Parity Trustee Alan Stemp, his wife Joyce, and ladies who worked at our past Camberley shop, also put on a day of coffee and sandwiches at their home. Princes Mead allowed Parity staff to run a 'penny mile' near Asda.

At Notcutts, which has chosen Parity as its charity for the year, Trustee Angela Brunton coordinated an exhibition of powerful black and white photos displaying aspects of the music therapy service. Meanwhile, staff at the Frimley shop held a hugely

successful raffle with the top prize of a hair cut and blow dry at Nicky Clarke's Mayfair salon. The Church Crookham shop brought in a valuer who donated each customer's fee. The North Camp shop staff sold gorgeous baby doll clothes on e-bay adapted from donated baby clothes, and also recruited several local traders to keep on hand a special Parity swear box. Our thanks to everyone involved, who in addition to raising awareness, also helped raise just over £1,100 for the charity.

Below, Farnborough College of Technology staff and students hand over their Parity Day takings. Left to Right are FCOT students Sam Crunden and Nicole Hobyn, Parity student Rob Hensley, Parity Secretary Chris Wooldridge, and FCOT staff member Nancy Ormonroyd.



Julie Completes the London Marathon



A 'before' picture: Julie holds up the trainers that will carry her to the finish line as students Sunil Krishnamurthy (left) and Kath Hardie (right) give her moral support.

Although Parity is on the list for a permanent London Marathon place, the list is very long and our spot is still a few years away! However this year we were offered the one-off opportunity to purchase a place through the Marathon's Silver Bond scheme. We didn't have to look too far for a volunteer to do the run, as Whetstone Road Centre Coordinator Julie Cantillon instantly stepped up to the challenge...From January, Julie ran for miles each day. Towards the end, she was doing 10 to 20 miles at a time, and her efforts paid off on the day of the Marathon Sunday 22 April. Julie completed the race in 5 hours and 40 minutes, raising £1,170 in sponsorship for Parity.

"It was a fantastic day," Julie said afterwards. "Everyone was buzzing at the start line, chatting to each other. It was a very tough run, but I wouldn't have missed it!"

Congratulations, Julie, from everyone.

Rushmoor Mayor Cheque

As his last act in office, Rushmoor Mayor John Marsh, with the Mayoress Margaret Marsh, visited Parity for Disability's Whetstone Road Day Centre on Monday 21 May to hand over a cheque for £2,500. Cllr Marsh raised the monies as part of his overall fundraising campaign during his mayoral year. The funds will go directly towards maintaining the day to day operations of the charity. On their visit, the Mayor and Mayoress met with some of the students who use the day centre. Pictured left to right are Mrs Marsh, Cllr Marsh, student Kath Hardie, and Parity Chairman Paul Roper.



Hart Chair Cheque

Thank you to Hart Chairman Brian Blewett and to everyone involved at Hart Council and community for their donation of £1,370. Parity was one of the Chairman's charities for the year.

Pictured Left to Right are: Student Kath Hardie once more (not a camera shy person!), Senior Keyworker Ann Fox, Hart Chairman Brian Blewett, Business Manager Helene Abbiss, Keyworker Melanie Crank with Student Rachel Blewett, and Music Therapist Helen Leith.

Life After Retirement

Janet Butler is an Assistant Manager in Parity's North Camp Shop, and explains here that there is definitely life after retirement.

When I reached the grand age of 60, I wondered what life had in store for me. After 18 years as a Scheme Manager of Sheltered Housing, I had been used to a busy lifestyle – organising maintenance of a block of flats, dealing with a variety of people from residents to members of professional agencies – and had lived in a 'fish bowl' on site. What could follow that experience? Working for Parity!

I began to do some voluntary hours in the Parity shop in Queensmead, Farnborough and later I applied for an Assistant Manager position which would take effect in the new shop in North Camp. Wonderful...it was near enough to cycle or walk to (except when the weather was too inclement) and I would enjoy the comradeship of like-minded people. However, there were extra bonuses to enjoy which I had not envisaged - the customers in the shop.

It took only a short time to realise what a diverse and interesting group of people our customers are, and how much I was enjoying their company during working hours. Some come just to browse and obviously wish to be left alone. Some come mainly for a chat and finally have a look at the wonderful items there are for sale. Others become regulars and friends, asking advice, wanting an opinion on a smart trouser suit which is such a bargain, and offering their advice on my 'big day' which was looming ever closer.

I was to be 'The Mother of the Bridegroom', a role I had not had before, nor will ever have again, which made it



Janet Butler is pictured centre with Asst Manager Pam Eldred on the left, and Asst Manager Sylvia Miles.

such an important time of my life and the need to get my outfit right! I had the offer of several hats to wear, with the comment that 'if it is not suitable, then put it in the shop', and a good many suggestions about colours and style of outfit that a person of my height and colour should wear. One customer was aghast that I should think of wearing black and white for the wedding when there were so many wonderful colours to wear.

I could add much more about my new job but suffice to say that I do so much enjoy 'going to work' and to realise that on top of my enjoyment, many customers find real bargains, and, most importantly, the till rings up money which helps maintain the quality of support for our young people using Parity's services.

Fresh Floor for Shop

After years of staff and customer feet making their way along the racks and shelves, the Church Crookham shop's carpet clearly had had its day. The new vinyl floor has really improved the look and appeal of the shop. Staff and volunteers put in a huge amount of work lifting, carrying and preparing, and then putting everything back where it was! Congratulations to the whole team, and to Manager Sandra Broadbridge's husband Steve. Thank you also to Manager Marilyn Benger's husband Nick who mended the roof. Pictured left to right are Volunteers Di Cook and Kevin Miller with Marilyn.



Fundraising Thanks

Mrs Helen Simmons donated £34 from card sales.

The Royal Logistics Corps Band donated £1,400, the proceeds from one of their Christmas concerts.

A Meat Raffle at The Old Courthouse Pub in Farnborough raised £1,000.

The Camberley Theatre raised £190 through a raffle.

Children in Badgers Close, Fleet raised £21 with a Super Sonic Car Wash.

Chris Hardie completed the Reading Half Marathon and secured £130 in sponsorship.

A half-time collection at Farnborough Town FC brought in £96.93.

All the volunteers who helped with our collection outside Sainsbury's Watchmoor Park in March brought in £400 for Parity, and our Tesco's Aldershot collection in June raised £350.

The Fox Pub in Farnborough donated £170 from an Easter Raffle.

Mrs Nelson ran a Parity stall at the Hawley Fair. Thank you also to the public who supported Parity's stalls at the North Camp Fair, Parkside's Fun Day, Farnham Charities Garden Parity, and Aldershot's Victoria Day.

Mr & Mrs Harden and Ms Anne Brown donated £170 through the Frimley and Camberley Lions Sponsored Walk.

Minibus Signwriting

The four Parity minibuses have been made over with the striking design from Parity's new awareness campaign. A handprint design by Julia Camden has been rolled out on posters, car stickers, and now the Parity minibuses. We are grateful to the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation for funding the project, and to Strawberry Signs of Aldershot for doing a great job of adapting the design to our fleet.



Event Volunteers

A number of volunteers have been helping on Parity events for both this year and next year. Donald Ashton of the Camberley and Farnborough Cycling Club organised the sponsored bike ride from Farnborough to Meudon (see back page). Sylvia McPhee, on top of her amazing abseil-in-fancy-dress endeavors has been helping make other Parity events successful, including the quiz night at Notcutts. Designer Trissy Norris, as well as spending a huge amount of time developing a fresh new look for Parity's brochures and web site, has been helping on all our fete stalls. These volunteers are now pitching in to put together future events including a Parity Fete and a Multibike Challenge. We also welcome Gayle Crockford who has hit the ground running looking for land to hold a metal detecting event, and has donated a PA system. To join our team, please contact Helene.

British Parking Assn

Thank you to British Parking Association President Peter Guest who chose Parity as his nominated charity for the year and has reported a final total of over £5,000. The full story will be in the next issue.

Notcutt's Quiz Night

Everyone had a great time in March at the Curry and Quiz Night at Notcutt's, which raised £700 for Parity, and at the repeat of the Blooming Clothes Show in June which raised £500. Congratulations to Trustee Angela Brunton and Shops Manager Christine Stevens for making these events so successful. Please see the Calendar on the back page for other Notcutt's events...



North Camp Shop Scooter Club: Regular customers Sydney Jones, Thomas Carter and Lawrie Smith pose with their wheels.

New Bike Ride

We're very proud of our team of nine cyclists who, as we go to press, are taking part in Parity's unique sponsored bike ride from Farnborough to its twin town of Meudon in France. The three-day trip was organised with lots of help from qualified cycling coach Donald Ashton of the Farnborough and Camberley Cycling Club, and The Twinning Association of Rushmoor. A full report on how everyone fared will appear in the next newsletter.

Zip Wire 07

As we go to press, 45 fearless supporters are gearing up to climb 70 feet up a tree and whizz 650 feet along a thin wire at 25 mph! The event takes place in Runfold on Saturday 15 and Sunday 16 September. Specialists Three Peaks Outdoor Pursuits will ensure everyone's experience is thrilling but still very safe. Parity Trustee Kelvin Smith, who knows about living with a disability, is taking on the challenge and has set himself a sponsorship target of £1,000. Of course, the Frimley Shop Daredevil Team who took part in the firewalk and glass walk will be there! Eagle 96.4 DJ Kim Robson is also zipping and doing a wonderful job promoting both Parity and the event. Look out for some great photos in the next issue.

The deadline for submissions to the Winter Newsletter is Monday 31 December 2007.

Donations

Many thanks to the following, who donated to Parity between Jan 1 and July 31 2007:

Mr R Abbiss
Albert Hunt Trust
Alfa Laval
Austin Phoenix
Bruce Wake Trust
Calleva Foundation
Crest Nicholson
Mr A De Watteville
Miss E Barwick
The Fat Cat Band
Frimley & Camberley Lions
Mr G Ballantine
Gerald Palmer Trust
Good Neighbours Trust
Hart Chairman's Fund
Henry Smith Charity
In Memory of D Curbishley
JK Stirrup Ch Trust
London Law Trust
Miss S Olliff
Mr & Mrs F Smith
Mrs Kennedy
Mr N Rorie
The Stemps' 50th Anniversary
P De Haan Ch Trust
Royal Logistics Corps Band
Rushmoor Mayor's Fund
The Charly Ch Trust
The Fitton Trust
True Colours Trust
Mrs Wilkins
Wilkinsons Hardware

Parity 100 Club Winners

Congratulations to:

February – C Wooldridge
March – O Durrett
April – S McPhee
May – C Cooper
June – K Steele
July – A Cooper

Dates For Your Diary

Sunday 30 September
Rotary Club of Camberley Annual Sponsored Walk
Raise funds for Parity with a choice of 3 or 6 mile walks at Frimley Lodge Park.

Sunday 14 October
Fleet 10K Marathon
Parity is the nominated charity this year, please contact the office to sign up.

Tuesday 23 October
Parity Super Duper Tombola for Children's Fun Day
Notcutt's Garden Centre, Bagshot
Quality prizes, face painting and other fun and a great day of shopping at the beautiful centre. From 10am.

Saturday 27 October
Street Collection—Fleet High St
We will need volunteers to hold a tin for one or two-hour shifts.

Saturday 17 November
Santa Arrives at Notcutt's
Volunteers needed for every Saturday and Sunday until Christmas to assist Santa. 50% of all the grotto takings will come to Parity. Please contact Angela at the Parity office to join in the fun.

Monday 5 November 7.30pm
Parity for Disability AGM at Rushmoor Council Offices

Friday 29 November
Parity Christmas Dinner & Quiz
Notcutt's Garden Centre, Bagshot
Enjoy a full Christmas dinner, and 15% off all purchases at the Centre. Tickets available from our shops, £12.50 with £5 going to Parity. They're guaranteed to go fast...

More DIY Help

Thank you to Jim Dunaway for his genius work on the Parity office door, which is no longer a struggle to open. Visitors to the office please note that the usual strong-arm tactics aren't needed any more! Jim also installed new smoke alarms in both day centres and mended the Farnborough day centre's kitchen cupboards. His work is tremendously appreciated.

This newsletter is published by Parity for Disability. It is edited by Helene Abbiss and designed by Triss Norris. If you have contributions for future editions or comments resulting from this newsletter, please contact Helene c/o Parity for Disability, 94 Whetstone Road, Farnborough, Hants. Tel. 01252 375581. E-mail: helene@parityfordisability.org.uk. Parity is a Registered Charity No. 1071571.