



**Friendship
Project**



for Children
Registered Charity No: 517684

**The Friendship Project
For Children**

**Newsletter Issue 4 / Page 1
June 2006**

Chairman's Report

Since the last Newsletter there have been a number of personnel changes. Pete Aldersley, Coordinator at Atherstone, additionally has become the Projects Operations Manager. He will aim at achieving consistency of practice and purpose across all branches and will also support the work of Coordinators.

Dawn Wood has replaced Maureen Quinn as Coordinator at Nuneaton. She is currently training to be a Pilates coach. We are grateful for all that Maureen achieved on behalf of the Project during her 5 year stint and wish her every success during the remainder of her Social work degree course at Coventry University.

Phil Hayes (Warwick Coordinator) has agreed to act as Child Protection Officer for the Project enabling him to use his extensive experience of this work gained in his teaching career. Coordinators (Social Services in emergency) will normally be the first point of referral for Older Friends regarding Child Protection. Phil, however, will be the main link with the newly established Warwickshire Children's Safeguarding Board and keep abreast with new legislation and local developments in this important aspect of our work.

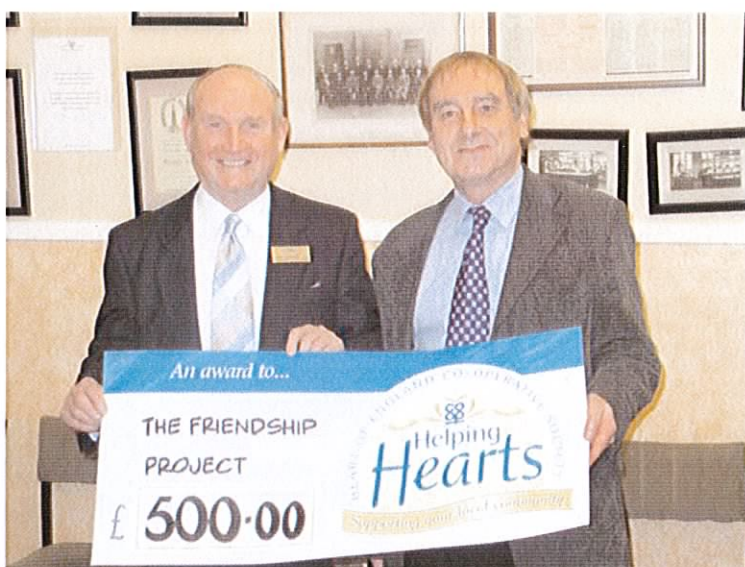
We are grateful to Barry Aust for acting as temporary Fundraiser. In 2005, he was successful in raising enough money for us to end the year with a healthy financial cushion. In January Catherine Smith Coordinator at the University branch took up post as Fundraiser and quickly impressed the Trustees with her efforts. Unfortunately in April she will be taking up a full-time post at the University of Worcester as Community Liaison Officer. Our loss is their gain. Once again the Project has proved to be a good stepping off point.

As ever, thanks to all Project Members for their valuable work,

John Hancock Chairman

HELPING HEARTS

- Helping the Friendship Project



John Hancock - Chairman of the Friendship Project seen here receiving a £500 donation from the Heart of England Co-operative Society. The Society provides the cash for its Helping Hearts scheme from profits on the sale of tobacco.

EDITOR'S COMMENT

Welcome to our latest newsletter! In this edition we are pleased to have more reflections from volunteers befriending children through the county. We are sorry to be saying goodbye to some of our stalwart supporters (see Chairman's report), but pleased to welcome new faces who bring with them their own experience and expertise. Our Quality Assurance work continues apace, amongst the many changes that have come about because of this work, our redefined Mission Statement is something we would like to share with you here, as it clearly captures the spirit of the project and what it hopes to achieve.

I hope you find this edition useful and interesting. If you have any particular topics you would like to see covered in future editions, then please do not hesitate to let me know.

Gina Worrall Editor
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Newsletter Issue 4 / Page 2
June 2006

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2005 and 2006

Last October our 2nd Annual Conference staged at Sydenham Primary School in Leamington Spa, enabled Trustees, Coordinators and Older Friends to meet, work and plan together. The venue proved to be excellent as were the refreshments prepared by the Brunswick Healthy Living Centre. Comments made by participants included:

"Worth giving up my Saturday for"

"I'm glad I came"

"Good atmosphere with people keen to share experiences"

"Group sessions worked well but there were probably too many"

We are grateful to Anni Shearer, from Atherstone Social Services, for being our chief guest and for being such a valuable resource throughout the day.

This year our Annual Conference will be held on Saturday 7th October 2006 at the same venue. We would like to encourage all our members to join us for what promises to be another interesting session of shared experiences and best practice. If you have a particular topic you would like to have discussed then please contact the chairman or your local coordinator.

An Older Friend writes.....

"I have been involved with the University of Warwick branch of the Friendship Project for four years. During my first and second years at University, another student and myself befriended a family of four girls in Coventry, aged between 7 and 14. During our two years with the girls we pursued all manner of activities including swimming, cooking, going to the cinema and a trip to Cadbury's World. We also took two of the children to an event organised by the Friendship Project at Pizza Express where Older Friends and Younger Friends got together to make and eat pizzas.

For the last two years I have been a student project leader at the University. As a Project leader, my responsibilities have included: helping with recruitment of students at the volunteering Fayres, ensuring that the necessary training sessions are provided for all of the Older Friends and then establishing and monitoring friendships. My role as project leader has allowed me to see a very different side to the project and I have enjoyed this equally as much as being an Older Friend. The new friends I have made through the project and experiences over the four years have enhanced my university life considerably. Being able to reflect upon my involvement in the project has just helped me get my first teaching post and I hope that, as I enter my new career in a different part of the country, similar volunteering opportunities will be available to me".

Mission Statement

- To improve the social opportunities of vulnerable children

Our Specific Aims

- To broaden their horizons
- To build their confidence and self esteem
- To enable them to have fun

Our Objectives

- To provide an Older Friend / mentor to a vulnerable child
- To ensure that regular contact takes place between the child and Older Friend
- To give the child access to learning opportunities through contact with the Older Friend
- To give the child access to fun activities through contact with the Older Friend
- To provide a positive influence to a vulnerable child

Quality Assurance Update

The quest for Quality is continuous. As an organisation we are always aiming for and working towards, delivering the very best. The best, not only in terms of the services that we as a charity offer, but also the best, in terms of the way in which we operate as an organisation. To this end we have adopted a Quality Model - PQASSO. This system has enabled us to measure our standards of service and operational processes against a set of Industry Quality Standards. From this we are able to discover where our strengths and weaknesses lie, and initiate change within the charity in a structured and positive way.

To date our assessments have lead to us implementing the following across the organisation: -

All documentation connected with the project is now in audit proof format.

Training policies are now in place.

Templates for job descriptions for all project members are in place.

The Project supports members identifying additional learning opportunities and has a sum of money identified in the strategic plan for training.

An operations manager provides regular supervisory and support sessions to all coordinators and maintains records of the same.

All project members have up to date copies of the Guidelines.

The production of a comprehensive Induction Pack for all Trustees to include: -

- Mission Statement and aims.

- Outlines of Trustees obligations as per the Charities Commission Guidelines

- Organisation chart

- Contact lists

- Annual Report

- Current Guidelines

- Copy of the Constitution

- Trustee Job Descriptions that define individual responsibilities.

- All Trustees will have CRB checks.

Our next area for assessment will concentrate on the ways in which we record and monitor feedback from our users, and, importantly, how we use this feedback and channel it into our strategic plan to ensure that users demands are met. Our users are defined as the children who are our 'younger friends', their parents, our volunteers who are our 'older friends', social services, any other organizations who use us, and our funders.

Finally, for those of you new to the project and new to Quality Assurance, below are the benefits that adopting a Quality model give us as an organization: -

- It highlights our strengths and weaknesses.

- It enables us to initiate change within the organisation in a structured and positive way.

- It focuses us on fully complying with our legal obligations in governance and management.

- It focuses us on understanding and fulfilling our customers needs, requirements and expectations.

- It enables us to become better organised and work more efficiently as a team.

- It can help to satisfy funders.

- It allows everyone to have a voice in how we improve what we do.

- It demonstrates our commitment to Quality.

If you would like to know more about quality assurance and be part of the team working towards accreditation then please do not hesitate to contact Gina Worrall.

Gina Worrall
Quality Assurance Manager



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Newsletter Issue 4 / Page 4
June 2006

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An Older Friend writes.....

"I decided to become an Older Friend because I wanted to 'give something back' and I thought the Friendship Project sounded like a very worthwhile charity. I was matched with a younger friend, a 12 year old boy with learning difficulties, and I have been taking him out for trips at weekends for four years now. We go swimming, to football matches, cycling, we play tennis and badminton, visit the cinema and go ice-skating to name just a few! Some of the most enjoyable activities for us both, have been the more simple ones - picking blackberries, finding conkers and flying a kite. He is always very enthusiastic and enjoys whatever we do. It has been so rewarding to introduce him to new sports and new places and I have seen him grow in confidence over the years. I have never regretted getting involved with the charity and I hope to continue my friendship with him for as long as he wants".

Obituary - Malcolm Peters

At the beginning of April Malcolm died of a brain tumour having coped with Parkinson's Disease in recent years. He was a highly respected member of the Project who played a significant role in fundraising. We extend our sympathies to his wife Barbara who was also involved in the Project for several years as a Group Supporter.