

DEVELOPMENTS

East Renfrewshire Carers' Centre Annual Review 2009/2010



Changes to Support Groups

The Barrhead Support Group will meet on the 1st Monday of each month at either Café 158 or Voluntary Action (Undercover) from 2pm-3.30pm.

The East Renfrewshire Carers Support Group will now meet in Sandlers cottage on the 2nd Wednesday of each month between 1pm & 2.30pm.

Male Carers Group

The Male Carers support group meets on the last Thursday of every month at Sandlers cottage from 2pm-4pm. Please contact the centre if you would like to be added to the mailing list.

Parent Enabler Group

The parent carers group will continue to meet on the last Thursday of every month at Sandlers Cottage from 10am-12pm. Please contact the centre if you would like to be added to the mailing list.

Card Making Group

Carers are invited to join volunteer Helen Clunas at Sandlers Cottage every second Tuesday from 10am-12pm to make greetings cards.

New Carers Training Programme

Staff are aware that the procedure for passing information onto carers, particularly new carers, needs to be continually assessed, therefore we intend to pilot a new carers training course during 2010. As some carers are unaware of the various services offered by the centre and a small minority identified that they had not been informed of their right to a carers' assessment, the proposed training programme will not only cover the services we offer but will look at various types of assessments and also highlight carers' rights in more detail.

Carers' Voice

The 2009 annual carers survey identified that some carers wanted a voice at a local and national level. It is our intention to develop a support group during 2010 which would address this request. If any carer is interested in attending an initial meeting contact the centre for more details.

The results of our 2009 annual carers' questionnaire are available to view on our website. All our activities and events can also be viewed on www.eastrenfrewshirecarers.co.uk

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2009...

Carers' Week 2009

The Carers of East Renfrewshire celebrated Carers' Week 2009 with a very busy week of events. Carers came together in Eastwood House to take part in various workshops including building self-esteem, positive communication, laughter therapy and awareness of Carers' rights. The Centre was fortunate enough to have the support of a host of local voluntary organisations who supported Carers' Week by providing information stalls and goodie bags to our carers.

For those carers who couldn't make it along to Eastwood House, we also held a coffee morning at Sandlers Cottage. Ken Macintosh MSP popped in for a coffee and chatted with some of the carers regarding the issues that are important to them.

Scottish Young Carers' Festival 2009

The Festival took place on 29th/30th August 2009 at the Broomlee Centre in West Linton. Almost 500 young carers from all over Scotland gathered for a weekend of fun activities. Six young carers aged 13-16 years old and 2 staff members attended from the centre. The weekend offered young carers the opportunity to try fun and new activities e.g. the flying fox, dance, football, a disco, karaoke, arts and crafts, games contributed to the festival radio programme whilst meeting other young carers from across the country. The festival also allowed the young carers to highlight the issues that are important to them and engage with key decision makers, raising awareness and gaining national recognition for Scottish young carers. The festival provided an element of respite from the caring situation, which is very important for young carers. Many MSPs were in attendance at the Festival including MSPs Shona Robison and Adam Ingram who were involved in a question time debate with the young people. We plan to repeat this fun experience in August 2010.



The Board of Directors wish to acknowledge the achievement and support of staff in successfully tendering to continue to provide services for carers over the next 3 years.



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Outings and Activities

Our young carers experienced mountain biking at Castle Semple in Lochwinnoch during the Easter break from school. Trips to Heads of Ayr, Loudoun Castle, M&D's and Castle Semple to try out water sports took place during the school summer holidays.

A group visited the BBC studios to create a short animation entitled 'A Random Day'. This film portrayed a day in the life of a young carer. We were all surprised at just how much work is involved in the making of even a short animation! An adventure packed week filled with exciting fun activities of kayaking, gorge walking, orienteering, sailing & mountain biking took place at the Benmore Outdoor Centre, Dunoon in August. Eight young carers gained confidence and learned new skills including working as a team. At Christmas we had a Pool Party at Neilston Leisure Centre. Splash!



Rothesay Residential Break

Respite is a recognised entitlement that carers and those suffering from a disability should receive. It is the responsibility of social services to assess and provide for this need. However, when the Carers' Centre budget allows, it tries to provide some limited respite provision to carers who are in crisis. In October 2009 the Centre arranged 2 weekend respite breaks for 23 carers in Skelmorlie and Rothesay. These welcome breaks from the caring role were viewed as a very positive experience by carers. They did like to be beside the seaside!



Carers' Voice

In November 2009, two carers attended the Carers' Cross Party meeting at the Scottish Parliament where several MSPs heard what life for a carer is like and what would make a difference to their lives. Sinéad McCarrey and Russell Kinnear addressed the Cross Party meeting which was attended by Moira Oliphant from the Scottish Government's team that is responsible for the new Carers' and Young Carers' Strategies. Cathy Peattie MSP invited another 15 carers to tour the Parliament building and have an opportunity to meet with more MSPs. Carers also spoke with Annabel Goldie MSP. In October 2009, the local MSP Ken Macintosh held a consultation with carers regarding the individual educational support plan.



Training

Adult Carers

This year we spent a great deal of time consulting with our carers regarding training courses and one particular topic continued to raise its head and that was how to cope with loss. Loss, not necessarily through bereavement, seemed to be something that all carers experience. It could be loss of confidence, loss of a social life or loss of the person you're caring for which means losing that caring role too. We consulted with Isobel Allan M.B.E. who has a Diploma in Counselling and is a qualified trainer. Isobel also cares for her daughter and thus is aware of the difficulties a caring role can bring. Isobel ran 4 training courses on Change and Loss which touched on the strong emotions and guilt carers can experience due to their caring role. The feedback from the course has been excellent and we will continue carers' training throughout 2010 but will also have follow-up training which looks at positive communication, self esteem and confidence building.

We provided back care training for 12 carers to help give them the skills and confidence to lift the cared for person safely. The carers were also shown several items that can be used as lifting aids and can be purchased at local mobility shops.

Young Carers

The Centre identified several young carers with a substantial caring role and they each underwent a 6 week self-development programme called "Secrets of Success" which looked at self esteem, image and confidence building. We were also fortunate to recruit a volunteer maths tutor to work with young carers who are struggling with exams and school work. The tutor has supported the young carers

on a one to one basis. According to the young carers and their family this service has been a success therefore we hope to continue this throughout 2010.



A first aid workshop was carried out with the British Red Cross who instructed 23 young carers in the basic skills of first aid.

At a healthy eating workshop young carers were asked to identify and taste a number of different fruits and then rate them for favourite taste through to their least favourite. A discussion then followed on vitamins that can be found in different kinds of foods and why these vitamins are important to remaining healthy. This helped increase their knowledge on healthy foods and to introduce them to fruits they had never tasted before.

Centre staff worked in partnership with the council's Sports Development Team to provide young carers with an opportunity to get fit and healthy and try different sports. These sessions were facilitated by a worker from the council sports and leisure services department and involved the young carers taking part in a number of team sporting activities such as basketball, football, cricket, netball, rounders etc.

The programme took place at Mearns Primary and allowed the young people to find out what after school activities are available to them.

Therapeutic Services

The Centre provided 558 therapies during the 2009/10 financial year at both Sandlers Cottage and Voluntary Action Barrhead. From the feedback received from carers we know that this service is of benefit to carers' health and well-being. Carers have stated that they felt more relaxed, less stressful and anxious, were sleeping better and the aches and pains associated with their caring role were much relieved. A stress management programme designed to raise carers' awareness of stress, its causes, its impact both physically and mentally was implemented to give carers coping strategies and relaxation techniques.

In November 2009 the Centre agreed to provide placements for students completing the Stress Management Diploma at Cardonald College. Two students provided a 4-6 week individualised programme to 23 carers. The feedback from carers has been very positive therefore this service will continue in 2010 along with group relaxation courses.

