

# Newsletter

Issue 50

July 2008

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## **AfOP NEWS UPDATE**

### **Our new premises**

Many of you will have witnessed the huge changes taking place within the borough and especially in Woolwich over the last few years. Sadly the building we were in is scheduled for change too – it is going to be demolished and the site will be redeveloped, apparently as a hotel and shops.

As you know, we have now moved into an office – Room 22 – on the second floor of Mycenae House, a community centre in Mycenae Road between Charlton and Blackheath. It is smaller than our old office but in a great location and there are other community groups using the centre, including several clubs which attract older people. I trust you have all received our new contact details. You are very welcome to drop in and see us in our new setting.

### **Changes in staff**

2008 has brought some interesting developments for us here. Bert Duffus finished as our Project Worker in January but has continued to work as a volunteer. We would like to thank him for the fantastic job he has done for his partners and to say that he is sorely missed in the office as well.

Some of you will now have met our new member of staff, Genya Robinson, who started in January. Genya has already carried out an extensive publicity campaign to ensure that people in the borough have up-to-date information on the service and has been going out to groups and lunch clubs giving presentations on our behalf. She is also working directly with clients in crisis and liaising with volunteers.

### **Strategy Review Day**

As the first stage in an organisational review to map out the future direction of the organisation, the Management Committee and staff met at Mycenae House on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> June. It was a very successful event and lots of creative ideas

emerged. We will be sending out more detailed information later on and contacting all the volunteers to canvass their views and comments.

### **A revamped website**

We are delighted to say that after a break of over six months, the web site is now up and running again, with the same web address. We have been lucky enough to find a volunteer, Keith Aubrey, who has got done an excellent job. The next step is to redo the content and ensure that it is regularly up-dated with news and information. Do please have a look at it and let us know what you think and any suggestions you may have. The photos are temporary and from public files on the internet.

***We are looking for interesting photos to put up on the site. If anyone has a photo of themselves or with their partner which they would be willing to include, we would love to put it on as long as everyone involved has given their consent.***

### **THE CARE HOME PROJECT**

This month we have an exciting new project starting. We have been successful in getting some funding from Help the Aged to run a six month pilot programme in two Greenwich care homes. We will be running group advocacy for the residents as well as setting up one to one partnerships where appropriate. We will also be doing reminiscence work and helping residents to put together Life History Books which will provide them with a visual record of their lives. Sam will be taking the lead on this project, working with Genya.

We hope to extend this project in the future and are looking for funding to set up similar groups in more residences and to carry on the work for the next three years.

***We are looking for volunteers to be involved in this project so if you are interested, please do contact us.***

We will provide any training which is necessary for volunteers. Age Exchange in Blackheath offers a very interesting session on Reminiscence work which Eleanor and Genya have attended. Anyone volunteering will be offered the same opportunity as well as training from Sam who has a lot of experience in this area.

### **ADVOCACY RESEARCH PROJECT**

AfOP has agreed to take part in research into advocacy being conducted by Edna Mathieson. Edna has been for many years on the Board of Trustees of Westminster Advocacy Service for Senior Residents and is doing this research as part of her PhD thesis. All of the staff and members of the Management Committee are being interviewed as part of this project.

We are looking for volunteers and partners who would be willing to participate in a telephone or face to face interview of about 30 minutes. If you are willing to do this, please contact Eleanor on 020 8269 0298. She will pass your contact details on to Edna who will call and arrange a time for the interview at your convenience. We would be grateful if you could also ask your partners if they would be willing to be interviewed and let us know.

## **VOLUNTEER NEWS**

### **New volunteers**

Since last year, we have been lucky enough to get some volunteer help in the office. Aparajita Ray very generously gave her time two or three days a week from November to March and did an excellent job. We are pleased to say that she has left to go to a paid post and we wish her all the best for the future.

We now have two new volunteers, Idalyn Acolatse and Abiodun Oke. Idalyn is working one day a week on Wednesdays and giving us really useful admin support and Abi is working on advocacy issues and is based in the office.

### **Partner reviews**

We have been so busy catching up after the move that we haven't been able to organise any partner reviews over the last few months. So we have set up a programme to catch up. Several members of the Management Committee have kindly volunteered to undertake the reviews. We will be enlisting your help in explaining this to your partners and will be in touch shortly with details.

***All the reviewers will be given ID cards to help identify them to the partners.***

### **Support sessions**

We are organising a new series of training and support sessions for volunteers on different topics to start after the summer. We will be in touch with the programme once we have finalised the dates and the trainers. Thank you for the suggestions you have already made. We will ensure that these topics are covered.

## **TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES**

### **So far this year....**

We have run three successful training events so far this year. In February and June, Eleanor provided sessions for Greenwich Council's Staff Learning & Development programme entitled 'An introduction to Advocacy for Older People'. These were intended to raise awareness of advocacy and its benefits for older

people as well as to raise the profile of the organisation in the borough. 15 people attended each session, many of whom worked with older people's services in the borough or in residential care homes. It was great to meet them and see how many people are really concerned about older people and the way they are treated. Eleanor will be doing another similar session in November.

Sam ran a successful training course for volunteers in March with three participants. We are very happy to welcome Eleanor, Nddi and Suleman as volunteers. One of them is already working with a partner and the others will be matched soon.

The next volunteer recruitment and training will take place after the summer.

### External Training available for volunteers

Training or Event	Offered by	Venue	Date
Free Dementia Awareness Course	Greenwich Council	The Training Suite Bowater Road, SE18 5TF	22 <sup>nd</sup> August and 10 <sup>th</sup> December 2008
Free Managing Challenging Behaviour Course	Greenwich Council	The Training Suite Bowater Road, SE18 5TF	5 <sup>th</sup> September and 26 <sup>th</sup> February 2008
Introduction to Dementia	Fordementia	6 Camden High Street, London, NW1 0JH	July 9 <sup>th</sup> 2008
Activity Groups for People with Dementia	Fordementia	6 Camden High Street, London, NW1 0JH	August 27 <sup>th</sup> 2008
Counselling Skills for Dementia Careworkers	Fordementia	6 Camden High Street, London, NW1 0JH	September 16 <sup>th</sup> 2008

New Training courses are being advertised in July around Assertiveness and Communication Skills. We will send flyers out to people when they are available.

*We have attached a flier advertising a post at the Volunteer Centre. If anyone is interested, the contact details are included.*

***If you have any news or information that you would like us to include in the next newsletter, please contact Eleanor in the office. We are particularly interested in stories relating to your partners, any information that you feel would be helpful to other advocates or any events that are coming up.***