



VSB Befriending Scheme Newsletter

SUMMER 2008

Hi There!

Claire and Victoria from the Befriending project here, wanting to say hello and introduce the first edition of the new VSB Befriending newsletter!

We hope to send out a newsletter every quarter to tell you about the work that has taken place under the project during the previous months. We are really fortunate to have a great team of volunteer

befrienders who make such a difference to the quality of life of our befriendees. We think it only fair to have our very own befriending newsletter to keep you informed about what has been happening under the project and to tell you about the great work that you are contributing so very much to.

We would really welcome any comments you have on the newsletter and please let

us know if you have any ideas for new articles/sections for the next issue!



Project Update

Gosh, where do we start, it has been a busy few months! Take a look at the information below to see what a little teamwork can achieve:

April – June 2008

- Average of 41 befriendees had a VSB volunteer calling at their home regularly for a chat to provide company



- With the help of volunteers, 5 trips and outings were organised to a range of places including Forestside, Bloomfields and Newtownards Shopping Centres. Such trips are so important for our befriending clients as it allows people the opportunity to socialise in a group setting and retain a little independence in relation to shopping.
- Deaf Awareness training for volunteers took place in May – if you missed this don't worry, read on for some key communication hints and tips!
- A thank you event for volunteers was organised

on 5th June to mark Volunteers Week

- VSB received the Investing in Volunteers (IIV) Quality Standard – thanks to all volunteers who participated in a telephone or face-to-face interview!

A huge thank you to all our volunteers – every single one of you has helped to make our befriendees feel less isolated, be it through giving of your time by visiting someone in their own home, by helping out on trips or driving the VSB bus on outings!

A large print version of this newsletter is available by contacting VSB on (028) 9020 0850 or email info@vsb.org.uk

St Patrick's Day Event

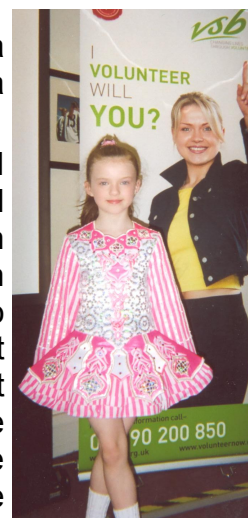
Once again this year VSB's Befriending Scheme was successful in securing a small grant from the Good Relations Unit at the Belfast City Council to hold an event to celebrate the life of St Patrick.

We held an event on 20 March 2008 which was attended by 18 older people and volunteers. We were very lucky to be entertained by a young Irish dancer called Laoise who wowed us all with her speed, agility and colourful costume. We also had a singer who sang old Irish and local songs jogging peoples memories and leading to a couple of requests.

We tried to keep even the refreshments authentic and served tea with wheaten bread,

boiled cake and Irish tea loaf, which all went down a treat!

The afternoon was enjoyed by everyone who came and if we are successful in securing the grant again next year we would hope to organise another event inviting those who didn't get an invitation this year. Due to our budget restraints we are unable to invite everyone to all events, but endeavour to get around everyone over the year, leaving nobody out.



Investing in Volunteers



As some of our volunteers may already be aware VSB have recently been working towards achieving an Investing in Volunteers UK Quality Standard, and we are delighted to tell you that we have been successful in achieving this award.

Investing in Volunteers UK is the quality standard for organisations which involve volunteers in their work. The standard enables organisations to review their policies and practice in relation to effective volunteer management.

We hope by achieving this award we will be able to provide better support to our volunteers including:

- Written documents which volunteers can refer to at any time.
- Improved training opportunities.
- A better appreciation of volunteers by all concerned.
- An even more professional approach to the management of volunteers.
- A safe environment created through risk assessment, health & safety and practical measures.

We have enclosed a copy of our Volunteer Policy for your information and we are currently updating other policies including Health & Safety Policy and Grievance Policy. If you would like copies of these policies please give us a call on **028 9020 0850** and we will post them out to you.

Volunteer Thank You Event - *Can't Cook Won't Cook*

To mark Volunteers Week, 11 volunteer befrienders attended a celebratory 'Can't Cook won't Cook' event at Farset Hotel. It was our

very own take on TV's 'Ready Steady Cook'. Red Tomatoes and Green Peppers were the deciding factor when Nuala McKeever (Patron of VSB) and Alan Simpson (Radio Ulster) demonstrated their cooking skills. Who did you vote for? Were you a red pepper or green tomato? Take a look at the photo to find out.

Unfortunately, due to limited resources, it was not possible to invite all VSB volunteers to this event. For those who did not attend this time, we hope that you will participate in an event later in the year.



Volunteer Training at VSB

We recently held a Deaf Awareness training session which we found very informative and have included some information from that session in this newsletter as we thought it would be of interest to our volunteers. We would like to express our thanks to Philip Townsley and Denise Birmingham from the Deaf Support Team at the Bradbury Centre who delivered the training.

Being deaf or hard of hearing can mean very different things to different people. Some people will feel more comfortable with particular words to describe their own deafness. They might feel strongly about terms they do not like. RNID (Royal National Institute for Deaf People) use the following terms:

Deaf People – The term deaf people is used in a general way when talking about people with all degrees of hearing loss.

Hard of Hearing People – This term is used to describe people with a mild to severe hearing loss. It is quite often used to describe people who have lost their hearing gradually.

Deafened People – People who were born hearing and became severely or profoundly deaf after learning to speak are often described as deafened.

Deafblind People – Many deafblind people have some hearing and vision. Others will be totally deaf and totally blind.

The Deaf Community – Many deaf people whose first or preferred language is British Sign Language (BSL) consider themselves part of the deaf community. They describe themselves as 'Deaf', with a capital D, to emphasise their deaf identity.



Here are some Do's and Don'ts to help you when communicating with a deaf person.

DO:

- Make sure you have the person's attention before you begin to speak.
- Switch off background noise such as radio's or TV's or move to a quieter place.
- Face the deaf person at all times, position yourself approximately 3-6 feet away, and on the same level, both standing or both seated.
- Use a firm clear voice.
- Ensure your face is in a good light, move if necessary or switch lights on.
- Speak more slowly than usual, but not too slowly.
- Try to use an expressive face and natural gestures.
- Come to the point quickly.
- Use plain straightforward language. Using technical words or jargon makes lipreading much more difficult.

DON'T:

- Don't shout, this distorts both your face and your voice and can be physically painful to a person with a hearing aid.
- Don't over-exaggerate your lip movements.
- Don't slow your speech too much. This creates extra syllables which are confusing to a lipreader.
- Don't cover your face or mouth with your hands if smoking or eating whilst speaking.
- Don't turn away or look down while speaking. Speech movements are extremely rapid and can be easily missed.
- Don't give up and say it doesn't matter – use a pen and paper if necessary.

Remember that lip reading is tiring, and have patience if communication takes a little longer.

For more information go to www.rnid.org.uk or call the RNID information line on **0808 808 0123**.

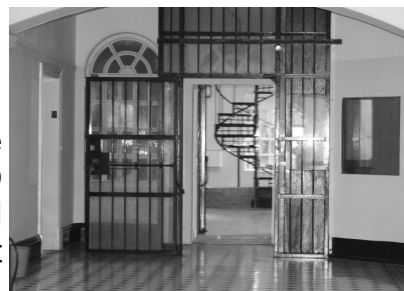
Crumlin Road Gaol Visit

Guided tours of one of Belfast's most distinctive and notorious buildings will run every Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 13 June to 12 September 2008.

Friday & Saturday tours run 10am-4.45pm.
Sunday tours run 11.30am-4.45pm. (Duration 1 hour)

Admission is by prior booking only through **Belfast Welcome Centre** 47 Donegall Place, Belfast (next to Boots) on **028 9024 6609**

Price: £5 adult.
Admission is free for seniors but ID must be produced at the Belfast Welcome Centre.



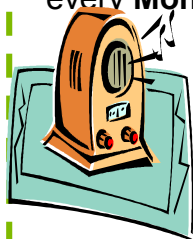
Tours are not suitable for small children and visitors with any special requirements should check access arrangements prior to booking.

Why not tell your befriender about

'Afternoon Delight' - Radio programme for older people

(Feile FM in conjunction with West Belfast Senior Citizens Forum)

Don't forget to tune in to **Feile FM 103.2** every **Monday afternoon 2.30 - 3.30pm** for



the *Afternoon Delight* radio show. The programme is hosted by older people, and addresses areas of interest and key issues impacting upon lives of older people. It is now more than six

months since *Afternoon Delight* hit the airwaves and in that time we have welcomed a wide range of interesting speakers, all contributing their professional knowledge and experience to debates on important issues affecting older people such as healthy eating, fuel poverty, diabetes, positive mental health and many more. If you would like to listen to previous shows please contact Feile FM on **028 9033 1247**

Belfast City Council Home Safety Check Scheme

Every year home accidents cause death or injury to thousands of people in this country. Don't let your home become a hazard house.

Belfast City Council's home safety check scheme offers free home safety checks to any household within the Belfast City Council area, particularly to those over 65 and parents with children under the age of 5.

During the checks, trained staff will;

- Show you the areas of risk in your home.

- Offer advice on home safety.
- Inform you about any specialist services available.
- Carry out minor repairs or modifications free of charge.

To arrange a home safety check contact the Home Safety Section on **028 9091 8715**.



We are always trying to think of any training that would be appropriate to the role of our volunteer befrienders, If there is anything you feel would be beneficial to you in your volunteering please let us know.

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Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

