

## “Volunteer Voices” - Your Story!

VSB has successfully secured funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for a unique social history project. It will record and preserve the story of volunteering in Belfast over forty years – from 1967 to 2007. It's part of VSB's Forty Years celebrations, but it's also an opportunity for those individuals – ordinary people – who did extra-ordinary things during those years, to tell their story, to have that story preserved as a golden nugget of Belfast's positive social history in difficult and challenging times, and ultimately, to see that story published in 2009 when the full body of research is produced as a high quality publication.

**TELL US YOUR STORY** In the shadow of the headlines and hardship that revolved around Belfast in those years was a parallel period of admirable and amazing, selfless yet passionate, enthusiastic and enduring ethos of voluntary work. And at the heart and core of it all was the people. It was these people who in small and big ways, made a difference, engineered change, had an impact on their locality, their communities, their city.

**CASTING THE NET** Over the coming months a major research exercise will take place. VSB has appointed Julie McCaughan as its researcher, and together we'll be casting the net over the city to trawl for stories and experiences about volunteering in Belfast over the past 40 years. In particular we're searching for individuals whose stories remain untold, undiscovered and unrecorded.

**HELP!** We want your help to identify these people. We want you to come forward if you have a story to tell. Send your stories to VSB, 34 Shaftesbury Square, Belfast BT2 7DB or log on to [www.vsb.org.uk](http://www.vsb.org.uk) and click on **'I was a Volunteer'**



For more information contact:

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email [issue.island@btinternet.com](mailto:issue.island@btinternet.com)



Supported by  
**The National Lottery**  
through the Heritage Lottery Fund



## Bernice McGurk

VSB was deeply saddened to hear of the sudden death of Bernice McGurk.

Bernice was an inspiration to everyone she met. A volunteer for many years, she played an important role in a range of community organisations and was awarded a Peter McLachlan accolade in June 2007 for



"Changing Lives through Volunteering." The fact that she was blind and confined to a wheelchair didn't ever hold her back, indeed she actively encouraged other people with disabilities to get involved in volunteering.

Bernice's belief was "if you give a little you get a little back" and this is certainly reflected in the many friendships she developed through her voluntary work.

She will be remembered with fondness by all at VSB.

## Updating our Records

It's really important that we have correct information on all of our volunteers and we are currently updating our database. As we have 3300 volunteers this is a huge task!

If your contact details or circumstances relating to volunteering have changed please let us know – either email [info@vsb.org.uk](mailto:info@vsb.org.uk) phone Belfast: 028 9020 0850 / Bangor 028 9127 0486 or write. If you get a letter, phone call or email please reply with all your details. This will help us speed up the process and will allow us to provide you with the service you need!

## Volunteer Befriending Christmas Dinner

This event was attended by just under 100 people, including those in receipt of VSB befriending, transport and buddying services, volunteers and VSB project staff. This is a very special event in the calendar year for our befriendedees as it is an opportunity for people who are otherwise housebound or who have limited or no contact with friends and family over Christmas, to come together and celebrate Christmas with others during what can often be a lonely time for some. The event was made particularly special by the



attendance of the Lord Mayor, Councillor Jim Rodgers, who welcomed everyone and passed on warm and heartfelt wishes for the Christmas period.

After eating Christmas dinner, entertainment was provided by Victoria College school choir who sang a range of Christmas carols and songs which greatly added to the festive spirit. *Marks & Spencer* kindly donated presents of sweets and chocolates as part of their work in support of older people. A great day was had by all and we are already looking forward to next year's Christmas event.



## Investing in Volunteers

Volunteering is at the very core of VSB's work. We therefore want to ensure that our volunteers receive the best possible management support. We are happy to announce that as an organisation we are currently in the process of working to achieve the Investing in Volunteers UK Quality Standard.

### What is 'Investing in Volunteers'?

Investing in Volunteers is the UK quality standard for organisations which involve volunteers in their work. The Standard enables organisations to comprehensively review their policies and practice in relation to effective volunteer management. The Standard is based on four key areas of volunteer management, namely; planning for volunteer involvement; recruiting volunteers; selecting and matching volunteers; and supporting and retaining volunteers.

### How will the Standard benefit VSB volunteers?

Benefits to the volunteers themselves during and after achieving the Standard include:

- appropriate documentation volunteers can refer to at any time
- improved training opportunities
- a better-informed 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 other practical measures



## Go Tea Potty!

Join in during Save the Children week  
27 April - 3 May 2008



Hold a Tea Party and show it's simple to save a child's life.

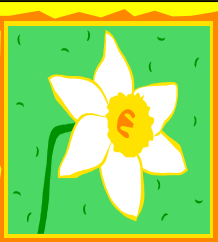
For more information contact Save the Children  
on 028 9062 0000 or check their website  
[savethechildren.org.uk/gotepotty](http://savethechildren.org.uk/gotepotty)

## Human Rights Consortium

1700 sectarian incidents here last year alone

**That's why we need  
a Bill of Rights.**

The Human Rights Consortium encourages the general public and community as a whole to engage in the process of a strong and inclusive Bill of Rights. The website has a great lobbying tool whereby you can email local MLAs with views and opinions. [www.billofrightsnri.org](http://www.billofrightsnri.org)



## The Great Daffodil Appeal

We need 840 volunteers to help raise funds for Marie Curie Cancer Care in N.I. As part of the organisation's 60th Anniversary year in 2008, we have the fantastic opportunity to hold collections at all Tesco's stores in the UK for the Great Daffodil Appeal on the weekend of **Friday**

**29th February and Saturday 1st March 2008**

We want volunteers to help collect £34,000 locally and almost half a million in the UK. 2 hours of your time would raise enough to pay for 2 hours of nursing care.

For more information contact VSB on 028 9020 0850 or email [info@vsb.org.uk](mailto:info@vsb.org.uk)

## VSB Buddying Service

VSB, with funding from the Department for Regional Development, is currently delivering "Transport Buddy" services for isolated older persons in both North & West Belfast and the Ards Peninsula.

A "Buddying Service" is defined as a support service which enables an isolated older person to be accompanied by a volunteer (buddy) on a journey by bus or train with the focus on achieving independent travel by the client. To date clients have used a range of transport services depending on their needs ranging from public transport through to door to door services and community transport.

Buddies can provide the following support services:

- Provide one to one support and confidence-building
- Provide information on bus/train timetables and help to plan a journey
- Accompany the client when travelling to help build their confidence until they become independent to travel
- Help the client to complete a short travel diary recording their experiences etc

Do you know of an isolated older person aged 65+ in either North & West Belfast or the Ards Peninsula who could benefit from this service?



VSB's Buddy Service is also undertaking a trial support service with users of the Door-To-Door Transport scheme in Lisburn and Dunmurry. If you are currently using this scheme and would like more information please contact Angela on 028 9020 0850

### Could you be a volunteer?

If you would like more information on how to volunteer with the Buddy Service in North & West Belfast, Ards Peninsula, Lisburn or Dunmurry then please contact Angela Teggart at VSB for more information on 028 9020 0850 or e-mail [angela@vsb.org.uk](mailto:angela@vsb.org.uk)

## Women Caring Trust

With administration and assessment support from VSB, the Trust has supported children and young people in Northern Ireland for over 30 years through a range of projects, particularly in areas of disadvantage, which promote cross-community activities and reconciliation.

Representatives from Women Caring Trust recently paid a visit to the Micah Centre – a newly built addition to Willowfield Parish



Community Association in East Belfast which facilitates activities for a wide section of the community. They were delighted to hand over a cheque for £5,000 to the Centre. Hilary McClay of the Community Association stated "We are delighted with the support from Women Caring Trust, this donation will make a huge difference and will be used to purchase essential play equipment."

The grant to The Micah Centre is one of the last to be awarded for the present as the Trust is currently undertaking a review of their Policy and Funding Criteria and is not accepting new applications. Further information, when it becomes available, will be posted on their website [www.womencaringtrust.com](http://www.womencaringtrust.com)

## Millennium Volunteer Programme

Millennium Volunteer Programme enables young people to be recognised for their volunteer hours by receiving an Award of Excellence for 200 hours completed. Below is Leanne Donaghy's story who has completed her 200 hours and continues to volunteer.

*My name is Leanne. I am 21 years old and I volunteer in one of Oxfam's Charity Shops.*

*Oxfam is a global movement of people working to overcome the injustice of poverty and suffering. At present I am in charge of the jewellery section. All jewellery must be sorted, priced and hung out in the shop the jewellery sells well because it is very affordable to young people.*

*There are many different areas in the Oxfam shop where people can volunteer. I would sometimes price bric-a-brac and then display it in the shop.*

*In the shop we have a kitchen, bathroom, and stockroom. Upstairs we have a bridal department. We sell wedding dresses, veils, shoes, bridesmaids dresses and mother of the bride. Upstairs we have a large store room keeping surplus stock. Also we have a separate room for storing Christmas stock throughout the year. My mother is also a volunteer and together we priced the Christmas stock. The stock is usually put out the first week in December.*

*I would also use the till and deal with customers. The shop sells unwrapped gifts which mean that customers can buy items to help people in poorer countries. For instance goats, tools or seeds etc. Oxfam helps with poorer countries and have people already based in these areas. The reason that I got involved with Oxfam is that my mother worked there and asked me to join the volunteers.*



## Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety

Health Minister Michael McGimpsey, has welcomed the announcement that Belfast is to become a new Centre of Excellence for research into complex public health issues. A partnership led by Professor Frank Kee of Queen's University has been successful in a national competition to establish five such Centres across the UK.

The Minister said: "I am delighted that a partnership led by Professor Frank Kee has been successful in this highly competitive national competition. This important new Centre will be vital for bringing together world class experts from a diverse range of backgrounds to ensure that essential research is carried out to make a significant

impact on the health of people in Northern Ireland. There have been big improvements in health and life expectancy over the last decades. However Northern Ireland still faces challenges to improve public health and ensure that, as a society, we benefit from longer and healthier lives. The initiative is a good illustration of the willingness of leading experts from a range of disciplines in partnership with policy makers, the Health and Social Care family and wider stakeholders, to work together to tackle complex issues which have the potential to improve the health of our population."

The success of the Queen's-led bid has been as a result of partnerships with the Institute of Public Health for

Ireland, led by Dr Jane Wilde CBE and the engagement of an important group of key stakeholders, including the Office of the Chief Medical Officer, the Community Health and Development Network, the Research and Development Office, the Health Promotion Agency, the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency and the Discovery Centre, W5, who will help disseminate the research to the public.

The Centre will receive up to £5million over five years to support high quality research by experts working in partnership with practitioners, policy makers and wider stakeholders to tackle public health issues.

## Department of Education

Education Minister, Caitríona Ruane, has confirmed that an extra £4.6million has been allocated to youth services in the final Budget.

The Minister said: "I have listened to the concerns expressed in the course of the public consultation on the Draft Budget proposals. I recognise the importance of youth

services to our children and young people and I am pleased that the increased final Budget allocations have enabled me to allocate an additional £4.6million to youth services over the next three years.. This allocation will enable existing youth services to be delivered while also allowing for the continuation of important work with young people in

areas of need across the North of Ireland - areas where young people may not have had opportunities to take part in positive activities that can contribute to their learning and achievement. This money will also deliver services to young people who may be marginalised or are currently unable to access mainstream youth services"

## Volunteer Opportunities - North Down & Ards Volunteer Centre

**Age Concern North Down** require volunteers for a range of different roles including :

- Administration – volunteers required to assist in office
- Art Class Volunteer – assist with art class for older people (Monday)
- Catering volunteer – assist in kitchen and with serving in coffee lounge
- Computer Tutors – help run basic computer classes for older people
- Good Morning Volunteer – to make phone calls each morning on a rota basis to elderly residents living on their own to check their well being

All of these opportunities are based at Age Concern North Down's office on the Hamilton Road, Bangor

**Homestart** – why not become a home visiting volunteer? Visit families in their own homes weekly to offer friendship, support and practical help. Volunteers must have parenting experience and, before they are matched with a family, go through a training programme.

**Assisi** requires volunteers to assist with educational talks in schools, with or without dogs, to talk about the work of the sanctuary and to raise funds and awareness.

Volunteers are also required to conduct educational talks and tours around the animal sanctuary.

**Bangor Drama Club** need volunteers to help out with General backstage duties, help with costume, set design, also front of house eg. programme selling, refreshments etc. Based at Studio Theatre, Central Avenue, Bangor.

**For more information on these and many other volunteer opportunities in the North Down & Ards area, contact our office in Bangor on 028 9127 0486 or email [ruth@vsb.org.uk](mailto:ruth@vsb.org.uk)**