

Summer 2010



# Wilberforce MATTERS



## Living and Learning Zone

A unique facility for people with sight loss and additional disabilities

It was a momentous day for Sandra. She was one of five clients of Wilberforce Trust rehabilitation services who attended the first demonstration workshop in the Skills Room of the new Living and Learning Zone at the trust's headquarters in Huntington, York.

"I've been too frightened to use an oven for six years; now I'll go home and bake like I used to do for my children", Sandra said as she tucked into a freshly baked scone she had mixed and baked herself. She had also spread it with butter and jam, then topped it with cream and a strawberry she had cut herself.

Continued on page 6 ►►



Sandra cautiously tastes the results of her first bake in five years; Keiran, David and Holly get into weighing ingredients, guided by Sue and Phil.

## Little help for people with Learning Disabilities

"It still proves difficult in some areas to gain the support of those responsible for eyecare services within the NHS to work jointly with those responsible for people with learning disabilities, whether they are also within the NHS or within social care settings, each seeing the 'problem' as the other's responsibility", Keith McKee, Chief Executive of the Wilberforce Trust told a seminar audience at the Vision UK 2010 conference in Birmingham in June.

Discussion following the presentation found a consensus that this lack of a joined-up approach severely disadvantaged people with learning disabilities and led to them being unable to realise their full potential, with higher NHS and social care costs as a result.

Although available research presents a confusing picture, ranging from one in three to 90% of people with a learning disability also having visual impairment,

Continued on page 6 ►►

# Wilberforce **MATTERS**

## 3

### **Fundraising**

Volunteers, staff and tenants have a busy time.



## 4

### **Meet a volunteer**

Jane Burnett has been volunteering for the Trust for 11 years.



## 5

### **More volunteering opportunities**

The new Living & Learning Zone opens up more opportunities for volunteers.



Tadcaster tenants need more help too.

#### **The Wilberforce Trust**

Wilberforce House  
49 North Moor Road  
Huntington, York YO32 9QN

telephone: 01904 760037

fax: 01904 786203

[www.wilberforcetrust.org.uk](http://www.wilberforcetrust.org.uk)

email: [enquiry@wilberforcetrust.org.uk](mailto:enquiry@wilberforcetrust.org.uk)

#### **Editor:**

Roger Livesey

[r.livesey@wilberforcetrust.org.uk](mailto:r.livesey@wilberforcetrust.org.uk)

*Roger is keen to receive suggestions for stories for future editions. Get in touch.*

This newsletter was designed and printed by Our Celebration. Supporting recovery from mental ill health.  
[www.ourcelebration.org.uk](http://www.ourcelebration.org.uk)

## **Chief Executive's comment**



Since the previous edition of Wilberforce Matters we have been working hard on the improvement plan, which was drawn up in response to the Care Quality Commission Inspection report published at the beginning of the year.

We have invested significant resources in updating support plans, improving record keeping, reviewing procedures and training staff, and are hopeful that our actions will be sufficient to warrant a more positive review of our services by the Commission.

However the Care Standards Act 2008 will bring in a new regulatory framework from 1st October 2010 bringing with it new standards, requirements and outcome measures for us to meet. Whilst much of our recent work will stand us in good stead for the new expectations, we are inevitably entering uncharted territory, where we will need to be watchful of the potential problems caused by shifting sands.

Combined with the current economic climate and savings to be found by local authorities, it is likely that we will be expected to deliver more for less in the coming years, and face pressure to reduce the costs of services that are not particularly generously funded to begin with.

However it is still important to be positive and hopefully this edition of Wilberforce Matters will demonstrate our commitment to continually develop our services despite these challenges.

Best wishes

*Keith McKee*

## David braves the Manchester weather with volunteers and staff



Over £500 was raised in sponsorship by volunteers, and our tenant David Kendall, pictured with Wilberforce support staff members Debbie Bell (left) and Samantha Beaumont. The BUPA Manchester run in May was another 2010 fundraising event which was not blessed with good weather, so a special thank you to all those who took part.



## In memory of a faithful volunteer

We are very grateful to the Mitre Lodge of York, who provided a boost to the Living and Learning Zone, with a donation of £400 specifically for the Skills Room, in memory of a Trust Volunteer and member of the Lodge, John Benson

The cheque was presented on behalf of the Lodge by Tony Hodgson.

## Dull, damp day doesn't dampen the spirits at St Crux

Tenants, volunteers and trust staff braved a dull day and some rain at the annual fundraising day at St Crux church on 9th June.

The weather meant that stalls went up late but over £500 was raised. Tenant John Thomas, and staff members Sam Jakes and Mark Redhead, seem to be enjoying it despite the weather.



## Collection at York racecourse

Over 20 people including Trustees, Volunteers (including some from St Peter's School), Rotarians, staff and tenants turned out for a collection at York Racecourse on 22nd May.

Many thanks to all who helped to collect more than £1,600 and to ensure that the Trust's name continues to be in front of this important audience.

## volunteering



### Eleven years as a trust volunteer

**A**sked what has kept her volunteering for the Wilberforce Trust for 11 years, Jane Burnett said, “The atmosphere in the houses, the friendliness of the tenants and the staff, and it feels so incredibly rewarding. The tenants make it all worthwhile; they’ve had very tough beginnings and had to surmount so many difficulties but there’s no bitterness, no self-pity”.

Jane is one of around 70 volunteers who assist the Trust in its work in all sorts of ways. She travels the 20 miles from her home in a village outside York to one of the Trust’s houses, once a week to chat with tenant Bev Stockton and help her with needlework.

Jane has even become a bit of an inventor in order to help Bev, who has no vision in one eye and almost none in the other. Jane has made a needle

guide from a small ear insert ‘purloined’ from her GP husband, which Bev says is “tremendous”.

At the moment Bev is making a bag (she says she’s a great collector of bags and chunky jewellery). This bag, as with most of the bags, cushions and purses Bev has made over the years, will go on a stall to be sold to raise funds for the Trust.

Chatting to Bev about all her interests, it’s easy to see why Jane finds it so rewarding. Bev loves to sing and loses no opportunity to sing for you if you ask, but she also enjoys singing in church and at musical evenings in a local church hall.

She’s also a great collector of jokes and ‘funny names’, which she will rattle off one after another between peals of laughter.

# New zone offers exciting volunteering opportunities

**The new Living and Learning Zone at Wilberforce House, to be opened in September (see page 1) will create many more interesting opportunities for volunteers, not all of them taking place within the zone itself.**

Whether your interests are in sport, music, art, walking or IT and whatever your age, there are likely to be opportunities to support sessions both at Wilberforce House and further afield.

It is intended to offer a wide range of recreational and social activities within the zone, 7 days a week, so if sport or IT is not your thing then crafts or music may be - or just a social evening.

Although the majority of volunteers may be assisting in a session run by a facilitator, helping a small group or an individual, some may like to run sessions themselves if they have specialised knowledge either from work or a hobby.

Some of the Trust's existing volunteers already help some of our tenants with various crafts, such as card-making, but there are many more opportunities to help in the zone with people with visual and other disabilities coming from outside of the Trust's own accommodation.

We know that many people who have lost their sight love to cook but need assistance. So if you're a keen cook and would like to pass your skills on to someone who'd really appreciate it (see Sandra's comment on page 1), then we'd love to hear from you.

Other possibilities are art, jewellery making, other handicrafts, music and singing, dancing, keep-fit – the list goes on! If you have any ideas where you can use your own skills we'd be really interested to hear about them...

And there's a need for volunteer drivers to transport those attending sessions.

**To find out more get in contact with our volunteer coordinator Helen Ambrey. She usually works Monday to Wednesday from Wilberforce House.**

**You can email her at [h.ambrey@wilberforcetrust.org.uk](mailto:h.ambrey@wilberforcetrust.org.uk) or phone her on 01904 760037.**

## Want a real challenge?

The three Wilberforce Trust houses in Tadcaster are home to several tenants with learning disabilities, some severe, and often other considerable disabilities too. Many of them enjoy a social chat or taking part in various activities.

An example is David, with severe learning disabilities and needing a wheelchair to be mobile, who nevertheless took part in the BUPA run in Manchester in May (see page 3).

More volunteers are needed in Tadcaster! It's a real challenge but very rewarding. Why not get in touch with volunteer coordinator Helen Ambrey (details at the end of the adjacent story) and find out more?

## New staff

**Four new staff have joined the team at Wilberforce House:**

- **Rachel Lintott** is the new *Rehabilitation Services Manager* and responsible for the new Living & Learning Zone.
- **Philip Simpson** joined our Rehabilitation Services as a *Rehabilitation Officer*
- **Helen Ambrey** has taken on the role of *Volunteer Coordinator*.
- **Roger Livesey** is now *Communications Coordinator* and, among other things, is responsible for the production of this newsletter.

◀ Continued from page 1

## Living and Learning Zone

The new facility, which includes not only the Skills Room with comprehensively equipped kitchen but also an IT suite and a Conference Room, will be officially opened by the Lord Mayor of York on 7th September.

The Trust is now carrying out a series of consultations with users, other agencies and tutors to finalise a programme of vocational, recreational and social activities.

Sessions currently being considered include Braille, IT, Boxercise, Social Singing and Craft, as well as a series of 'skills for living' sessions, like the baking shown in the pictures on the front page. The introduction of a specialised 'employability' course early next year is also being considered.

The 'Zone' or individual rooms within it, and three other smaller meeting rooms in the Trust offices, are available for hire on a one-off or regular basis.

The Skills Room in the Living and Learning Zone has its own entrance and alarm system so it will be available daytimes and evenings until 9pm seven days a week. Other rooms are available until 4.30pm.



◀ Continued from page 1

## Little help for people with Learning Disabilities

It is clear that people with a learning disability are more likely to have a visual impairment and are known to have poorer health compared with the general population. Despite this, people with learning disabilities have poor contact with primary health care services, principally because few health care professionals have specific training in caring for such people.

As an example, the Wilberforce Trust had failed to secure funding for an integrated eyecare support service for people with learning disabilities in York and North Yorkshire because Learning Disability Partnership Boards, Primary Care Trust Learning Disability Services and Primary Care Trust Optometric Services each saw it as the responsibility of one of the others. One of the Learning Disability Partnership Boards even stated that community eyecare services for people with a learning disability were not a priority for the Health Task Group and would therefore not agree to fund the service.

Despite the shortfalls, Keith McKee was able to pay tribute to organisations demonstrating good practice around the UK, including the RNIB with the Bridge to Vision Project, based on the pioneering work by RNIB Scotland's Visual Impairment and Learning Disability Service. He also mentioned SeeAbility's 'eye2eye' campaign, and the specialist workers in the rehabilitation teams of Kent Association for the Blind.

The Bridge to Vision project is jointly funded by the Wilberforce Trust and the RNIB. One of the Wilberforce Trust Rehabilitation Officers and a RNIB Project Assessment Worker are providing Functional Vision Assessment to clients with a learning disability in East and North Yorkshire, supporting them to a sight test and compiling a plain language Vision Report with recommendations for carers.

◀ A recent user forum in the conference room of the Living and Learning Zone. Seating and tables can be arranged to suit the occasion. Projection facilities and a hearing loop are installed.