

York Blind & Partially Sighted Society

Volunteer Newsletter, Autumn 2016

“the happiest people are not those getting more, but those giving more.”(H. Jackson Brown Jr.)

Hallo from Trudi

Since being appointed Volunteer Manger in June 2016, I have been meeting established volunteers and recruiting new volunteers. This is of course in addition to meeting members; managing referrals for our Home Visiting Service. I look forward to meeting more volunteers in the future —please see the events list for some ways in which to do this.

Training Volunteers

In October, 6 volunteers took part in our induction training. The participants all stated that they found the training ‘very helpful’ and that their overall impression of the sessions was that they had gained insight and confidence. All said that they gained most from meeting one of YBPSS’s members who shared her story of her sight loss and how she has benefitted from services at YBPSS, including counselling and the Home Visiting services, both provided by volunteers. An experienced Home Visitor also kindly shared her tips and experiences with the new Home Visitors. Many thanks to the member and volunteer for giving their time and for bringing the service to life.

Request for involvement in future training

Any YBPSS members and/or Home Visitors willing to share their stories at future training, please get in touch with Trudi. Next round is scheduled for February 2017.

Volunteer Skills

My own experience of being a volunteer began when I combined volunteering in museums with study and bringing up my children. Through this, I gained in confidence, work-related skills and a realisation that volunteers bring a wealth of skills and energy to organisations such as YBPSS. I'd be delighted to hear from you what you get out of your volunteering. Why not email or phone to let me know? (Contact details on the back page). If you'd like to explore how you could share or develop your skills, please book on to our Skills Audit event.

Volunteer Skills Audit Focus Group: 15th December, 1:00-3:30pm

Volunteers are a wonderful asset to YBPSS. This session is for you to let us know the skills you already have and what areas you would like support to develop for yourself and to benefit YBPSS. You may already volunteer using the following skills: fundraising, group support, admin, campaigning, training, eye health awareness, supporting others, telephoning, IT.

Whether you volunteer regularly or as a one-off, we'd love you to attend this session. Lunch will be provided. Please book your place with Trudi.

Volunteer events since the Summer

There are many ways YBPSS volunteers give their time. Here are two recent examples:

Rowntree's Park Visual Impairment awareness event

This event in September was very well supported by volunteers, despite the rain. Volunteers cheerfully ferried tables and other equipment to the park; set up gazebos; hosted games and activities to engage with visitors and were ready with information

about YBPSS services and volunteering. Many thanks to all involved.

St Crux Fundraising Sale

Many thanks to all who contributed to the success of this event, whether by setting up and tidying up the stalls; or providing knitting, cakes, bric-a-brac and books to sell; or by running a stall or serving in the café. The event involved a lot of hard work particularly from YBPSS staff Barbara and Deb and of course the many volunteers who contributed so enthusiastically. This excellent case of team work resulted in almost £700 being raised for YBPSS.

Can you help?

Christmas Card Writing

As you may know, each year we offer help to clients by writing their Christmas cards with them. If interested in this, please let Trudi know which days/times you would be available to offer this support. Trudi will do her best to match offers of help with a client living nearby. Travel expenses can be claimed in the usual way.

Volunteer Scribes Needed, 7th December, 11am-1pm

to support participants at a creative writing taster session at YBPSS. Please contact a YBPSS staff member if interested in being a scribe.

Spotlight on a Home Visitor Volunteer, Jax.

Jax started volunteering for YBPSS in September this year and has met with her client 6 times since then. Each week Jax and her client shop and always end up in McDonald's, which her client loves. Jax reassured her client that it is her day and it is centred around her client's wishes. They talk, laugh and have a wander

around. Jax had never volunteered before. Jax's own experience of depression and feeling isolated fed her desire to meet and help other people who may be experiencing something similar. She explained that letting the client know a little of her own experiences, helped build trust and understanding between them both.

Before meeting her client for the first time, Jax admits she felt, 'very, very nervous'. However, Jax recognises that her client now seems more confident and assertive and that she laughs and smiles more. Jax noticed that since her volunteering, she herself has felt more confident around people and is finding the role very rewarding:

'I truly love meeting up with [my client]. She is an inspiration to me...I just want to learn more and try to help my client reach some of her goals.'

Home Visitor Quarterly Reports

This is a gentle reminder to all practising Home Visitors to complete and return your Quarterly Reports (1st September to 30th November 2016).

It is an essential part of your role and enables YBPSS to keep abreast of your activities, ensure client and volunteer safety and report to funders. You will note that the questions on the form are slightly different from the last quarter. I'm aiming to gather feedback on outcomes for both clients and volunteers, which will inform our future way of working.

Happy Festive Season

To all our wonderful volunteers, thank you for your contribution in 2016. We wish you a very happy and healthy festive period and look forward to welcoming you to one or all of the meetings listed on the back page.

We are trialling a new Peer Support meeting (see dates over page). We acknowledge that some of the volunteering roles may have an emotional impact on volunteers and these sessions may offer ways to express this and seek support. Even if you don't feel you are currently experiencing emotional stresses in your role, you may wish to share with fellow volunteers what works for you and how you manage potential stresses and you may wish to offer emotional support to your fellow volunteers.

**Dates for your diary
(all meetings held at Rougier House)**

Please contact Trudi to enquire or confirm attendance at all events.

Volunteer Christmas Get-together, 1st December, 4:00-6:00pm

No matter how you give your time for YBPSS, you're very welcome to join us at YBPSS for drinks and mince pies. It's a festive chance to catch up with or meet staff, trustees, other volunteers and an opportunity for us to thank you for your contribution and to hear your views and ideas.

Volunteer Skills Audit Focus Group, 15th December, 1:00-3:30pm

We wish to capture the range of skills and experience our volunteers have already and which areas you would like support to develop. (See front page.) Whether you're a regular or a one-off volunteer, we'd love you to attend this session. Lunch provided.

Volunteer Peer Support Sessions

Tuesday 10th January, either 2:00-3:30pm or 5:00-6:30pm

A confidential space to share with other volunteers and Trudi challenges and triumphs arising from your volunteer roles.

Mental Health Awareness Training (with York Mind)

Tuesday 24th January, 5:30-7:30pm

One in 5 people aged over 75 have sight loss. One-third of older people with sight loss also experience depression. How can we understand mental ill health and how to support people who experience it?

Application Deadlines for Home Visitors, Friday 3rd February 2017.

Contact Trudi for an application pack.

Volunteer Induction Training

Thursdays in February: 9th, 16th and 23rd, 5:00-8:30pm

For prospective volunteers or as a refresher for long-standing volunteers. Booking essential.

Volunteer Scribes Needed, 7th December, 11am-1:00pm

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