

York Blind & Partially Sighted Society

Volunteer Newsletter, Summer 2017

Hello from Catherine, our new Volunteer Manager

Since I started at the beginning of March I have met some fantastic people. I have been working closely with Deb who has kept the volunteering and home visiting service going between Trudi leaving and me starting. As well as recruiting and training volunteers I am responsible for managing the Home Visiting service and I've already met a few clients and hope to get round to meet more. I've got 18 new clients waiting for a volunteer so the next few months are shaping up to be very busy. We have already trained a new group of Home Visitors and will be running another course later in the year. I have also been working with Caroline, who manages activities volunteers and Carolyn who manages fundraising volunteers to ensure all volunteers are recruited, managed and receive the training and support to ensure they enjoy their time at YBPSS. We are always open to hearing from volunteers on how we are doing so please do get in touch.

What have we been up to?

Exercise Class

Our Exercise class is going strong. We have recently recruited a new instructor Kevin who is the owner of Xercise gym in Haxby. He runs the class with a colleague and they have both been very impressed with the group. We also have our new volunteer Emma helping out in the class and socialising over a cupper with the group members after their workout.

General Fundraising

The Fundraising side of YBPSS has been quite busy since I started in January. Volunteers have been very good at coming forward to man stalls and run an event. This makes my life easier and it is great to work alongside such dedicated people. We have had 2 Garden Centre Collections which resulted in over £600 being collected, and have some Railway and Street collections coming up which I am very optimistic that we will do well. These types of events are important to raise money but also to raise the profile of YBPSS and talk to people about the great work we do.

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 from the many volunteers who contributed so enthusiastically. This excellent case of team work resulted in almost £800 being raised for YBPSS.

Don't forget the old £1 coin goes out of circulation in October 2017. Old £1 coins should be banked before 15th October 2017.

Welcome to our new volunteers

I would like to welcome Nicola, Dave, Jane, Helen, Alex, Emma and Farhan who took part in our induction training in May which included an introduction to the organisation, sight loss and eye conditions and sighted guiding. Helen, Emma and Farhan are helping out with our activities whilst Nicola, Dave, Jane and Alex are going to be part of our home visiting service and are waiting to be matched with a client. Many thanks to the client

We are also still looking for a volunteer to help coordinate our crafting workshops. If you have a crafting background and could help with this please contact Caroline or Catherine. Our next sessions start on the 30th May and will run every two weeks for 5 sessions.

Goodbye to our Home Visitor Rosemary.

The Home Visiting service is a key service of YBPSS and as an organisation we recognise the importance and hard work that our Home Visitors undertake. Sometimes relationships come to an end and Rosemary has decided to retire. Here are a few words from Rosemary:

‘When I first started volunteering for YBPSS (six years ago) I had a clear idea of what constituted a nice day out. It featured grass and trees and peaceful surroundings, so this is the sort of thing I suggested when Mary (not her real name) had no definite ideas about what she would like to do. It was a revelation when one day she said tersely “I like to hear different voices, I get plenty of peace and quiet at home!”

After that we started to make regular trips into town, browsing in Parliament Street where we often found buskers and other special attractions; sometimes stopping for a coffee in the market if it was warm enough. I learned to regard Mary’s shopping list as a challenge, rather than a chore; it gave us plenty of exercise tracking down the right sort of wool, or the precise type of vitamin pills. In the special markets there were lots of craftspeople who were pleased when Mary wanted to feel their wares. I was constantly challenged to be aware of the sounds and smells, while not neglecting to watch out for the A-boards and the changes in the pavement which could cause a problem to a blind person. I hope that my time as a volunteer has taught me some useful skills’ **Rosemary Thornton**

Rosemary's client, Mary has really valued Rosemary's time and said a few words about the impact of having a home visitor 'It's lovely, I look forward to her visits. We go into town and have a sandwich at dinner time. It's made a big difference and it puts a new spin on life. It's something to look forward to'. **Mary.**

On behalf of Mary and YBPSS I would like to thank Rosemary for all her hard work over the years and wish her all the best for the future.

Home Visitor Quarterly Reports

This is a gentle reminder to all practising Home Visitors to complete and return your Quarterly Reports. There are still some outstanding reports from 1st December 2016 to 28th February 2017 which I need back as soon as possible.

I realise that not everyone likes completing forms and it can sometimes feel onerous, however it is an essential part of your role and we need to provide copies in order to maintain the Approved Provider Standard. They are also invaluable when putting in bids to secure funding to continue the home visiting service. The forms can be returned to me either via email or by post. If you are having trouble completing the forms please ring me and we can complete the form verbally.

Home Visitor Safety

Just a quick reminder that for your own safety when carrying out a home visit please make sure you inform someone of where you are going and anticipated return time. In case of emergency it is wise to have your clients emergency contact details and YBPSS phone number with you whenever you visit. If there are any incidents during your visits or if you have any concerns about your safety please contact me to discuss the situation.

Dates for your diary

Pizza and Poetry Evening

Thursday 1st June, 6.30pm -9pm, Rougier House

Meet award winning local poet Anneliese Emmans Dean and join in with other volunteers to come up with our own poem about volunteering at YBPSS. Anneliese brings poetry to life in a fun and lively way. Pizzas and refreshments will be provided.

Tour and Talk at St Nicks

Tuesday 6th June 6pm to 7.30pm, St Nicks Environment Centre, Rawdon Avenue, York, YO10 3ST

St Nicks is a nature reserve in Tang Hall that used to be York's landfill site. It is now a 24 acre nature reserve and we will be having a tour around the nature reserve followed by a talk and refreshments in the Environment Centre located on the nature reserve.

Keeping in touch

The cheapest and quickest way for us to keep in touch is via email. If you haven't let us know your email address and would be happy to receive occasional emails please get in touch.

If you have any questions about volunteering or the Home Visiting service please contact me on:

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