

Sunderland Carers' Centre

Newsletter

May 2014

Young Carers' Conference

Sunderland's first ever conference organised and presented by young carers and young adult carers took place on Friday 21st March and it gave the city's professionals a real insight into the world of young carers.

The young carers gave presentations about their roles and how this impacts on their lives to an audience which included staff from GP practices, educational psychologists, social workers and youth workers. The Young Carers Drama Group also performed a play to show how being a young carer affects them at school.

Sharon Hodgson MP for Washington and Sunderland West spoke about the amendments to the Children and Families Bill and the audience shared with her their views on how best to identify and recognise young carers.

The aim of the conference was to ensure that all relevant agencies in Sunderland work effectively and in partnership to support young carers to achieve fulfilling lives as children and young people and to prevent them from undertaking inappropriate practical care.

Young adult carer, Becky Nelmes said "We wanted to raise awareness of the importance of recognising young carers and to help

professionals better support them."

Currently 600 young carers are in contact with and supported by Sunderland Carers' Centre. The Centre offers information, advice, support, and regular groups and activities to young carers (aged 5 – 13) and young adult carers (aged 14 – 25).

Congratulations and thank you to all the young carers and young adult carers involved – all your hard work will help benefit young carers in Sunderland in the future.



Carers Week Trip

To celebrate Carers Week (9 – 15 June) the Carers' Centre is organising a coach trip for carers to York on **Wednesday 11th June**. This is a great chance for you to have a day to yourself and meet other carers. York has something to offer everyone including museums, York Minster, shops, cafes and "Betty's" famous Tea Rooms.

The coach will depart from Toward Road bus stop next to Mowbray Park at 9.30am prompt and plans to arrive back about 5.30pm. The cost is £4 per carer (non-refundable). Please call into the Carers' Centre or phone 549 3768 from **9am Tuesday 6th May** to book. Places are limited. Your place will be confirmed on payment of your £4. Payment must be in cash (no cheques). Please do not send cash in the post. Payment must be received by Tuesday 27th May. Carers must book individually (no block bookings) and must be over the age of 18.

Caring for Carers Awards

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There is still time to say thank you to workers who have supported you in your caring role by nominating them for the Caring for Carers Awards 2014. For example, a nurse, doctor, care worker, or a voluntary or community worker (not workers from Sunderland Carers' Centre). All workers nominated will receive a certificate. The awards and certificates will be presented during Carers Week.

Please return nomination forms (enclosed with the last newsletter) to the Carers' Centre by **Tuesday 6th May**. For a new form phone Lisa Hall on 549 3768 or visit our website www.sunderlandcarers.co.uk/awards

The Carers' Centre would like to thank Aztec Colour Print for kindly sponsoring the Awards.

Harry's Story

Four years ago I retired early to become a full time carer for my wife Cathy who suffers from neuropathy. As we all know looking after someone for 24 hours a day 365 days per year is taxing and I was looking for a sport that was close to home and where you could play for an hour or two maximum.

I saw a letter in the Sunderland Echo from North Biddick Bowling Club in Penshaw Park which is situated on the old road from Washington to Penshaw. I went along to see what it was like and was given a warm welcome. Initially my idea was to go to bowls when Cathy was cared for by a relative however when I explained my situation to other members I was encouraged to take Cathy with me when I wanted to and they were fully geared up with ramps into the clubhouse and disabled toilet facilities. There is a thriving social aspect to the club and there is always someone there to have a chat and a cup of tea with Cathy while I play. A quiet sun trap in the summer there is nothing better than being at the green. I can honestly say it has been a lifeline to both of us.

I discussed the carers' organisation with the committee and we all agreed we would like to invite carers and the people they care for to a taster event to see if they could gain the same benefits from the club as I have. The location of the green makes it well within reach of people in Washington, Penshaw, Shiney Row etc.

We would like to invite anyone interested to come along between 12 noon and 2pm on **Tuesday 13th May**. We will provide light refreshments and we will have bowls and shoes available for people to use.

Come along and see what we have to offer. To ensure we have enough equipment and refreshments available it would be useful if you could email or telephone me to say you are coming. Email harry.chalmers@9gc.co.uk or phone 07938955778.

Harry Chalmers (Carer)

Gardening Group

For the past year a group of carers have been maintaining and developing the Carers' Centre garden area and would like to welcome new volunteers to join them. No gardening experience is required. The group are currently working to improve one particular area of the garden so carers have their own space to relax. Their plans also include re-establishing a sensory garden, creating a beautiful space for wildlife to flourish.

The group meets on the last Wednesday of each month (where possible), 12 noon – 1.30pm, to discuss the work to be done in the garden. The next meeting is on **Wednesday 28th May**. They carry out the work whenever they get an hour or two of spare time or plan when they can work together as a group. If you are interested in joining them please contact Kevin on 549 3768 or email kevin@sunderlandcarers.co.uk

Dementia Carers

Do you look after someone with dementia? Do you want to know more about the illness and learn new coping strategies? For the first time four new sessions will be added to our existing Caring with Confidence programme for carers of people living with dementia. These sessions will start on **Thursday 26th June** and then for the next three Thursdays on 3rd, 10th and 17th July. All the sessions will take place at 'The Place', Athenaeum Street, Sunderland, SR1 1QX from 11am to 2pm with lunch provided.

To sign up for these sessions please contact the Carers' Centre on 549 3768 or e-mail kevin@sunderlandcarers.co.uk. If you would like to take part but would find it difficult to attend, because of transport problems or you need to arrange alternative care, please let us know and we will see how we can help. You do not need to have taken part in other Caring with Confidence sessions to take part in these new ones.

Award Winner

Congratulations to our Information Officer, Lisa Hall, who has won the Go ON North East 'I made a Difference' Award for 'Helping a charity get connected'. Lisa said "A big thank you to everyone who voted and to Chris Foreman from Sunderland City Council for nominating me. I hope this will encourage more carers to go online and visit our website and social media sites."

Pictured: Lisa (right) with Baroness Martha Lane Fox, one of the Award judges.



Time Well Earned

Sunderland Carers' Centre is delighted to announce that the 'Time Well Earned' Photography Exhibition featuring images by Daniel Dale of carers in Sunderland will be shown in the House of Commons from 23 – 27 June 2014. The exhibition highlights the importance of carers taking a break from their caring roles and gives a fascinating insight to some of the hobbies carers enjoy when they get a much needed break. It has previously been shown at venues across the city. Thank you to Sharon Hodgson MP and her office for helping us organise this exhibition.

Carers Have Talent!

On Friday 13th June Sunderland Carers' Centre will host the Carers Have Talent Show at Washington Arts Centre, 6pm-8pm, followed by an after-show party and buffet (until 11pm). Carers, young and old, will be performing their talents on stage and there will be a display of carers' art and craft work. Limited tickets are available to carers. Please ring the Carers Centre on 549 3768.

A Life Worth Living

Carers and mental health service users came together at Washington Mind on Monday 10th March to attend 'A Life Worth Living' Conference.

The conference began with 'Happy Monday', the launch of an annual event by Mind. This focused with starting the week by sharing an activity with friends and family that makes you happy! The conference looked at how carers and mental health service users can help their own wellbeing. It also had an emphasis on suicide prevention and feelings of despair, as we all need 'A Life Worth Living'.

Sunderland Carers' Centre gave a presentation about the importance of carers looking after themselves and it included two short films produced by the Carers' Centre from shared thoughts and experiences of carers. The first film looks at the emotional effects on carers who care for someone who experience suicidal thoughts or attempts and the benefits of finding support. In the second film carers share their thoughts about the benefit they get from having the support of other carers at the Mental Health Carers Group – their 'Happy Tuesday'. Both films can be viewed on the Professionals page of our website.

Sunderland Carers' Centre

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Fire Station Campaign

Sunderland Carers' Centre is formally supporting the Sunderland Echo Campaign to save Sunderland Central Fire Station. Our firefighters perform a key rescue service in case of accidents at work, at play and on the roads, as well as fighting fires. The station in Railway Row is situated right on the edge of our city centre, close to amenities like the main shopping centre, the Empire Theatre, restaurants and nightspots, and also with ready access to the Port, industrial estates and our main arterial roads. There has been a stay of execution until 2017 but firefighters are looking for support for the long-term future security of the station. Please show your support too by signing the petition on the Sunderland Echo website www.sunderlandecho.com or we have paper copies available to sign at the Carers' Centre.

Commission Visit

On Thursday 20th February carers from Sunderland met with members of the Standing Commission on Carers at the Carers' Centre. The Commission is a body that advises national government on carers' issues. Thank you to the Commission for their visit and to the carers for sharing their experiences.

Thank you...



Thank you to Charleton Fencing for their help in re-erecting the fencing in the young carers' garden. The fencing had been damaged as a result of vandalism a few months ago. The Carers' Centre has now installed CCTV to monitor the grounds including all areas of the garden.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information in this newsletter is correct. Sunderland Carers' Centre can accept no liability for errors and omissions and can not recommend products or services. Views and opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of Sunderland Carers' Centre.