

# Sunderland Carers' Centre

# Newsletter

September 2013

## Carers' Centre boosted by donations from the Mayor and Gentoo

**O**n Tuesday 9th July, after a busy year of fundraising for his nominated charities, former Mayor, Councillor Iain Kay and Mayoress, Councillor Barbara McClennan, came along to Sunderland Carers' Centre and presented us with a very generous donation of £7,000.

Sunderland Carers' Centre was one of Councillor Kay's Mayoral Charities last year, along with St. Benedict's Hospice. The money was raised via a range of fundraising activities including charity nights, concerts and culminating in a grand Charity Ball.

Councillor Kay said "It was really exciting to be Mayor of the city in Jubilee and Olympic year. Choosing the Carers' Centre as one of my charities was a real no-brainer as carers do an amazing job for family, friends and the wider community. The money is going to a very good cause."

Graham Burt, Chief Executive Officer of Sunderland Carers' Centre said "It was fantastic that Councillor Kay chose Sunderland Carers' Centre to be one of his nominated charities. We will ensure that the money will be spent to benefit all carers in Sunderland. The Carers' Centre has been in its Thompson Park premises for a year and is going from strength to strength. It is wonderful that carers and the work of the Carers' Centre have received this recognition."

Councillors Kay and McClennan are pictured with members of the Board and staff from Sunderland Carers' Centre after being presented with flowers and an etching of Sunderland

Harbour to thank them for all the support they have given to carers and the Carers' Centre.

The Carers' Centre is also delighted to receive £4,930 to further develop our garden thanks to the Gentoo Southwick Customer Panel. It is a tremendous boost for our garden volunteers who have already done some amazing work since we moved to Thompson Park last year. As well as maintaining the young carers' area created as part of the BBC1 Flowerpot Gang programme, they have made a great start transforming derelict areas of the garden for use by adult carers. In particular, the funds will help the group turn the old sensory garden in to something special that they and other carers can enjoy well into the future.



## **Sunderland Carers' Centre Annual General Meeting**

You are invited to the above meeting to be held on

**Friday 11th October 2013**

at

**The Stadium of Light (Banqueting Suite)**

Registration from 11.30am

Buffet lunch at 12 noon

Business starts at 12.45pm

**RSVP: (0191) 549 3768 by  
Friday 4th October 2013**

## **Autumn Training Get involved!**

We are delighted to offer the following sessions to carers in the autumn months... trusted favourites like 'Caring with Confidence' and a new taster session called 'Grow and Succeed'.

### **'Caring with Confidence' in Washington**

The next round of Caring with Confidence sessions will take place at the Washington Primary Care Centre next to the Galleries. If you haven't already taken part in this programme make sure you book your place this time! The 'Finding Your Way' introduction session is on **Tuesday 1st October**, 11am – 2pm, in the Community Room at the Washington Primary Care Centre, Parkway, Washington NE38 7QS. From here you can decide which of the other sessions to take part in.

Hundreds of carers have taken part in the programme since 2008 and carer feedback about the sessions is better than ever! A carer who completed the last round of sessions in Sunderland said "I really appreciated the time to stop and think. Thank you so much for showing me how to reach the impossible, for the information, advice... and FUN!"

### **'Grow and Succeed' in Sunderland**

We are able to offer a 'Grow and Succeed' taster session in partnership with a leading personal development organisation on **Friday 20th September**, 11.30am – 1.30pm, at 'The Place', Athenaeum Street, Sunderland SR1 1QX.

The 'Grow and Succeed' programme offers adult carers the opportunity to spend some time

on themselves, working out how they can best look after themselves and what they'd like life to really be like. This is a personal development programme, meaning it's all about YOU. It's the kind of programme that many people pay thousands of pounds to do but it's available to adult carers for free.

What will you get out of the programme?

- More self-confidence and self-esteem – see what's getting in the way for you in your day-to-day life and look at how to address these challenges powerfully.
- Improve the quality of your relationships with family and friends.
- The opportunity to have things be different – if there are things in your life that you would like to be different, this training will support you to make that happen.

Following the taster session there will be weekly sessions for 12 weeks, starting late September.

### **Want to sign up or find out more?**

All sessions are free to carers with lunch provided. To book or for more information please contact the Carers' Centre on 549 3768 or e-mail [kevin@sunderlandcarers.co.uk](mailto:kevin@sunderlandcarers.co.uk)

## **Sunderland Big Walk**

Staff members are taking part in the Sunderland Big Walk on Sunday 22nd September to raise funds for the Carers' Centre. We are walking the shorter 6.5 mile route from the National Glass Centre to Washington Wetlands Centre. We would really like carers to join us. If you are interested please contact Wendy at the Carers' Centre on 549 3768.

The walk is organised by Sunderland City Council. The entry fee is £5 per adult, £3 per child (12 to 16 years), free for under 12s. All walkers receive a medal and goody bag and a shuttle bus will take you back to the Glass Centre at the end. The entry form and details of where to pay your entry fee is on our website: [www.sunderlandcarers.co.uk/SunderlandBigWalk](http://www.sunderlandcarers.co.uk/SunderlandBigWalk). The closing date is Friday 13th September.

If you would like to sponsor our walkers please contact the Carers' Centre on 549 3768.

## Save the date to 'feel good'

Learn more about how to have and maintain good mental health at our **'Feel Good' Event** on **Tuesday 8th October**.

As part of a week of events in Sunderland to celebrate World Mental Health Day, our day will focus on carers and their health and happiness. There will be a variety of activities including: learning hand massage techniques, potting herbs, Chi Kung (gentle meditative exercise), craft activity, good mood food information and pamper sessions. Light refreshments available.

No need to book but spaces will be limited for some activities. Drop in at the Carers' Centre anytime between 10am and 2pm or stay for the whole event. Save the date to feel good – you're worth it!

## Sunderland Live Charity Partnership

The Carers' Centre has been chosen as one of Sunderland Live's Charity Partners for 2013/14. Sunderland Live, the company responsible for organising some of the city's biggest events such as Sunderland Festival and Sunderland International Airshow, has joined forces with a number of charities to create a unique partnership that will provide an exclusive range of fundraising opportunities. The fundraising activities were launched at the Airshow in July – thank you to those carers who joined staff to help with the charity bucket collection over the weekend.

## New Beginnings Group

Are you a former carer?

The New Beginnings Group has been set up by a carer to continue support for carers after their caring role has ended for whatever reason. The Group has lots of activities, including meeting for coffee/lunch, days away, evenings out, weekends away and holidays.

The Group aims to provide support, new experiences and a new network of friends for former carers. For more information contact Dorothy Dobinson on 548 6064.

## Carers Breaks and Opportunities Scheme

The Carers Breaks and Opportunities Scheme (CBOS) offers carers the chance to take a break from their caring responsibilities or take part in opportunities or activities of their choice that will help to maintain or improve their quality of life. It awards grants of up to £500 to carers who meet the criteria.

Not all carers are able to, or want to, apply for funding towards the cost of a break but are unsure what else they could apply for funding towards. In this and future editions of the newsletter we will give real examples of different ways that carers have used their grants.

Mr Armstrong has cared for his wife for over 2 years. Mrs Armstrong suffers with arthritis, very poor mobility, and is unable to stand for long periods of time as her legs will give way without warning. Mrs Armstrong uses walking sticks around the home and a wheelchair outside. Mrs Armstrong has recently been diagnosed with manic depression. She rarely leaves the house and becomes very nervous around strangers and in crowds. This has impacted greatly on their social life. Mr Armstrong applied to CBOS for a Practical Pro Workshop to do metal work. He made part of his garage which is in the garden into a workshop. This means they are not 'on top of each other' 24/7 but he knows his wife is close by if he is needed. When Mrs Armstrong is feeling good she helps her husband by choosing the colours for him to paint the metal work, both of them enjoy seeing the end result. Mr Armstrong said "I feel a lot happier, being able to work with metal which I enjoy and I feel my stress levels have improved".

Other examples of successful grants include driving lessons, therapies, mountain bikes, laptops/iPads, gym membership and football season tickets.

For more information or to apply to CBOS please contact the Carers' Centre on 549 3768 or visit our website. We have workers that can advise you and help you apply.

## Feeling the financial strain?

You may remember in our March newsletter we asked you to let us know if welfare reform and cuts to services were having an impact on you as a carer. As some of the changes to welfare reform are starting to take effect now we thought it would be useful to remind you of the information we are looking to collect:

- 1) Have the changes to services and benefits had an impact on your household income and to you personally as a carer?
- 2) If you live in social housing is your home now classed as 'under occupied (i.e. you have a bedroom classed as 'spare')? How will this affect you financially if you stay in your property? If you had to move house would this impact on your caring role?
- 3) Do you feel your caring role has increased as a result of changes to services and benefits?

We have started to collate the information we have received so far but we need to hear from more of you. All the information will be recorded anonymously but will give some real-life insight of how the changes are directly impacting carers day in, day out. To tell us your experiences please contact the Carers' Centre on 549 3768 or e-mail [info@sunderlandcarers.co.uk](mailto:info@sunderlandcarers.co.uk)

### **If you need more advice or think decisions made are wrong...**

If you are experiencing financial hardship and want to talk these through with your local elected members why not contact your local councillor or MP? If you need help to contact your local councillor call us at the Carers' Centre. The MP's can be contacted on the following numbers:

Julie Elliott, MP for Sunderland Central – (0191) 565 5327

Sharon Hodgson, MP for Washington and Sunderland West – (0191) 417 2000

Bridget Phillipson, MP for Houghton and Sunderland South – (0191) 385 7994

The Carers' Centre is open  
Monday to Friday 9am-5pm.

**Tel: 0191 549 3768**

(Answerphone after 5pm)

Sunderland Carers' Centre, Thompson Park,  
Thompson Road, Sunderland SR5 1SF.

Email: [info@sunderlandcarers.co.uk](mailto:info@sunderlandcarers.co.uk)

Website/Facebook/Twitter:

[www.sunderlandcarers.co.uk](http://www.sunderlandcarers.co.uk)

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## Male Carers Group

It was Bill Wright and Alan Linsley who told me about the Male Carers Group and I'm so glad that they did. That was back in 2009 when I was caring fairly intensively for my mum. Attending the Male Carers Group meant a complete change of scene for me one afternoon a month and I soon started to feel at home.

Led by Gina Smith and Dave Willcock, we meet on the first Thursday afternoon of each month. Mind, if you come looking for us at the Carers' Centre we probably won't be in! We like to get out and about and here is a sample of what we've been getting up to in the past few months: a visit to Bede's World, ten-pin bowling at Washington, a riverside walk from Cox Green to Fatfield, outdoor bowling at Thompson Park, a visit to St Mary's Island, a walk from Roker to Souter Point Lighthouse, a visit to St Peters Church, a visit to the races at York and a circular walk in Seaham Harbour.

Just in case you think we never touch base, well we do and here are some of the talks we've enjoyed at the Carers' Centre on a Thursday afternoon: old Sunderland (a slideshow by Ron Lawson), mini-MOTs (Gina was the only one to pass with flying colours!), healthy eating, growing vegetables, Sunderland in the fifties (a slideshow by Phil Curtis) and eating on a budget.

As you can see from the above talks, food is never very far from our thoughts and it seems to work well when we combine a visit with a meal – this we've been able to do at St Peters Church (when we had lunch at Bede's Bakehouse) and on the Seaham Harbour circular walk (when we had an extended lunch stop at the Hat and Feathers!).

In amongst all this walking, talking and activity individual problems can come to light as we care for our partners, wives and parents. Just as an example one of the members revealed that he had a parking problem outside his home and one of the Carers' Centre staff was able to take this up on his behalf.

Our next four meetings are a return visit to the bowling green at Thomson Park on September 5th (guess who won last time – Gina!), a visit to the restored Seaham Harbour lifeboat at Seaham Marina (following lunch at the Hat and Feathers) on October 3rd, a talk on oral health at the Carers' Centre on November 7th and our Christmas meal (venue to be confirmed) on December 5th.

If you'd like to find out more about this friendly group, please have a word with Gina or Dave at the Carers' Centre.

**Ashley Sutherland**

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