

Volunteer becomes new BME Befriending staff member

On 1 April 2006 Age Concern Westminster launched its latest project to help combat isolation and depression in older people. The BME befriending project is a result of a funding application to Age Concern England.



We identified the need within our community for befriending for BME elders. While our current befriending scheme is very effective it has not had a large response from BME elders.

Left: Rita Lilala

We also identified that we have a very diverse volunteer base in terms of ethnic background and age.

The project will be run by a part time staff member Rita Lilala who has been working with Age Concern Westminster as a volunteer for the past year and a half. Rita beat a wide range of applications for this post displaying her dedication, understand and passion for the befriending role.

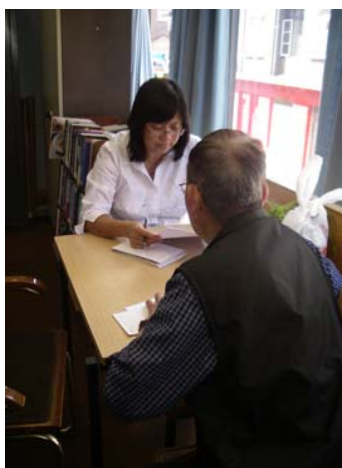
In the coming months Rita aims to attract BME elders to take up the service and also get a new group befriending volunteers from BME backgrounds.

Everyone at Age Concern Westminster would like to congratulate Rita on her new position.

ACW obtains £40K for direct payments pilot

In May, we will be starting a one year pilot project working with Westminster City Council to increase the take up of direct payments among older people.

Our work will focus on those people with smaller social services care packages and help them access services for shopping, cleaning and escorting with this money.



The idea behind direct payments is give people choice over who provides services for them and to give them greater control over how their money is spent. At Age Concern Westminster, we will help people identify if direct payments are suitable for them and support them with the set up.

We have obtained £40k to deliver this pilot project and we will be recruiting to the post shortly. The person will be working closely with the existing Information and Advice team and Ann Mather will manage the project.

Our priorities for older people

Age Concern Westminster, together with our voluntary sector partners has launched a manifesto containing our priorities for older people. This will be used as a campaigning tool with local politicians in the lead up to the May 2006 local elections. There are ten priorities that have been identified, which are:-

- Fight Age Discrimination
- Empower Older People
- Safeguard Local Services
- Improve Health and Social Care for Older People
- Recognise Westminster's Diverse Older People
- Make Physical Access Easier for Older People and Disabled People
- Make Older People Feel Safe and Included, at Home and in Public
- Decent Housing for All Older People in Westminster
- Full Access to Learning for Older People
- Full, Affordable Access to Cultural and Leisure Activities for Older People



Chief Executive, Martin Davies, commented "To have maximum effect, we now need lots of older people to sign up to this manifesto and question candidates on these priorities"

Sign up sheets are available at all Age Concern Westminster locations for you to sign up and you are encouraged to come along to the event on 19th April (see events section) to quiz local politicians.

Older learners lose out on education

Cuts to adult education funding, in particular non-accredited classes have been taking place recently. The Government has diverted funding from 'leisure style' classes to those for 16-19 year olds or which lead to employment.

There is deep dissatisfaction with this decision as it is seen that many Westminster older people will lose the opportunity to undertake classes and enjoy hobbies in later life.

Full access to learning for older people is one of the priorities in the 'Older Peoples Manifesto'. See above article and events section for the chance to question the politicians.

A letter writing campaign to local MP's is being organised and if you would like some further information please contact Trisha Parrott by leaving a message at the Leonora Club 020 7286 0386.

Support Age Concern Westminster
by joining a team for the

5-A-SIDE

Annual ACW World Cup

Entry is £10 per person

(Teams of 7 permitted)

Sunday 21st May 2006

If you are interested in participating
please call Melanie

on 020 7724 9347

Focus onEdgware Road Charity Shop

Our face to the local community is our store on Edgware Road.

Located next to Marks and Spencer and around the corner from the Tube station that was affected by the 7/7 bombing, the store is run by Maggie Richardson and her dedicated team of volunteers. The store takes over £100,000 per year, raising much needed funds for the charity.



Above: Maggie Richardson and volunteer John Coward

Donations pour in every day filling the store with clothes, shoes, bric-a-brac and more books than they know what to do with!

The store is actively involved in our Ebay selling project working with Jonathan Webb to find, price and describe a wide range of items each week. Our Ebay selling has been a great success in recent months with some fantastic items coming through the shop.

The shop is a lively place with around 15 volunteers working Monday through to Saturday. The volunteers come from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences and work to sort, price and display items for sale as well as providing up front customer service.

The store currently needs more volunteers if you are able to help out at the store please contact Alex Dalton on 020 77246930.

Charles Port's Christmas and New Year Diary

In the heart of Theatreland, shops and eateries, Covent Garden members had a great time in December and January. We kicked off with two Xmas Lunches at the Club on the 14th and 15th December. 45 members sat down to lunch each day. Help was had from Charing Cross Police, Cadwallader, and Pearsons and it was great to see Councillor Francis Blois who chatted to all the members and posed, very good-naturedly, for photos.

On Monday 19th December we hosted a party for the local Macklin Street nursery. 20 preschoolers came armed with handmade cards and after some carol singing and impromptu dancing they sat down, quickly demolished the sandwiches, crisps, cakes, mince pies and squash. The next day we were entertained by the Abbey Singers with a specially prepared Christmas programme, complete with a buffet and wine.

For those members who were to be on their own over Christmas, "King Richard" of Zorastros restaurant fame provided a free lunch at his restaurant, Papageno, in Covent Garden.

Betty Toomey's' 96 year young birthday provided an early New Year celebration. We continued our celebrations with a trip to the Coliseum on the 13th January, to see Sleeping Beauty and then had tea at the St. Martins Hotel.

Ah well, party time is now over and we are getting back to normal, not that it is ever quiet. We have restarted the IT classes, Picture Framing, Choir, ENB Exercise classes and all the other activities that we do. My thanks to everyone who helped out with donations of money, time or gifts in kind. Thanks also to the members for supporting all the functions.



Above: Charles Port and Councillor Francis Blois

WHOS WHO...

Abou Guisse

Abou Guisse is the General Assistant at Edgware Road. He is the person we call for everything spill-ages, breakages, small jobs and tall jobs!

Abou has had a pretty exciting year. In October 2005 he got married to Fatima and in late January they had their first child a little girl called Khalissa Oumou.

Abou is originally from the Ivory Coast. He came here to study International Trade and Shipping at the College of Central London.

When he is not at work or studying, he likes to watch movies, read books and although he is modest about his ability, he likes to cook.

EVENTS CALENDAR

Age Concern Westminster have lots of exciting events organised over the coming months so keep an eye on this column to find out what is going on:

- Easter Raffle—Tickets now on sale! Have you got yours? If you would like some tickets sent out to you please call Melanie on 020 7724 9347.
- Staff and Volunteers Get Together—5th April at 5pm at the Covent Garden Club, Odhams Walk, off Shelton Street.
- Older Peoples Network Manifesto Event - 19th April 11am at Regents Hall, off Oxford Street, W1.
- Saturday Social - Fun over 50 dance afternoon. £2. 2-4pm. Elgin Centre. Call Tony Bunce 020 72862043.
- ACW 5-a-side football WORLD CUP—21st May 2006. Call Melanie to enter your team now!

FEEDBACK

We welcome your feedback. If you have any issues you would like to see raised in *Platinum Age* please do not hesitate to contact us at the address below:

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London W2 1DS
Phone: 020 7724 6930
Fax: 020 7723 0405
Email: mgibbons@acwestminster.org.uk

Hectors Helpful Hints

After defrosting freezer rub glycerine inside and ice will not stick to the walls or sides anymore.

NELSON'S COLUMN

Nelson is looking for ingenuity and best practice among the staff team that can be shared.

Nelson's commendation in this issue goes to Breeze McKrieth for ingenuity and best practice in attracting new clients.

Since the beginning of 2006, Breeze has used his skills attract 21 out of 23 possible new clients referred to Elgin, which is a success rate of 91%. When compared to a traditional referral conversion rate of 50%, this shows the dramatic difference that Breeze has made.

This success is due to his engaging personality and charm together with his enthusiasm for the centre and its work.

His ability to present day care and our services in a professional and caring manner has proved immensely successful and demonstrates both best practice and ingenuity in its approach and execution.

Well done Breeze!!!!