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At a Glance

TRUSTEES WANTED

HRSG requires new Trustees to join its Executive Committee. We are looking for people from a range of backgrounds, with different experiences and skills. Whether it's for your first Trustee role or you can bring a wealth of experience to the Board, if you are passionate about young people we would like to hear from you. For an informal discussion, please contact Freda on 01895 434 728 or freda@hrsg.org.uk

Inside this issue:

- Laughter 2
- London Eye 3
- Befriender speaks 3
- Grant Panel 4
- Future Events 4

Hillingdon Refugee Support Group

October 2009 - Issue 30



Our Mission Statement

To bring, hope, dignity, and empowerment to refugees and asylum seekers in Hillingdon. To work with all faith communities and with organisations with no religious affiliation in order to protect the interests and promote the rights of all asylum seekers and refugees, regardless of their beliefs, race, gender, sexual orientation or any other distinction.

As I write this newsletter the summer has drawn to a close, the evenings are getting shorter and we are left reflecting on the memories of an event filled

summer; it was a joy to behold the young people developing as individuals and having fun at the same time. We shall build upon the positive experiences during

the darker autumn and winter months with an educational and entertainment packed itinerary.

Visit to Grenville House Outdoor Educational Centre

On the 3rd August, 44 young people and 6 staff members visited Grenville House, an Outdoor Educational Centre for a residential activity week. It is situated in a unique location in the picturesque and historic fishing village of Brixham, Devon. The centre believes that it is important for young people to take responsibility for themselves and others within a communal environment. Prior to the trip the young people attended compulsory Tuesday night BHUMP sessions, which were also attended by the

social workers who accompanied the young people during the visit. During these sessions the young people were involved in setting their own ground rules for the visit; they were also split into groups, to which a social worker was assigned and the young people nominated a leader for each of the groups. Everyone enjoyed the trip and the young people really benefited from the structured activities and the opportunity to interact with each other away from their usual environs. Activities arranged by the friendly and open Grenville

staff included: abseiling; kayaking; raft building; high ropes; indoor and outdoor mountain climbing (held on the wild and beautiful Dartmoor) beachcombing, yachting and canoeing. These activities were specifically designed and demonstrably assisted in the young people developing greater self reliance, a deeper understanding of peer group relationships, a sense of independence and an appreciation of others concerns and wishes. Following the evaluation we shall certainly be looking to visit next year.



The Importance of Laughter

At the end of the hectic summer period as we reflect on the times shared together it is wise to take stock and it is useful to reemphasise why we attach so much importance in ensuring that the young people in our care experience fun times and laugh together.

“ the small acorn grows to be a majestic oak tree, with the right nourishing . ”

The young people come from a variety of backgrounds and cultures and whilst at initial inspection all their personal stories differ, there is a common element. All of the young people have experienced emotional and physiological trauma in one form or another when they arrive here.

It is worthwhile drawing attention to the dictionary definition of trauma, “an extremely distressing experience that causes severe emotional shock and may have long-lasting psychological effects”. At the Hillingdon Refugee Support Group, in conjunction with our partners we seek to minimise and if possible eradicate the future effects of any past trauma. We offer a welcoming caring and safe environment. One of our tools is laughter.

Amongst all of the educational courses and evenings which we arrange we also ensure that the young people have the opportunity to share and grow together, to enjoy themselves and to above all laugh and have fun.

The importance of laughter cannot be under estimated and its therapeutic effects are widely documented: Laughing together is a way to be connected; it demolishes barriers and lightens our mood; it has the capacity to make people better liked by their peers, healthier, and much more resilient; it can change one's perspective and hence the quality of one's life; laughing is a cathartic release and invokes feelings of happiness and joy; laughing is uplifting and takes you to new heights where you can gain some new insights. In addition laughter has physiological benefits. It reduces the level of certain stress hormones and boosts the immune system.

We see the responsibility that we have as immense and embrace it fully; we wish to ensure that the young people grow into fully

functioning adults equipped with all the emotional tools that will enable them to function fully throughout their adult life. Like the small acorn grows to be a majestic oak tree, with the right nourishing we know that the young people shall be able to fulfil their true potential and take their rightful place in society.

A happy life requires positive energy, solution focused thinking and a big 'yes' approach. It also requires a lot of giving. Not simply giving to others but giving, in a new way, to ourselves by reclaiming space, making time, creating positive experiences.

So as we travel into Autumn and Winter we are filled with hope and possibilities and the knowledge that as we enter into our forthcoming programme of educational courses and social outings that we shall see our young people grow and develop and attain their rightful equal place and that we shall be surrounded by laughter and happy faces.

Hold on to your Hats

On August 13th the young people visited Thorpe Park in Surrey. There was a heady mixture of entertainment on offer; white knuckle rides mixed with more gentle fun pursuits for those not so inclined. The visit was enjoyed and young people were able to meet and relax and grow friendships. There shall certainly be a repeat.

“ I met with many new people. ”



Mothers and Babies day out

On Tuesday the 18th August a large group of young unaccompanied mothers and their children had the opportunity to travel to Legoland for the day. Feedback and discussions after the trip have shown how valuable the day was. Obviously the children had the opportunity to play together, but more importantly, the young mothers were able to share their experiences of raising children in an unfamiliar land. This is so important and the benefits of being able to share in a relaxed setting are inestimable.

Quote - *“Every time you smile at someone, it is an action of love, a gift to that person, a beautiful thing.”*
- Mother Teresa

Breathtaking views from the London Eye

On August 20th, The young people visited the London Eye and the weather was kind enough for them to have a bird's eye view of the great city. On the same afternoon they also visited the Science museum. In the short period of time that they were there, one of the things they were able to learn about was the origin of the computer, a subject which the boys in the group found particularly interesting.



“I could see places in London very far away.”

Bhump Volunteer Befriender

One of the BHUMP volunteer befrienders in her own words details her personal experiences of assisting in the BHUMP project. It is noted with pleasure that it is not only the young people who benefit from BHUMP. The input and invaluable assistance of each and every one of the befrienders is instrumental in the project's continued smooth operation.

“My name is Priyanka Jeganathan. I am 17 years old. I have been volunteering with BHUMP for over a year. My experience at BHUMP has been absolutely fantastic. Every week we do something different that benefits the young people, in which I get to do different roles including interacting with the young people, general helping out, interviewing; which we did during the grant making project, etc. Everyone I meet is really pleasant and very easy to interact with, including the staff and the other

volunteers. Through this experience I have gained a lot of skills as well as learning a lot about myself. Through BHUMP I have learned to communicate better with other people. I have learned to work as a team. In addition, I have also learned to lead and manage a team. BHUMP has been a life changing experience for me and I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to all the young people, the volunteers and staff for this chance. I hope in years to come BHUMP will continue to flourish

and help those who truly deserve peace of mind.”



“My experience at BHUMP has been absolutely fantastic.”

Summertime favourite

In August young people visited Whipsnade zoo, a trip they always enjoy. They particularly relish the opportunity to leave the city behind for the day and enjoy the space of the countryside. It is easy for all of us to forget the effect of living in a sprawling busy city. It is important that the young people, indeed all of us take the opportunity to enjoy the beauty and wonder of nature.



“I was amazed at seeing elephants walking near people.”

Quote - *“Perhaps we cannot prevent this world from being a world in which children are tortured. But we can reduce the number of tortured children.” - Albert Camus*



Terrence Higgins Trust Chlamydia Screening Team visits BHUMP

The Terrence Higgins Trust Hillingdon Chlamydia Screening Team are in and around the Borough promoting and encouraging young people (15-24 years) to test and be more aware of the Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI), Chlamydia. Recently, they have been working closely with young people from BHUMP giving awareness workshops, information sessions and Chlamydia testing.

- ◆ 1 in 10 young people are thought to be infected in the UK.
 - ◆ Affects both men and women, usually with no symptoms.
 - ◆ If left untreated could lead to serious long-term conditions, abdominal pain and can also cause conjunctivitis or arthritis. It can even be passed from mother to baby.
 - ◆ Very easy to treat with usually one course of free antibiotics
- The free Chlamydia test is quick, easy and painless. Results are sent to you within 5-10 working days depending

on your choice of contact (text message, phone call or letter). All your information is kept completely private and confidential. Please say YES to a FREE CHLAMYDIA TEST. It is worth doing for your own health and wellbeing. For further information on where you can go for a Chlamydia Test in the borough, please call the Chlamydia Screening Office on 01895 259 133. Or drop in to a BHUMP session.

Quick facts about Chlamydia:

- ◆ A very common STI.

BHUMP Grant Panel Update

The BHUMP grant panel, is run by young people for young people. In June, funding from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, enabled them to give grants to five projects. These projects will be completed by the end of October and will feature in the next newsletter edition. The exciting news is that the BHUMP Grant Panel is about to form a Youth Bank which will be the first in Hillingdon. Youth Bank is a grant making initiative run by young people for young people. Youth Bank projects are already

established in a number of locations across the UK. Young people come together to form the Youth Bank. They decide how grant applications will be assessed and who receives the money. They will be supported by HRSG and other partner organisations who will help with training, administration and provide support to the young people involved. Youth Banks offer a range of development opportunities for young people; opportunities to learn about and participate in their own communities, to develop new skills

and have new experiences, and to travel to meet other young people involved in Youth Bank across the UK. Youth Bank provides a positive role for young people in their communities and in turn can improve the community's perception of them. Youth Banks directly contribute to the regeneration of communities and, by putting money into the hands of young people, ensures their priorities are being met. We will update you on their progress.

“Youth Bank builds on young people’s skills and experiences to enable them to reach their full potential .”

Art Workshop

Over the summer holidays, Katie, the Community Arts Facilitator from Waterman's Art Centre held a series of art workshops. Young people learnt graphic design, digital camera techniques, Photoshop, and improved their computer skills. They had the opportunity to use their creative talents to design their

own fashion tee-shirts. Some wonderful designs were produced and by the end of the session, all participants had an inspiring piece of artwork to take home. Watch this space for some budding future young designers. Pictured are tee-shirts designed by young people.



Upcoming Events

Photoshop Surgeries workshop: Ongoing projects every Tuesday until the end of October. Participants will work on individual new media projects. You will learn skills in digital photography, design, fashion, Photoshop, internet research, art, In –Design and illustration.

Countdown night at BHUMP: Based on the same theme as the popular television show, Countdown, BHUMP will be having a similar evening of friendly competition where contestants will engage in a battle of wits.

Half Term day trip to The Historical Tower of London. 29th October 2009

Wanted: Young people to join the BHUMP Grant Panel. Would you like to be involved in forming Hillingdon's first Youth Bank? Run by young people for young people. Learn new skills and experiences whilst benefiting others in the community. To find out more, please contact Freda on 01895 434 728.