CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER 2005

Well it took some days to get our breath back after the actions of the previous few months culminating in our "Celebration of Disability Awareness" at Chichester Festival Theatre. Since then we have been digesting the congratulations at having presented the Celebration, and invitations to repeat the production again next year, and also in other venues.

We have digested not only the praise, but the few criticisms and will take them on board as we do with comments made by Head Teachers in our follow-up questionnaire after a school visit. Only in this way can we measure if our message is getting through to the children.

The most common request from Head Teachers is "can you provide visual support with your talks?" Sadly, our fund-raising has so far produced only 2 laptops and 1 projector, and if we are able to provide visual aids, we need 3 more laptops and projectors. Our fund-raising team keep trying on this issue.

Outreach News

Crawley

Jake's contacts in Crawley have continued to blossom and we have been in contact with the local council and applied for funding for the £30,000 to be shared by worthy charities in Crawley, sponsored solely by Barclays Bank and the Crawley Observer. We have also recruited 3 new volunteers from the Crawley area.

Hampshire

Ross Smith too has been busy and with his ever increasing workload has asked his Community Volunteer Organiser to help him find a part-time secretary.

Ross has also initiated a plan to meet volunteers from deepest Hampshire in their own surroundings where, with other staff we will discuss Training needed before visiting schools and talking to school children.

Training sessions

Our last session was held at West Wittering on 17th November where Ruth Foster was supported by Ross Smith and Toby Hewson. Newcomers were Theresa Bentley and Linda Ianniou together with Heather (Workability) who is keen to accompany Theresa on school visits. Our next training session will be on 9th February, venue to be announced.

Volunteer contacts

As a result of the numerous letters sent out by Sarah, our work experience teenager at half-term, we are making contact with more Occupational Therapists and Physiotherapists at hospitals across the south. As a result we have been invited to talk to staff in the department.

We are fortunate to welcome the actor Peter Pine on board. Peter is willing to join in talks to schools as well as speak on Disability Awareness to other organisations.

Your Chairman had a very interesting meeting with the Mayor of Chichester, Councillor Richard Plowman, and discussed several mutual interests needing advancement in the Community and afterwards, was treated to an insight of the city's paintings and regalia – which was very much appreciated.

Charity Fair at the Grange

We were supported by four volunteers and with a combination of jewellery sales and tombola, we raised £156 in two-and-a-half hours.

This year the Fair was located in the Exercise Hall, which is the least popular hall and was badly signed. We have taken this point up with the Grange.

At the same time we ran a raffle for St Richard's Hospital and Cancer Appeal, selling over £60 of raffle tickets.

Many thanks to those of you who responded to our appeal for donations to the tombola, this was appreciated, every little helps.

What is ahead – 2006

During the past year we have doubled the number of speakers available to visit schools, so will be able to considerably increase the number of schools we visit in the area.

A second group of volunteers to promote Drama Workshops will also operate.

What we need

We are advertising widely for wheelchairs, both for adults and children to be used by our ambulant speakers in their talks. We have also targeted companies that might have used equipment they could pass on to us, which might be able to deliver the visual support so frequently requested.

Fund raising

As our field of work has expanded, so have our expenses and the number of organisations we approach is increasing proportionally. It would be helpful to recruit fundraising volunteers in your locality.

Under discussion

Requested by a Croydon School – Disability Awareness Week at the school/

Suggested by a local supporter, Disability Awareness Week in Chichester. In this connection, other local charities involved with disabled people have been contacted and appear willing to fund their own presentation.

For your diary

Training session – 9th February, venue tbc

Placement Fair at Lord Mayor Treloar College

A big thank you to you all for your help through the year and to Andrej, our student volunteer who has been supporting us for the past two-and-a-half years and to Hayley in the office for her fund-raising efforts.

Watch out for Tom Yendell's Exhibition at the Ox Market Gallery in Chichester later in the year. Tom will not only be presenting his own work but that of other talented MFPA members.

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