



Winter 2009

Updating you with the latest news from SHARE Community

Special points of interest:

- SHARE's AGM
- Awards Ceremony
- Student Stories
- Meet SHARE's Volunteer, Esther
- Annie's Column

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"It's about the people..."

On January 26th, SHARE Community held our Annual General Meeting for the year 2007 to 2008. The AGM was a great success with over 40 people attending and some really interesting talks from Lisa Geary (Wandsworth Social Services) and Richard Hartnett (Employment and Training Support Officer, Wandsworth Adult & Community Learning).



It was a great chance for supporters, students and staff of SHARE to meet the board of Trustees and find out who they are and why they work with us. Lisa Geary spoke to us about the introduction of Individual Budgets and what it



means for our students. Richard Hartnett and his team at Wandsworth council are working to open up more employment opportunities for people with disabilities. The team will be visiting SHARE in the near future to meet our students in person and find out what types of work they are looking for.

Patricia Hodge lends a helping hand...

SHARE's Awards Day, held on Tuesday 25th November, was a wonderful celebration of our students' achievements. We were enormously grateful to our patron and esteemed actress, Patricia Hodge (pictured right with student Tony Hyam), who kindly took a break from her tour of the country with the stage show of Calendar Girls, to help us present the students with their certificates. We were also really grateful to Councillor John Farebrother, Mayor of Wandsworth for attending and making a speech about our work in the borough.



Over 60 students came to receive their certificates this year ranging from Horticulture NVQs, to Basic Skills Numeracy certificates, through to the computing qualification CLAIT as well as Business Administration NVQs.



Since 2007, SHARE have presented the Peter Jablonski Award for perseverance and outstanding achievement in the face of adversity. This is in memory of Peter Jablonski, the General Manager at SHARE who sadly passed away in 2006 after a long battle against cancer. Staff from each project nominate students and Peter's family choose the winner. This year it was awarded to Rowland McPherson, pictured left with Patricia Hodge, Jackey, Ana & Ryan Jablonski.

Annie's Column



These are remarkable times. Since the last newsletter, America has elected Barak Obama as her President. Suddenly, from that magic day in November, everyone seemed to have found some hope for the world, a sense of optimism. Maybe there would be peace; maybe the world would become a safer place. We are full of hope, and that's a good feeling, because if we have hope for the world, we have hope for ourselves. Our students followed the election and there was a definite sense of celebration at SHARE on 5th November. Here was an opportunity to explore the concept of democracy, and why it's important to vote; but also to recall the long struggle that African Americans have fought to achieve social equality, and why that makes Obama's victory so significant.

But as we know, all is not totally rosy in the world. We are reminded every day of the financial situation that the country is in and its implications for unemployment. What will this mean for SHARE? Less money to distribute in the form of grants, that's for sure; greater pressure on local authorities to cut costs – and this will certainly result in wide scale cuts to the voluntary and community sector. There are fewer jobs available for our students, and much tougher competition; but paradoxically there may also be benefits, as the demand for training and employment guidance increases. We will step cautiously and keep all our senses alert.

SHARE took a day out in October to start planning for the year ahead. For the first time, we invited people from outside SHARE to our away day, which took the form of an open space event. Aply facilitated by Linda Mitchell, we



explored the challenges facing SHARE and identified things we want to do in the year ahead. Trustees, students, staff, colleagues from Wandsworth and South West London and St George's Health Trust, our social work students and volunteers all took part (pictured above). It was a lively and rewarding way to kick off our business planning process, and reminded us that we're a highly skilled and creative collection of people.

Thank you for your continuing support. Do keep in touch, and tell your friends and colleagues about us and the Friends scheme. Have a happy, healthy, and positive 2009.

Annie McDowall, CEO



First Bites

In partnership with Garrett Park School we've begun a new Healthy Living project for secondary school children aged 16 and over. This project is funded by the Wandsworth Health Improvement Fund and aims to support prospective school leavers who are deaf or hard of hearing or disabled to lead a healthier lifestyle through awareness of what they eat and its effects.



Ten students from Garrett Park come to SHARE one day a week and learn about healthy eating and how to prepare healthy food. It seems like the students are all enjoying the course so far and have already learnt a lot.

We will be running a second programme in March with more students from Garrett Park.



Lambeth Endowed

2009 has also heralded the beginning of another new project from our Brixton Centre which is funded by the Lambeth Endowed Charities.

This project was designed as a bridge or a stepping stone for people who would like a job but still need some work on their soft skills in order to prepare for work. Soft skills are skills like confidence and motivation.

The students on this course work on developing and improving their confidence and motivation whilst working with Joe, our life coach and Tania, our Employment Guidance Officer. The programme can also refer students on for financial advice and help students apply for the individual learning grants that the Lambeth Endowed Charities offer. If you would like more details on this course, please contact our Brixton centre on 0207 326 5460.



Sustainable Transport

Working with the Enterprise project, funded by Transport for London, SHARE Community has undergone a sustainable transport health check and created a travel plan. The process involved working with Enterprise to question all staff on how they get to work and what is stopping them from using public transport or other environmentally friendly methods. The survey showed that 33.4% of our staff used public transport and 20% bicycle.

We hope to roll this survey out to our students as well and as a result of that, may make use of free cycle safety training and other government funded initiatives to get more of us making our way to work/college through more eco-friendly methods.



Meet a SHARE Volunteer...

Esther Delaney, Learning & Guidance Volunteer

How long have you been at SHARE?

I started volunteering in September 2007, so that must be nearly 18 months.

What do you do at SHARE?

I help out, mainly in Basic Skills and Life Skills lessons. I take smaller groups of students outside of the classroom and work on things with them such as reading and helping them to express themselves. I support the tutor with whatever needs doing really.



What other volunteering have you done?

Before SHARE I was working as a volunteer at Cave, which was an art therapy project in Clapham. I've worked with a number of different organisations in a voluntary capacity including being a school liaison officer in Dublin and an English teacher in Sri Lanka.

Why do you enjoy volunteering at SHARE?



Because I love people, that's my gut reaction. I come from a teaching background and, in spite of being retired from teaching for a number of years, I'm happy to give a little more while I still have the energy! At SHARE, I like the whole idea of the emphasis being on ability. I like how that is lived out in the day to day.

What do you do away from SHARE?

I'm a Catholic sister and I live in Clapham with 2 other sisters so we make a lot of time for each other to pray and play and that sort of thing. I love reading, at the moment I'm reading *The Brethren* by John Grisham but I like anything with a good story line that's well written. I get out and about too – the other night I went to The Abbey to celebrate Burns night, it was fantastic.

Is there one thing that's happened at SHARE that sticks in your memory?

In the Basic Skills lessons, Frances, one of the tutors, uses every opportunity to take the students out e.g. to the Natural History Museum, picnics on the Common, the local library, theatre etc. The one that stands out in my mind was the shortest journey – just across the road to Battersea Library to the African and Asian section during Black History Month in October last year. It was great to see the positive reactions of the students – some went for Bob Marley, some Mary Seacole, it was good to see the students proud of their heritage and interested in each other's.

What would you say to someone who was interested in volunteering at SHARE?

I would strongly recommend it. In my reflective moments I look back on my experience at SHARE as moments where I receive more than I give.

Meanwhile, beyond SHARE...

This issue, we asked Jago, a student from the Horticulture project to tell us about what he enjoys doing outside of SHARE...

Health and Meditation



I got into yoga and tai chi quite a long time ago. I use it as a way of calming my mind and keeping healthy. I would often go to Battersea Park in the early mornings and in the evenings to practise chi kung. Chi kung is a form meditation which uses movement, postures and breathing techniques. I really like doing it outside among trees and nature.



About 2 years ago I joined a class run by HSP which means Health Smile Peace and is an energy training programme founded by Dr Il Chi Lee. It helps you realign the body and increase your chi energy. I normally do classes 2 or 3 times a week and it's very beneficial. I sleep better and it gives me more energy – I feel more alive.

I started classes to help with my motivation. I still use prescribed medication but the HSP classes help me deal with the side effects that I have from the medication and give me a healthy lifestyle.

Although it was expensive to start with, I felt happy to make the commitment and I feel that the health benefits outweigh the cost.

I really recommend HSP classes – it has given me a more positive outlook on life, improved my social skills and my general living. I think about what I eat and what I need to stay well.

Jago Wilson, Horticulture Student

Derek runs the London Marathon

Vice President of SHARE Community, Lily Harrison OBE, has kindly persuaded her son, Derek, to run the marathon to raise money for SHARE Community.

Derek, pictured right, is going to run for SHARE and aims to finish it in around 3 hours. Derek has run 30 marathons in the past including one that is 56 miles across the desert in South Africa.

The London Marathon is on 26th April 2009 and Derek will be running for a few charities. If you would like to sponsor him to raise money for SHARE, please go to

www.justgiving.co.uk/runforSHARE

Alternatively, you can sponsor Derek by sending your donation to us at SHARE Community (address details on back page).

Many thanks and good luck Derek!



Supporters Update

We hope that you have all had an enjoyable festive break and are looking forward to the challenges of 2009. We at SHARE will be pushing forward with our resolutions to improve the services we offer, and increase the opportunities that are available to our students, opportunities that we can only create thanks to your support.

Special wishes go out this month to Wandsworth Councillor Billi Randall. Billi, who has long been a key figure within the Council supporting issues of concern to people with disabilities amongst others celebrated her wedding at the end of last year. The happy couple very kindly forewent a wedding list to put forward a group of charities to whom the wedding guests could donate to in lieu of a gift. Share Community were very privileged to be one of those charities and we are hugely grateful for the generosity of Billi, Mark and their guests.



This is just one of many ways that people can help us move towards equality of opportunity for disabled people. If you would like any further information about different ways that you can help SHARE then please get in touch .

We have many resolutions for the year ahead, to continue the work to tighten up our planning, to work towards creating more training and employment opportunities alongside choice for our students, particularly those with learning difficulties, and to grow and develop that special feeling that exists at SHARE.

If you have any resolutions for the year planned, we hope that one of them will be to keep up your support for SHARE, because it is only with your help that we can continue to grow. If there is room for another, then please find the time to come and visit us. Our door is always open, and we look forward to showing you what a difference you have helped to make.

Thank you, and all the best for 2009.

GARDENING TIPS FOR Winter/Spring

This is a great time to take stock and plan for the future;

- ⊗ We are thinking about **what new features the garden needs**, what needs to be moved or changed
- ⊗ Now is also a good time for **clearing and tidying up messy corners and tackling weeds** really thoroughly and cutting back the old stems of perennials
- ⊗ We are starting our **new season's sowing** with a collection of herbs to be followed in early February by the summer veg crops that like a long warm summer – tomatoes, peppers and chillies all do well in our poly tunnel
- ⊗ We are also **preparing the outside vegetable plots for new crops** by adding lots of garden compost and digging it into the soil
- ⊗ **Plant onion sets and shallots** when the soil has warmed a little
- ⊗ **Plant sweet peas if you sowed them in autumn** or sow them now for early flowers for cutting

Jenny Shand, Horticulture Tutor



Student Stories...

Travel Buddies

Since the last newsletter, four of our current students and one recent student have got jobs as Travel Buddies. This is a scheme set up by the Southside Partnership to get people with disabilities helping those with greater needs to use public transport. Kellie, Caroline, Sarah, Tope and Rachel will be working as Travel Buddies and escorting people on transport to and from their daily activities.



Rachel, who left us last year to go on to South Thames college and study Maths and English further, recently phoned SHARE to give us an update on how things are going. Rachel said that she was just filling out her first timesheet and had this morning escorted someone from their house to their day centre. Rachel said, "It's funny because when I was younger, somebody used to help me on the train because I didn't like doing it alone. Now I'm on the train all the time and I'm teaching someone else."

My Future

John Roberts, a My Future student at Brixton, has commented on the service he receives at SHARE as follows:

"Can I say that this is the first time in Adult education that I have been valued as an individual, the staff great you as a person not a number, they are kind and patient and always make me feel good about my work that I have done, even if I make mistakes.

I think you should have a comments card as feedback is good but you only have suggestion and complaint cards. I really enjoy myself here especially as I am dyslexic, disabled and suffering with clinical depression.

Meet a SHARE Student...

Ruth Miller - Ability First

From an early age I have had a difficult life. Home, school, last employment.

I worked for a Finnish company which I enjoyed very much for 10 years, but they moved. From then on, not very pleasant.

My experience at SHARE has been probably the happiest time in my life, apart from when my children were born. Meeting some of the people at SHARE has made me realise how lucky I am. All the people and Tutors in SHARE have made me see that there are 'nice' people, not everyone is unpleasant, which is what I have known most of my life.

SHARE has helped give me confidence I did not realise I had, and made me see that I am not 'stupid' or thick.

Because of the help & support I have received at SHARE I hope to completely change my career, and be able to help people live back in the community.





Focus on ability

64 Altenburg Gardens
London SW11 1JL

Phone: 020 7924 2949

Fax: 020 7350 1625

Minicom: 020 7228 1756

E-mail: info@sharecommunity.org.uk

www.sharecommunity.org.uk

Staffing News

At the end of 2008 we said goodbye to our Basic Skills Tutor, Debbie Dutilh, who left us to return back home to California. Zoë Bell has finished working as our temporary PA/HR Administrator and we've now recruited a permanent PA, Clare Miles, who will start with us at the beginning of March. Zoë had a variety of roles while working at SHARE and showed great commitment and flexibility, we wish her all the best as she begins her career in employment guidance and life coaching services. We have also recruited a new part-time Basic Skills tutor to fill Debbie's post, Pera, who will begin shortly. We are also hoping to fill our vacant Head of Fundraising & Communications post as well as 2 Employment Guidance posts in the very near future. Please contact us if you would like more information.



For more information about anything in this newsletter, contact SHARE on 020 7801 9821 or email info@sharecommunity.org.uk

What's next ... the next SHARE events are:

Date & Time:	Event:	Venue:
Thursday 11th June	SHARE Garden Party	SHARE Garden
Saturday & Sunday 13th & 14th June	Open Garden Squares Weekend	SHARE Garden & other gardens across London www.opensquares.org

Contact us



For more information about **SHARE Community** or the training projects provided, contact Pam Dale on 020 7801 9812 or email enquiries@sharecommunity.org.uk.

Information about the **Ability 1st**, **My Future**, **Lambeth Endowed** and **Skills for Jobs** projects is available on 020 7326 5460 or email newstart@sharecommunity.org.uk.

If you would like any information about the new **Train to Gain** project, please contact Sue Hart on 0207 801 9811

Visit our website for the latest information at www.sharecommunity.org.uk