Celebrating Black History Month

Black History Month is a remembrance of important people and events of the past and is celebrated annually in the UK in the month of October. It has been celebrated in the UK for over 30 years, each year growing from strength to strength, uncovering hidden history about black communities.

The members of the Fairfield club celebrated the month by doing lots of activities, including poetry reading, looking at black inventors, quizzes and even had a late night disco with radio DJ, Commander B of Vibes FM (pictured) on Thursday 29th October. The club was decorated with all of the 33 flags of the Caribbean and on different days, members got to sample foods from the islands.

Advocacy. Questions Answered.

Mind in Croydon's Advocacy Service has now undertaken a new role due to the change in the Mental Health Act and are now offering Independent Mental Health Advocacy as well as general advocacy.

Q. Who is in the team?

A. We now have four advocates (three full-time equivalents), Rory O'Kelly who is the Manager (and also manages the Welfare Benefits Service) Andy Forey, Nichola Harris and Megan Karnes. Megan has joined us recently and is working part-time.

Q. What is advocacy?

A. Advocacy is independent help and support with understanding issues and assistance in putting forward a person's own views, feelings and ideas. Advocacy is about enabling every person to understand their options and to have a voice of their own. It ensures that they are not excluded because they do not understand what is being said to them or cannot express their views in ways that people understand.

Q. What is IMHA (Independent Mental Health Advocacy)?

A. IMHA services provide an additional safeguard for patients who are subject to the Mental Health Act. IMHA advocates are specialist advocates who are trained to work within the framework of the Act. They have some additional powers such as being able to see the client's records and speaking to the people treating them. People do not have to have an IMHA advocate, or any advocate, unless they want one.

Q. What are the major differences between general advocacy and IMHA advocacy?

A. IMHA advocates provide a service that is required by law to people being held under the Mental Health Act in hospital (e.g. The Bethlem Hospital) or treated compulsorily. General Advocates can also work with voluntary patients and people in the community. All of our advocates act in both capacities and the client will not have to change advocate just because of a change in their legal status.

Q. Do advocates give advice?

A. An advocate will help someone to understand their options and then to decide what they want to do. They will not make the decision for them.

Q. What sort of reaction do you get from mental health professionals?

A. The majority of professionals are happy for advocates to attend meetings because an advocate can encourage a client to speak up for themselves. They can also help to stop things going wrong because of failures of communication. Even where there is a difference between a client and a professional an advocate can help to clarify the issues and negotiate an outcome. There will be some situations where there is conflict (e.g. where an advocate helps a client make a complaint) but most professionals accept that the right to complain helps to improve services.

Q. How many clients do you see?

A. Sometimes we could see clients for one meeting and others you could be dealing with for years. An advocate may have 20 cases which are open but not all of them are active at the same time.

Q. Do you only see clients that live in Croydon?

A. Our remit in IMHA is to see clients in any age range but they must be residing in the borough of Croydon. If they come from outside the borough but are in The Bethlem Hospital we can see them if commissioned by the Primary Care Trust where they live. For general advocacy clients, they again must come from the borough of Croydon but we can only deal with people in the age range 18-65. Unfortunately, this can be confusing in some cases but this is the contractual agreement.

Q. If I wanted to find out more about advocacy is there a website I could go to?

A. Yes, there is information on Mind in Croydon's site www.mindincroydon.org.uk and by doing a simple search on the internet i.e. "Mental Health Advocacy" or "IMHA" a lot of information can be found.

Enterprise House... Before and After

The shop refit at our charity shop in Upper Norwood was completed on the 21st of October. There was a grand reopening the following day and Sally-Anne Stapleford (five times British figure skating champion) cut the ribbon. She lives near to the shop and confessed that she had never been in the shop previously because of its appearance. Also, a guest at the reopening was Ray Hall Chair of the Crystal Palace & Norwood Chamber of Commerce, he was very excited about the project because of how it can benefit the community in so many ways.

Before **After**

We are now looking at involving local businesses to encourage good quality donations. Unfortunately, a lot of the donations are unusable or dirty. If you have any good, clean donations please contact 020 8771 5950.

Go Team GO!

On Thursday 5th November a group of 22 clients and staff went to Westerham for a day of paintballing and team building. The group were split into two teams, Britain vs Germany. Team Britain showed a great deal of strategy and Neville's (pictured) enthusiasm was not lost despite being shot in the back of the head by a team mate. Needless to say, Team Germany's tactic which was, "just shoot 'em" was not a winning one resulting in a 26-1 victory for Britain.

Staffing Update

Sadly we have recently said goodbye to Anja Bjorlo, Employment and Recovery worker at Orchard House. Anja left us to pursue a career in mental health in her native Norway and we wish her well.

Fairfield Club Christmas Opening

Dec 14th. – Meal at TGI Friday
Dec 17th. - Fairfield Club Christmas Party
Dec 21st – Women's Group
Dec 22nd – 10am-6pm
Dec 23rd. – Fit as a Fiddle Group
Dec 24th. – 10am-4pm
Dec 25th. – Christmas Dinner – Tickets Only (Purchased in advanced from Fairfield Club)
Dec 26th. – Closed
Dec 27th. – Closed
Dec 28th. – Bank Hol
Dec 29th. – 10am-6pm
Dec 30th. – No Groups
Dec 31st. – 11am-4pm – New Year Eve Dinner
Jan 1st. – Closed
Jan 2nd. – 12pm-8pm
Jan 3rd. – 12pm-8pm

The Graveyard...

Orchard House has recently rediscovered a room! The room has been known as the graveyard for some time as it has been full of disused IT equipment. The printers, monitors, towers and keyboards have all been given to Eco Computer Systems based in Sydenham.

Eco Computer Systems use all recycled PCs to create training centres to enhance the computer skills of the unemployed and those on low incomes. As such all profits made through recycling activity are invested in providing training courses and, at the end of the course, in providing each attendee with a free, refurbished PC that they can take home. In addition to this they support a number of charities and social enterprises by providing them with free recycled PCs.

For further information about how you can recycle your IT equipment the website is www.ecocomputersystems.org.uk. Now that the room is empty there are discussions about what the room will be used for. It is likely that the room will be used as an additional training room. Watch this space.

Seasons Greetings from all of us

Mind in Croydon would like to wish everybody a very merry Christmas and happy new year!

Both Pampisford Road and Orchard House will be closed on the 25th - 28th December and the 1st January 2010. Enterprise Shop will be closed from 21st December and reopen on the 4th January.

If you would like to add anything to our spring newsletter please contact Annie on 020 8668 2210 or email annie@mindincroydon.org.uk

mind
For better mental health

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For better mental health

Christmas Newsletter 2009

Mind in Croydon

Mind in Croydon Chirstmas Card

This year Mind in Croydon has produced a Christmas card for the first time. The artwork is by Terence Wilde, a local artist, who produces the artwork for the cover of our Annual Reports.

We only have one design this year and are hoping to have more next year. Please support Mind in Croydon by buying these cards for your friends and family. Ten high quality cards are only £3.95. Please call 020 8668 2210 or email admin@mindincroydon.org.uk for more details.

Fundraising Pledges

Ross Dimmock a Personal Trainer from Croydon is raising money for Mind by enduring intense training at a Muay Thai boxing gym in Thailand for a whole month, ending in a competition bout.

Ross was diagnosed with bipolar after leaving the forces in 2003 and wants to raise awareness and show people that a mental health problem does not stop you from following your dreams. At the end of his month in Thailand, Ross will enter into a full contact Muay Thai contest against another fighter for five three minute rounds with kicks, punches, knees and elbows to the head allowed! We wish Ross all the best with this!

This is the first time Ross has raised money for charity so we urge you to sponsor him at http://www.justgiving.com/Ross-Dimmock

Also, Alexander Armstrong, who lives and works in Dubai is running the Dubai Marathon on the 22nd January 2010 in aid of Mind in Croydon.

It is an incredibly tough race, the temperature will start at around 27C and, although it is winter, the high could be around 34C. Alex has run the London marathon a couple of times but getting used to running in this heat is something that will take him some time. There is a much lower level of public attendance than the London marathon so it will be a very mentally tough race as there is little support along the way. Alex is looking forward to giving it his best shot.

The reason why he has chosen to raise money for Mind in Croydon is because he has relatives in the borough, he has a family member who suffers from mental health problems and his mother used to volunteer at a Mind shop. His family also have a business in the area.

We would like to wish Alex all the best in his training and build up to this difficult event. You can sponsor Alex via his JustGiving page at http://www.justgiving.com/Alexander-Armstrong.