



Student Volunteering Cardiff
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SVC December Newsletter 2009

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- Cash and Watch at the Huggard Centre
- An Inside Story: Andrea Dare, SVC Manager
- Halloween Party
- SVC Winter Ball

*Don't
forget!*

Dates

- 02/02/10: *Welcome back Social*
- 23/02/10: *Live Music Night*
- 06/03/10: *Fun Run*

Introducing Confident Kids, *by Naomi Hands.*

Last year I was wandering around the projects on offer and when I reached the last stand I knew I had found the project for me. Confident Kids is a unique project inside SVC, and this is one of the reasons I feel proud to be a part of it. I'm hoping to paint a picture of the project for you, and what it feels like to be a part of it.

This project works with the Royal National Institute for Deaf (RNID), running as part of their Young People's Support Service scheme (YPSS). In the schools we work in around Cardiff, the children are hard of hearing, not fully deaf which means they might possibly have hearing aids, but they are oral –they can hear some words, pitches and tones but may struggle with others.

SVC offers students the opportunity to be paired with a child or a group of young people who are suffering from hearing impairments in and around local schools in Cardiff. These can be primary or secondary schools, depending on where the need for the project is. Each week the volunteers will go and visit their assigned school and

meet with the young people to work through a planned session. Essentially the volunteers then build up a relationship with the children they are working with by offering help and support in emotional development and welfare.

Being able to experience watching these young people become more confident over the year was such an incredible feeling. Once the children begin to get to know you, and you them, there is such satisfaction in their development. Being able to be a part of them interacting with one another, helping others in the group and observing them beginning to become more outgoing as a result of a planned weekly session is rewarding. This is what has kept me involved in this project for a second year.

Working with the RNID is unique to Confident Kids. Our volunteers have already had two training sessions with the YPSS, which prepares them for time in the classroom with the young people, but also offers other training such as deaf awareness courses and of course the opportunity to learn sign language!

An Introduction to CASH,

by Chris Humphrey

Initially, I felt a little apprehensive about volunteering at the Huggard Centre. I've been lucky enough in life to have a roof over my head at all times, so true homelessness seemed deeply unfamiliar. I wondered how much I could help with something I didn't fully understand. Having started late in the year, replacing a volunteer who'd dropped out, I spent the first few Wednesdays getting to know the other volunteers in my group and the Centre's clients. We prepared quizzes for prizes, played board games and cooked, trying as hard as we could to get people involved and enjoying themselves. Essentially that's what our task is, to provide quality time to lives where it's often lacking. I soon came to realise that my own inexperience of homelessness was utterly irrelevant, as anybody can potentially find themselves in the situation. Some have lost loved ones, and some have mental or physical health problems and some have become drug dependant. The cycle of social exclusion and withdrawal can be incredibly difficult to break. That's where the Huggard Centre steps in, providing shelter and support in an effort to

nurture people out of homelessness. I've continued volunteering at the Centre into my second year, and feel genuinely satisfied with the positive effect our help is having on other's lives. The first week of the volunteering year was spent bowling in Cardiff Bay with a few of the Centre's clients. Naturally, I realised the noble thing to do was to lose every game in devastating fashion. It was nothing to do with my competence, I promise. On the second week, we cooked pizzas, getting everybody involved with making their own bases and adding toppings. It was a huge success, and it was fantastic to see everybody working together and benefiting from the experience.

The Big Sleep Out

On Friday 4th December The Huggard Centre, a homeless shelter in Cardiff, held their annual charity event 'The Big Sleep Out'. Volunteers, workers at the centre and the homeless sleep on the streets for one night to raise awareness for homeless people in Cardiff.

Furthermore, through donations and sponsorship, it raises essential funds for the Huggard Centre, which offers meals, shelter and support to Cardiff's homeless population.

The event was a huge success raising £1531 in total, £400 of which was raised by SVC volunteers in donations alone, who support the Huggard Centre via the projects Watch and CASH.



Students on a rather different night out

An interview with SVC manager Andrea Dare

The success of SVC is not only down to the large body of student volunteers but the behind the scenes work of SVC staff. Their hard work and dedication to supporting the work of SVC is integral to its continual running.

Andrea Dare, SVC Manager

When did you start working for SVC? I started working in 1999 with CUSS – Cardiff University Social Services – a charity separate from the Union and University that was originally founded by students in 1969. SCA – Student Community Action shared the other half of the office. When the CUSS manager left in 2001, I wanted to bring CUSS and SCA together, which took two years to come to fruition. The partnership was renamed SVC – Student Volunteer Cardiff and I took on the role of manager in 2003.

What has been your most memorable time in SVC so far? There have been so many memorable moments working for SVC but one that comes to mind is when one of the young children on one of the Saturday projects ran up to me saying “You’ve come back, my Saturday has come back!” and hugged me. The sheer pleasure on his face embodies the pleasure all children, adults and students have from the projects. This was a small but nevertheless significant moment which encapsulates everything SVC is about.

Another important moment for SVC was when Professor Ilora Finlay, the Baroness of Llandaf agreed to become Patron of SVC in 2008. This was high recognition for SVC for all of the good work we do, also important

recognition of all the student volunteers from a person of such high standing in the community whose ethos fitted with the SVC ethos of wanting to benefit people.

What are you most proud of? I am most proud of all of our volunteers at every level, as the benefits they bring to the people they work with is without comparison. I see and talk to the people that do benefit from their volunteering such as the children they work with and their families, and see firsthand what a difference is made.



What are your typical daily duties? The main role of my job is to ensure volunteers are safe at all times and are enjoying their volunteering experiences, and checking that the people we support are benefitting from our services. I also deal with the finances of the charity and ensure that legality is complied to. I am constantly looking out for more opportunities to help the community.

What is the biggest project you are working on at the moment? SVC is currently being reassessed for the Investing in Volunteers award – a nationally recognised prestigious award that sets the standards to meet in looking after volunteers, we are working towards achieving this award again.

And finally... “I absolutely love my job and if someone asked me to design my ideal job SVC would be it! I am a cog in the mechanism that enables students to do good work and I am always pleased to see the ever increasing enthusiasm of student volunteers. It is especially satisfying to see the personal developments of students who stay with SVC throughout their university years.”

Halloween Party

SVC members ventured out to Owain Glyndwr in spooky costumes to celebrate Halloween. There were many weird and wonderful disguises .

Over 100 volunteers came along in fancy dress to play themed games and dance.



SVC Winter Ball

On the 6th December, SVC held its annual Winter Ball at the Holland House Hotel. Staff members, the Executive Committee, Co-ordinators, volunteers and guests all put on their party shoes for this black tie event.

After predinner drinks over 80 of us sat down to a three course meal, coffee and chocolates. Tables were even decorated with crackers to set the festive spirit.

After satisfying our appetites, the dance floor opened and all danced the night away to the band Ginge and Cello Boi who played Country music and many well known covers. The DJ then followed this lively act playing current songs along with a few Christmas classics.

The SVC raffle consisted of many wonderful prizes donated by companies in Cardiff, including the top prize of an event voucher. In total the raffle raised over £130 for SVC.

The evening was a resounding success,, giivng everyone the oppurtuiny to see each other, relax after a term of hard work and commense the Christmas season.



SVC wishes everybody a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Thank you to the following companies in Cardiff who contributed to our Winter Ball raffle prizes:

Cardiff Student's Union
Live Lounge
Lava Lounge
Saks
Boots
Body Shop
Post Office
Blew Room
The Pot
Cardiff Blues

Thank you *Bush Travel* for supporting Weekenders transport by subsidising their minibus.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the process for Investing in Volunteers. The Board meeting will take place in February to confirm if we will achieve this prestigious award.



Launch party



Volunteers enjoy a 3 course meal at the Winter Ball



Getting into the festive spirit... Singing carols for SVC

Last but not least: If there is a topic you would like to see covered in the newsletter, if you have a story you'd like to write, if you have photos of SVC events—or if you like to be part of the editorial team: email Sarah Casey (communication officer) communications@svcardiff.org!