

Eighteen And Under (18u) Update April 2010

We have been shortlisted for the Charity Awards 2010 for our V.I.P. (Violence Is Preventable) work. 2 workers travelled to London for an interview and to offer a presentation of our work to a panel of judges. We are now invited to a very posh dinner in London in June where the winners will be announced.

Following positive feedback from UN-Habitat we have reworked and resubmitted our application to the Dubai International Award 2010. Our international work is expanding rapidly. In 2006 we were approved as 'Promising Practice' by the awards panel and were invited to reapply this year. Considering the very small size of our organisation, compared to other entrants, it is incredible that we have gotten far enough to even be considered.

The annual planning, evaluation and policy review is underway in Eighteen And Under with staff, volunteers, service users, directors and members fully involved in the process. The implementation of any changes arising from the review will take place over the next two months through a set training programme. Anyone who wishes to be involved in the review or wishing to make any comments or suggestions, please get in touch with us. The local council and volunteering centre is kindly assisting with advice on changes to some of our policies.

We have just had an external evaluation carried out on V.I.P. project work for one of our funders. This entailed a 3-day visit by the evaluator, who came up from England. It included her gathering information, visiting several schools, talking to service users, talking with outside agencies and meeting with all staff and interested parties. We have received a draft copy of the evaluation report and it is looking extremely good.

We are now registered with Learning and Teaching Scotland as a CPD provider. This will mean that more educators and teachers will now be able to access the V.I.P. accredited training.

We are working with some of our partners on several International bids for funding just now in the hope of further extending the V.I.P. programme into other countries in the world. In particular, we are focussing heavily on trying to secure funding for the work in Palestine. A joint bid is also being proposed with our partner in Australia for an exchange visit. Several funding opportunities are presenting which we are pursuing.

In April, we worked in 3 primary schools and one Secondary school with a total of 827 children and young people. All are receiving the full 6-week programme and 45 teachers are engaged in the learning process too. A primary school has invited us in to provide weekly focus groups to target 25 children with additional needs. These children were identified through the school receiving the V.I.P. programme.

We have a new worker who has joined us all the way from Hungary. She is on a 6-month training placement to learn all about the V.I.P. programme and is

sponsored through the Leonardo daVinci scheme. Already she is active in schools and fitting in well to the organisation.

A new paid worker joined us this month and after induction she will be involved in setting up and developing the Resolve-It Project. This project will use V.I.P. in schools to identify and work with young people and children at risk of exclusion with the aim of addressing their problems and keeping them in school and engaged in learning.

We have had a huge surge in new potential volunteers who are keen to work with us. We have organised monthly gatherings for all volunteers and regular induction and trainings are ongoing to meet demand. One of our workers has taken on volunteer co-ordination and is engaged in getting further skills and training to keep on top of this task.

Tea in the centre has been busy this month with around 25 people dropping in for something to eat, a chat, support and workshops. This month we provided workshops on the issues of migrant workers, equality, human rights and children's rights in Africa.

Support wise we were very busy with young people perhaps due to the schools being off on holiday. We had 25 'crisis' drop ins with problems, including homelessness, drugs, pregnancy, child protection and abuse. We referred one child protection case to the police and one of our young people decided, with support from us, to go to the police and make a formal complaint about abuse. In addition, we provided just over 52 hours of face-to-face support to 30 young people and dealt with 110 support e-mails and 472 support texts. We are currently providing support to young people who live in Scotland, England, Sweden and the USA.

We provided Senior V.I.P. sessions in 4 different community and sheltered complex settings to 52 vulnerable adults. One of the groups we worked with had extreme difficulties with communication, which was a challenge we took great pleasure in overcoming. We also managed to successfully involve the police in one of the settings, which was much appreciated by the older people.

It has been a busier than usual month for us with the end of year accounts to be prepared, project reports submitted to funders and the day to day activities continued. In addition, we began our UK wide e-mail campaign, held planning meetings about our fundraising week, attended Cross-Party group meetings, community safety meetings and several varied forums across Scotland.

Our partnership with Broken Rainbow to carry out research on domestic violence is almost completed with only the report to be written up now. We are getting some additional assistance in analysing the results and putting together the report from someone at the University of Sunderland.

The Kirkton Beat, our children's samba band, is in increasing demand to play at events in and around Dundee. They have been invited to play at several gala days

over the summer. The group continues to practice on Monday evenings and is open to all children.

Training on Ritual Abuse awareness and how to support survivors will be offered over 2 full days on 7th and 8th July. Training on supporting young abuse survivors will be available in August and Accredited V.I.P. training will be available in October. There are limited places on all these trainings so book early to avoid disappointment.

We have an interesting new V.I.P. partnership developing. A church has taken on to have us in regularly to run the V.I.P. programmes with its young people. Having researched the V.I.P. project and found it to be of measurable benefit to children and young people, church leaders have decided to offer it to young people who are not receiving it at school. This will be the first time we have delivered V.I.P. in a church setting and we hope it will catch on with other churches, particularly in areas where schools are not involved with us.

And lastly for this month, sadly, Chilli the chinchilla died last month. She never recovered from the problems she was having with her mouth and teeth. We all did our best but we just got her too late to make a difference. The young people and workers are all missing her.

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