

SAMARITANS

in Cambridge

The Newsletter of Cambridge Samaritans and Friends

Summer/Autumn 2008

Samaritans Hall Refurbished

Cambridge Samaritans have long been fortunate that at Emmanuel Road we have the benefit of a large and spacious hall for events such as training and recruitment sessions. However, any volunteer - or anyone who has been to an open evening in winter - will tell you that sitting in the hall, huddled against a heater whilst trying to avoid the draughts could make an evening's meeting seem to go on for a very long time indeed!

This year has seen a stunning transformation of the hall. Thanks to an army of hardworking people from both inside and outside the Movement who gave time and support, the hall has become warm, airier, more modern and altogether a greatly more pleasant place.

The support for Samaritans amongst local businesses has been humbling, and we have been given some very good terms that have allowed us to afford good quality materials and fittings. The walls and ceiling have been insulated, double glazing fitted as well as a new boiler and radiators, carpets, new lighting and some very impressive storage units. The airy yellow and green colour scheme is businesslike but soothing.

Training and recruitment sessions will be transformed, not only by the vastly improved atmosphere of the hall itself, but also by a new interactive white-board which allows for impressive presentations. Again, it was the generosity of both regular supporters and local business which have allowed its purchase.

The list of people who have been crucial to the fantastic work that has been done is unfortunately

too long for us to mention everyone here. However, we hope that an even greater number of people will enjoy the hall, and find inspiration to help our callers every time they use it.

As part of the national 24:7 Samaritans awareness day, the hall will be officially reopened on the 24th July. Join us between 2pm and 7pm and see the transformation for yourself!



Volunteers have been out and about at a series of events in the last few months. A car boot sale in Kennet, a tombola at Newmarket Carnival and a book sale at the Big Weekend event on Parker's Piece between them made over £500 and helped to raise awareness - no-one could miss our bright green tabards!



A Week in the Life of a New Director

Responsibility for the day to day running of Cambridge Samaritans lies with the Director, who is selected from among the volunteers after consultation with everybody in the Branch. It is a vital and hugely demanding role, undertaken usually for three years...and of course for no pay! In May, Lesley took up the role; she describes her week.

Monday

Called in to the Centre after work to open the post. Delighted to find a donation from a local women's group and several references for potential volunteers. Both, in their different ways, are the life blood of the organisation. There were bills of course; there always are! One was for the contract for our phone system – the main tool of the trade. Chatted to the volunteers on phone and email duty. We welcome visitors in the centre and in the future we will be texting. We need to reach as many people as possible.

Tuesday evening

Went to a team meeting. Volunteers meet regularly in small groups. I am trying to find out what makes a good team. I have found out so far that teams help volunteers feel they belong, provide a relaxed environment to talk about all aspects of what we do. and help with two-way communication – from meetings in the centre to volunteers and vice versa. It was one of our teams that was inspired to lead on the refurbishment of our hall. It is now a lovely place to be – warm and comfortable and much more suited to our needs.

Wednesday and Thursday

I was away for work for two days and so handed over the reins to one of the excellent Deputy Director team. Each one has their own area of responsibility and they provide cover when I am away. Kept up with phone calls and emails while I was away. There is so much going on all the time. One email was from our outreach volunteer – to say that he had arranged to run five sessions with young people in a local community college – part of our work is to make sure that everyone knows who we are and how to get in touch when they are going through bad times.

Friday night

Went in with a colleague to a Listener meeting at HMP Littlehey. We recruit, train and support prisoners to work as Samaritans in prison – they are called Listeners.

Saturday – a quiet day for me. One of our teams was running a stall – for publicity and for fundraising at Newmarket Gala – with volunteers from a neighbouring branch - Bury St Edmunds. There are 15 branches in the Eastern region and 202 in Great Britain and Ireland.

Sunday

I went to the centre to get a bit of sleep before a duty starting at 2.30 a.m. Everyone in the organisation has a minimum commitment of four duties a month. Since I became Director I have welcomed duties more than ever. I only have to think about callers – that is what we are about after all.

Samaritans provides confidential, non-judgmental emotional support, 24 hours a day for anyone experiencing feelings of distress or despair.

Phone: **08457 90 90 90**

Email: **jo@samaritans.org**

Visit: **4 Emmanuel Rd, Cambridge CB1 1JW**

Open for visitors daily
10.30am - 10pm.



Friends' Report

The Friends of Cambridge Samaritans are volunteers who fundraise for the Branch.

We have had another successful year with an income of around £8500, the majority from supermarket and street collections. If you can help with collections do give me a call. The next one is in Cambridge on 12th September.

We also run a 100 Club where members donate £25 a year and participate in quarterly draws with 3 money prizes. If you would like to join, please contact me.

Samaritans national office is running a Summer Raffle with a £7000 first prize and several other cash prizes. The income from tickets we sell is retained by the Branch, so if you buy tickets you are contributing directly to our work locally. The draw is on 21st September.

After a couple of years without a Sponsored Swim we will be back next year with an event on 24th January at Next Generation Club in Cambridge. Full details will be available later in the year but do feel free to contact me now if you are interested.

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