



A word from our Chief Executive...

Welcome to our first Step by Step newsletter following our name change in January! It has certainly been an exciting time for us as we embark on a new phase of



our development as a charity. For those of you who are local to us, you will have seen our new fresh, clean shop fronts on Victoria Road and the rest of you will no doubt have seen the new look of our website or correspondence – including this newsletter. However, although we might look different and have a new name, our fundamental reason for

being remains the same – the young people.

At Step by Step we remain committed to our mission to 'empower homeless people and those facing adversity

to achieve their full potential'. Our services continue to evolve, expand and develop in response to the needs of the young people in our community – particularly our Supportive Lodgings provision, which you will read about later.

I would like to thank you all for your support throughout the name change. It was an arduous process but we are already seeing evidence of the positive difference to the organisation. We are delighted that it has been so positively received by you: our partners, supporters and friends.

Thank you.

Amanda Dubarry
Chief Executive



HELP wins High Sheriff award

Following a very well received presentation by our HELP (Homeless Education Liaison Project) Group at Surrey Council for Voluntary Youth Service's 'Celebration of Youth' event last summer, we were invited to submit an application for a High Sheriff of Surrey Award.

We are very proud to announce that we have been successful in our application and received our award from the High Sheriff of Surrey, Adrian White CBE DL on 15th March. The Mayors of Rushmoor, Surrey Heath and Waverley also joined us on the day to celebrate receiving the award.

During his visit, Mr White visited our accommodation and youth development projects in Aldershot and spent time with the young people discussing the issues affecting their lives. Of particular interest to Mr White were the barriers to employment and education experienced by the young people. He also spent time discussing the reasons for youth homelessness and the stereotypical views associated with homeless people.

Ivan Norris, HELP Project Worker said: "I'm very proud that the young people have received this award. They are thoroughly dedicated and



committed to their work and spread an important and powerful homelessness prevention message to thousands of children every year. This is a great boost to the HELP project and the young people themselves and we are very grateful for the recognition of our important work."

Attached to the award was a donation of £2,500 which will go, in part, towards funding the work of the HELP group **...enormously impressed by the work of Step by Step...**

Mr White said that he had been enormously impressed by the work of Step by Step, more so than by any other charity that he had visited throughout his term of office.

Official boost for Supportive Lodgings

Late last year, to mark the 40th Anniversary of the BBC drama documentary 'Cathy Come Home', which put homelessness on the public agenda, the Communities Secretary, Ruth Kelly, MP, delivered a speech entitled 'Tackling the changing face of homelessness'. In her speech Ruth Kelly said that "it is unacceptable for a

"It is unacceptable for a civilised society like ours to expect homeless 16 and 17 year-olds to be on their own in bed and breakfast hotels."

civilised society like ours to expect homeless 16 and 17 year-olds to be on their own in bed and breakfast hotels. This is

one of the worst faces of homelessness today. We are making a commitment today that, by 2010, 16 and 17 year-olds will not be placed in bed and breakfast hotels unless it is an emergency. One measure is that local authorities and local partners will establish supportive lodgings schemes across the country".

Those of you familiar with our services will know that Step by Step has been successfully operating Supportive Lodgings for almost ten years. The scheme provides accommodation for young people with householders who provide both a room in their

home and support, so that the young person develops life skills, finds independence and then moves on to their own accommodation.

Amanda Dubarry, Chief Executive said: "We are delighted that Supportive Lodgings has been recognised by the government as one of the best ways of tackling the issues associated with youth homelessness. Of course it comes as no surprise to us, as we have seen many

young people benefit significantly from living in a supportive and homely environment rather than being forced into bed and breakfast accommodation that is entirely inappropriate for young people."



Following the Ruth Kelly speech, Step by Step is pleased to announce it has secured further contracts with local authorities and expanded existing ones. We now run Supportive Lodgings Schemes with Hampshire County Council Care Leavers and Supporting People Teams, Rushmoor Borough Council, Surrey Heath Borough Council, East Hampshire District Council.



Norman Ashcroft, Supportive Lodgings Project Manager said: "The number of young people seeking help from us through local authorities is steadily increasing. Our schemes aim to bridge the gap between home or being in care and living independently in the community. We are currently seeking people from all walks of life to become carers – married or single, with or without children, young or not so young. Householders do not

"We are currently seeking people from all walks of life to become carers..."

need any pre-set qualifications, but we do ask them to attend a short, informal training programme. Young people are carefully matched with

those offering accommodation. The aim is for the young person eventually to move on to independent living. Some need a lot of support, others need very little, but they all need encouragement to help them mature. The end result can be very rewarding for everyone."

If you think you can help, or would like to know more about the scheme, please contact Norman on 01252 313158 or email norman.ashcroft@stepbystep.org.uk.

Testament to success

During my stay with Step by Step, which spanned almost 5 years, I could be nothing more than grateful for the help I received.

When you are in a position where you have nowhere to turn and little solid advice available, it is critical that organisations like Step by Step are there to help. Support is not only necessary in day to day matters such as looking for work or helping to find you housing, but also dealing with the challenges of being a young adult. At a time when I was going through so many changes and facing this for the first time the support from Step by Step was essential and it helped influence the direction my life took. The positive attitude of staff members is key to enabling young people to move on. By simply lending an ear to discuss your problems such as splitting up from a girlfriend or problems with family, (which in most cases was my issue), young people are provided with support that they otherwise would not receive from anyone.



I think one of the most unique things about Step by Step is their staged model of accommodation. They don't just provide emergency accommodation but rather give you the opportunity to move through their projects, proving they are committed to providing longer term support. This means that young people can slowly build their confidence and ability to live independently, many for the first time.

Thanks to the support I received, I now run two successful businesses, am married with two children, and able to help others in difficult situations. It is of paramount importance that places like Step by Step are available for young people in trouble so that they can turn their lives around and move forwards positively in life.

Mike Jackson

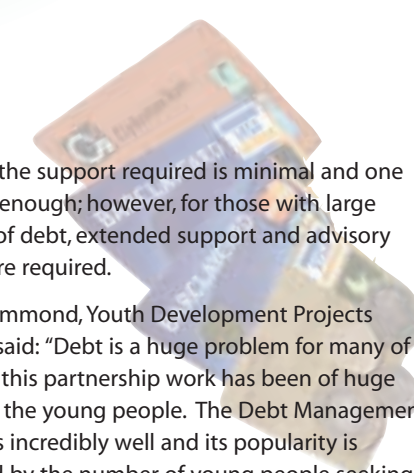
V Funding

Early this year, in partnership with Rushmoor Citizens Advice, we submitted a bid for funding for a programme of volunteering which would enable young people from Step by Step to become involved in the Citizen's Advice Bureau in Aldershot on a voluntary basis. We are delighted to announce that the bid has been successful and from April the scheme will be up and running.

Naomi Hammond, Step by Step's Youth Development Projects Manager said: "This is a great funding win and it really cements the working partnership we already have with Rushmoor Citizens Advice. Traditionally it has proved difficult to get work placements for the young people – this programme will allow them to get experience in a working environment while receiving support from the staff teams at the CAB and Step by Step. The young people need to be committed and dedicated to their voluntary roles and we hope to see some very positive outcomes for them at the end of their placements."

Steve Allen, a young person supported by Step by Step, added: "I'm really pleased that we've been able to get this funding. It gives us a chance to volunteer with the CAB and could even lead to us being trained as CAB Advisors, which would be great. I'm hoping to be one of the young people taking part in the scheme; it will be nice to be doing something which will make a difference to someone else. I hope that by volunteering it will make it easier for me to get a job in the future."

Step by Step would like to thank Rushmoor Citizens Advice for embarking on this partnership and we look forward to reporting back on the success of this project in forthcoming newsletters.



For some the support required is minimal and one session is enough; however, for those with large amounts of debt, extended support and advisory services are required.

Naomi Hammond, Youth Development Projects Manager said: "Debt is a huge problem for many of our clients, so this partnership work has been of huge benefit to the young people. The Debt Management Clinic runs incredibly well and its popularity is evidenced by the number of young people seeking appointments. Our young people can at times be difficult to connect with, but Janine is fantastic with them. She has great empathy and her communication skills are fantastic."

Thank you for our Christmas...

Once again we were delighted with the donations we received in the run up to Christmas. We received enough gifts so that every young person received some presents on Christmas morning. We were also fortunate with food donations, and Christmas dinner proved to be a big hit with the young people. Every year we have a large number of clients who remain with us over the Christmas period. We do our best to make Christmas an enjoyable time for them, but we couldn't do this without your help – so thank you!



"I was really dreading Christmas - it was my first one away from my family and I thought it would be a lonely and sad time. I really had a good day in the hostels, everyone helped to get ready for the day and we all helped with getting dinner ready. We all had some presents to open and I didn't expect that at all. I'd like to thank you for helping to make my Christmas one of the best for a while."

Anna (aged 17)

Debt management

As a further extension of our close working relationship with Rushmoor Citizens Advice we have formed a partnership to deliver debt management advice through our Youth Development Projects. This is a very important development, especially in the light of a recent report that Rushmoor Borough has the highest level of Voluntary Insolvency Applications in the British Isles.

Janine, a CAB Advisor from Aldershot, comes to our Daylight project to see young people who are struggling to settle debts and/or keep out of debt. The Debt Management Clinic runs every Tuesday and has proved to be a very popular addition to our provision. Since starting in January, Janine has supported nine young people and sees three young people on a one-to-one basis each week.

Army help for 'Quartermaster's stores'

In early January we were pleased to welcome Quartermaster Lee Austin and two of his cadets from Aldershot Garrison, Emma and Lisa, to Step by Step. We were very grateful for their assistance in helping us organise our food store. Every year we receive a significant amount of food donations which are absolutely essential to our operation. However, we continually struggle with finding adequate and efficient storage. Lee, Emma and Lisa joined with some young people from Step by Step to empty and sort the food store before cleaning and re-equipping it, with shelving donated by Aldershot Garrison.



We are delighted that we now have fantastic storage for our donations, a system to ensure that food is used up in order of sell-by-date and an efficient way of seeing exactly what and how much we have.

Jenny Turner, Accommodation Projects Manager said: "I can't tell you how valuable the input from Lee and his team has been. We have been struggling to establish a proper system in the food store for some time. Although we always use our donations, the store itself proved difficult to manage and meant that it was hard for young people to find what they needed. The new systems in place are proving to be very successful and a visit to the food store is a much nicer experience! On behalf of the young people and staff of Step by Step I would like to thank the Aldershot Garrison for supporting us in this way."

Splash for Cash 2007

This is an 'all age event' where taking part is the important part! Organised by Fleet Rotary Club, Splash for Cash 2007 is a great opportunity to raise funds for your chosen charity as well as Step by Step. The event is taking place on Saturday 9th June at 6.00pm at Hart Leisure Centre. As Fleet Rotary Club's chosen charity, Step by Step will receive half the funding, with the other half going to charities of the swimmers' choice. Swimmers are invited to enter in teams of six; however if you are having difficulty recruiting a team then please contact us on 01252 327317 and we will endeavour to find a team for you!

A big 'thank you'...

... to all the organisations, churches and individuals who continue to support our work, including; The Church of the Good Shepherd, The Worshipful Company of Makers of Playing Cards/The Cutler Trust, The Parish of Cove, Mytchett Vale Women's Club, Coutts Charitable Trust, Sir Jules Thorn Charitable Trust, URC Fleet, Fleet Baptist Thursday Fellowship, Frimley Church of England Junior School, St Andrew's Church, Crookham Village Women's Institute, St Joan's Church, St Barnabas Church, Johnson's Wax, Educational & General Charitable Trust, Christ Church, Heatherside Badminton Club, Christ the King and Saints Peter & John, National Grid (Wokingham), Alfred Haines Charitable Trust, Calthorpe Park School, Home Trust, St Mary's Church, Fleet PCC, St Andrew's Church of Scotland, Yateley Area Churches Together, The Parish of Frimley, Rotary Club of Rushmoor, Church of Our Lady in Fleet.

...and, of course, all our members, friends and supporters whose commitment to our young people remains absolutely invaluable.

A profitable day's stroll

Once again this year we are looking for walkers to join our team at the Surrey Advertiser Annual Sponsored Charity Walk. The event is taking place on 29th April and starts from Shalford Park, off the A281 Shalford Road at 9.45am. The event is jointly organised by the Surrey Advertiser and The Rotary Club of Guildford District. The walk takes a picturesque route out of Guildford to Chilworth, returning by a meandering country route back to Shalford Park, and is about 9 miles. There are manned checkpoints with a supply of free liquid refreshment along the way! Come and join us and enjoy a beautiful walk in the spring and raise some funds for Step by Step.



Sponsorship forms are available from Liz Slatter (email liz.slatter@stepbystep.org.uk, or phone 01252 327317). Sponsorship forms must be accompanied by a proof of entry token which can be obtained from copies of the Surrey Advertiser leading up to the walk, or they can be purchased on the day for 50p. All proceeds raised by our walkers will go to Step by Step.

Step by Step

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