



Issue No 15
Spring 2008

Sure Start

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Welcome to our spring newsletter. We're still busy running over 35 groups a week across West Lothian, for details please see our website www.wlcsurestart.org.uk or the Parenting West Lothian Link, or give us a call on 01506 775836

CUSTOMER SURVEY RESULTS

The customer survey we did in March was very useful to us and we were pleased to hear how many people felt that Sure Start helped.

Forty-nine people completed the questionnaire and felt we helped them / their child feels safe (96%) valued (96%) responsible (94%) supported (92%), part of community (92%) healthy (88%), cared for (100%); achieve more (100%).

When we asked what kind of problems they had help with, the most common were relationships (11) behaviour (11) social isolation (6) or pregnancy (5). All of these people said Sure Start helped, 30 said we helped a lot.

Comments included "I couldn't have done it without you" "great value for money" (some activity groups cost 50p: the rest of our groups are free). They also said other groups cost more

Suggestions for improvement – "more often", "more staff", "more on self esteem".

STAFF NEWS

Kate Malcolm has gained her Food & Nutrition Certificate from the Royal College of Food and Nutrition, and Nancy Cameron has achieved her Trainers Award in Video Interaction Guidance (V.I.G.)

Denise Black attended the Daisy Drop In residential in the Easter holidays. The parents learned about committee working and financial responsibility and they said it was a useful time away.

We have a student with us at present, Roddy Downie from Adults Services who is enjoying working with families and babies, as well as having a new baby of his own.

NEW MANAGER SETTLES IN

Paula Huddart our new manager has been out and about visiting Sure Start groups and attending meetings. She says "It's great to see busy groups like Jumping Jacks in Armadale with over 30 babies and toddlers coming along. And great to hear that mums and

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grannies enjoy it too. They say "It's a chance to meet other people".

She has also visited a "Getting Through The Day" follow-on group of parents at the Lanthorn, who said how much support they get from meeting with each other each week. They've had a variety of speakers this term and trying new activities like yoga.

Paula is also visiting the crèches, which are now registered with the Care Commission.

At the Dads Group she saw messy play and then a feedback group with the dads about the play session.

Sure Start Information Sessions

- ☺ Wednesday 25th June 2008
- ☺ Friday 25th July 2008
- ☺ Wednesday 27th August 2008

These sessions are for any new staff in West Lothian and will provide information about our services. The sessions are held in the Sure Start Office, Unit G, Kirkton Business Centre, Livingston Village. Sessions start at 9am and last 1 hour approx.

VOLUNTEERS!

Well done to Clair and Marie Andreotti who received the Millennium Volunteer Award of excellence signed by First Minister Alex Salmond. Marie and Clair completed 200 hours volunteering for Peer Education.



A new Peer Educators course is underway with nine enthusiastic volunteers who will complete the course by end of June and be available to deliver Peer Education for Sure Start

And well done to Carolanne McGinty (Clerical Assistant) took part in the Albert Bartlett Edinburgh Marathon Chevrolet Hairy Haggis Team Relay in aid of Victim Support. Carolanne has clocked up 160 hours (so far) volunteering for Victim Support

And congratulations to Mhairi Hall who has completed her Cosca 3 in Counselling and is now working towards Cosca 4

GETTING THROUGH THE DAY

Getting through the Day

This parenting course continues to be run by more and more workers across West Lothian, and outcomes are very good for parents' self-esteem and how they rate their children's behaviour. We are now training 5 mothers to be co-workers delivering the course, and so far they seem to be enjoying this.

The Friday support group for "graduates" of "Getting through the Day" continues to go well. The group has also planned a Kick-Boxing club which will get going in September. If you are interested, get in touch with Sure Start.

"POSITIVE STEPS"

(a group supporting mothers with post-natal depression)

Sure Start and the new Perinatal Service at St John's hospital discussed support around for mothers who suffer from depression in their baby's first year. Health Visitors were providing great support running 2 New Horizons groups, but there were pressures on their time and resources. We agreed that perhaps there was need for more support, and agreed that Sure Start and the Unit would run an additional group for the whole of West Lothian. In March 2008 we started our pilot Positive Steps Group. The group ran for 12 weeks with the first 8 weeks looking at women's feelings - depression and anxiety - with speakers coming along as well. The final 4 weeks were play activity sessions between mums and babies. We ended each session with baby massage, which went down a storm with both mums & babies. Given how well people engaged with this group, we are hoping to run a follow-on group in the school summer holidays using health & fitness activities as way of promoting good mental health and well being.

If you want more information about "Positive Steps" contact Karen Love or Mhairi Hall at Sure Start or Mhairi O'Byrne or Catherine Fergus-Allan at the Perinatal Unit.

EARLY YEARS STAFF TRAINING DAY

The Social Policy Early Years Staff will be taking a day out on Wednesday 1st October to plan future services, taking account of new policies and what the public say they value.

EARLY YEARS CONFERENCE

The Sure Start Conference this year is about Parental Drug & Alcohol Misuse - the impact on children, and local services for parents. It will be held on Wednesday 12th November and the main speaker is Dr Marina Barnard, University of Glasgow. Venue is still to be confirmed.

DRIVING AHEAD FOR CRECHE WORKERS

Some of the Sure Start young mums who have already undergone Crèche Worker training are now taking part in a **Driving Ahead** course to help them to improve their employment options. Being able to drive opens up more job opportunities in terms of accessibility of location and also gives parents more flexibility to organise their childcare and family commitments.

This course was funded for Sure Start by Access 2 Employment as part of an initiative to help increase the childcare workforce. It consists of 8 theory classes delivered by Community Based Adult Learning along with 8 driving lessons with Euan's School of Motoring which are taken each week at a time to suit the individual. The cost of taking the theory and practical tests is also reimbursed.

Many of the young parents have been helped to get back to work through gaining employment as Sure Start Crèche Workers. There are opportunities to work as Crèche Workers with Sure Start in a variety of group settings and with various other organisations throughout West Lothian.

The young mums have enjoyed the course so far and are hoping to pass their theory tests soon as a first step to getting on the road to success...



We wish them good luck!

A new Introduction to Crèche Work course will be starting after summer. Watch for more information.