



Exeter Community Initiatives

Grant aided by



Newsletter

Spring 2007

WELCOME TO OUR NEW CHAIR

We are delighted to report that Heather Morgan is due to become the new Chair of ECI at the end of March.

Heather is a qualified solicitor, specialising in crime and mental health law, interests she now pursues as a member of the Parole Board, as a legal member of the Mental Health Review Tribunal, and as a lecturer in mental health law.

She has had a long involvement in the Church of England at local and national level and chairs the governing body of St Peter's School.

Heather began her association with ECI in 1991 as committee member of the Palace Gate Project, and is looking forward to working with us all again.

So if we look more deeply into that example, here is a committed group of people who, because they exist and do the work that they do, touch a number of peoples' lives. Who knows how far those ripples spread out?

Then I looked behind me, as it were, and saw all of you who support the work of ECI and how through your good intentions and actions you are linked, albeit invisibly, to the work of each group that ECI supports and all the lives that they touch.

And this for me is what spiritual footprints are about: the invisible threads that link our intentions and actions to the manifestation of acts of service, and the invisible web of interconnectedness that links us all.

Carole Pilley,
Community Development Manager

'SPIRITUAL FOOTPRINTS'

At the Annual Review Meeting last November we were speaking about how our work at ECI makes a difference.

In reflecting on this question and thinking about what I wanted to say, I was struck by the number of levels on which a difference can be made, and how many people are potentially part of the process. I had also at that time attended a Fundraising Conference where a speaker had mentioned the concept of 'spiritual footprints' and that idea had gelled with my thinking about making a difference.

What I started to see was the interconnectedness of our actions and how linked we are as humans. I can tell you, for example, that I supported a local group to obtain a grant which safeguarded a job and enabled them to provide a service to 50 people for a year. That provides an objective picture of a difference I have made but it is really only one level of looking at the world, and for me lacks richness and colour.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE QUARTER

ECI has won 'preferred bidder' status to provide Children's Centre services in Central Exeter

St Sidwell's Centre has hosted 377 group sessions/activities, providing 3106 individual sessions, with 70 different groups using the centre

8 new referrals have been received by the PORCH project, and 17 people have been supported in finding and/or maintaining accommodation

10 more CARD mentors have been trained, bringing the total to 34, 20 of which are currently matched to mentees

The new Community Centre in Exwick has been open for four months and business is thriving

18 community groups have been supported by the Ujima and Supporting Community Development in Exeter projects

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

New Project Update

Following an evaluation of a number of ideas, a new project has been identified as a priority for development by the Team. It is proposed that ECI explore developing a Time Bank project for the city, building on the work of the (now ceased) Wonford scheme, by expanding it to other disadvantaged areas of the city.

Time Bank projects encourage community activity by enabling individuals to exchange skills and activities with other community members, measured in multiples of one hour. Each hour of time is worth the same, and the project relies on striking a balance between the needs of members and the skills and activities on offer.

Laura Callaway, Project Development Worker, is leading on this new area of work. She can be contacted on 01392 205801.

Homelessness Collaboration

This project has progressed well in the last quarter. Thanks to funding from Exeter City Council, a Service Audit is under way that will map exactly what each frontline homeless organisation does, and with whom. It will also highlight any gaps in service as well as possible overlaps.

A Client Audit is also being planned with Exeter City Council, as part of their Homelessness Strategy. This will give an opportunity for homeless people to express their views about the current services available and what they need most. Information from this exercise will help to shape future services.

EATS Project (Exeter Accredited Tenants' Scheme)

Following a successful application to the Devon Community Foundation, EATS has been able to provide tenancy training courses to Care Leavers in Exeter. Jenny from MOP has been delivering the courses at the Youth Enquiry Service building in George Street. This time the course has been cut into shorter sessions with smaller groups and is non-accredited to cut down the amount of coursework needed. This strategy is working well so far, with four care leavers attending twice a week. The next course is planned to begin at the end of March.

Housing Project

ECI are currently talking with Exeter Shilhay Community about working together to develop a Housing Project. The project would enable property to be purchased on the open market, or to be built using sustainable technology, in order to provide more affordable accommodation in the city.

This could be an effective partnership between two well-respected organisations, each bringing skills and expertise to the project: Shilhay in housing management and ECI in project development.

We would like to hear from anyone that has skills or experience in building, managing, letting, or developing residential property. Contact Trevor Gardner on 01392 661330.

Friday Night's Alright!

ECI has been working with members of the Mint Methodist Church on Fore Street to help them with the process of setting up a new project. It has the working title of "The Friday Night Project" and as the name suggests, it is planned that initially on Friday nights, local pub and club-goers will be offered light refreshments, a listening ear and a safe space to meet friends or wait for a taxi home.

Other local churches are interested in linking in with this work, including the Cathedral and Exmouth's Open Door Centre which already opens up late at night on Saturdays.

Church Re-Development

There is evidence to suggest that based on current trends (congregation levels, finances, etc) around one third of churches in Exeter are in danger of closure over the next 15-20 years.

ECI is currently working with one church in the city to help them think about their Mission (Aim), their building and how they might make the best use of the resources they have. If you are interested in thinking about these issues further regarding other churches in the city contact Trevor Gardner on 01392 661330.

Children's Centre Services

Last October ECI submitted a tender to manage and coordinate the Central Exeter Children's Centre as part of the County Council's phase 2 development of Children's

Centres. We heard just before Christmas that we were successful.

The aim of all Children's Centres is to improve the outcomes for all children by giving them the best start in life based on the five outcomes of the Every Child Matters Framework:

- Stay safe
- Be healthy
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being.

We are currently in the process of recruiting staff for this project and will keep you informed as it develops and grows.

If you would like to find out more about this project or would like to talk about any services that you provide for the under 5's and their families then please contact: Carole Pilley on 01392 205807 or email: carole@eci.org.uk

EXISTING PROJECTS

CARD Project (Close a Revolving Door)

The sixth Mentor Training course was held at the end of the year and provided CARD with a group of 10 new mentors. This means we now have a pool of 34 fully trained mentors, of which half are already matched with men either in Exeter Prison or the community. Our new mentors come from all walks of life bringing with them a wide range of skills and experiences, which is important when working with a diverse group of mentees.

We have a regular flow of clients who are involved with both CARD and PORCH, and relationships between the two projects have been cemented with the merging of the separate Management Committees into one.

Perspective from a new CARD mentor

"The training I undertook was friendly, supportive and realistic...so I felt well prepared when I met my mentee. I became aware in graphic detail of the difficulties affecting a repeat offender with little or no support on the outside. This only increased my respect for him as he struggled to maintain a positive outlook.

I am resolved not to give up on anyone and to go back again and again if necessary since that may be what it takes."

PORCH Project (Prolific Offenders' Resettlement through Co-ordinated Housing)

We are currently supporting 24 clients, 13 in the community and 11 in custody.

It is a constant challenge to find suitable accommodation for an offender leaving prison. However, with the generosity and co-operation of some landlords we have succeeded in placing six clients in private accommodation. They have all maintained their tenancies well and this has had a significant effect on their ability to stay drug and crime free.

If you are a landlord with accommodation to rent, please get in touch with us on 01392 205850.



We are delighted to welcome Tanya Hall as our new Community Support Worker who, with her experience and commitment, has already proved to be a real asset to the team.

Exwick Community Project

The Community Centre has now opened its doors and after only four months of trading, enough block bookings have been made to be half way towards break-even point for the financial year 2007/8, which is fantastic news.

One organisation that has been using the centre is Wolf & Water Productions, which will be running music production and DJ workshops with young people over the next two years at the centre. Some of the young people involved are fundraising to run their own sessions at the centre for other young people from the estate.

New Trustees are still very much needed to help build the capacity of Exwick Community Association. If you are interested in becoming a trustee please contact Tor Hodgson on 01392 410709.

'Ujima' Project (supports Black and Minority Ethnic communities in Exeter)

From commemoration to celebration, the last quarter has seen the Ujima Project helping on various projects from commemorating the Holocaust to Celebration of the Chinese New Year.

Kung hay fat choy! *(Happy New Year!)*

Ricky has had a few meetings with the Korean community, who, along with the Chinese, celebrated their New Year starting on Sunday 18th February (Year of the Pig). Over the coming months he hopes to be doing more work with them to celebrate other cultural events.

The Hikmat Chinese group had a celebratory lunch at St Sidwell's Centre and the Unicorn dance was demonstrated. The elders would like to teach the youngsters the dance so we will be working together in finding a time and place for this to happen.

An-nyeong-he ga se yo. *(Goodbye, go well)*

Ricky was invited to the Synagogue to help develop the Holocaust Commemoration event on 25th January, to include other victims of the atrocity. Sally Woodbury, a Romany Gypsy who has been studying the plight of the Gypsy in the same camps, spoke about the ignorance around their traditions and the prejudice they still suffer today.

Ricky has recently supported a young Saudi student called Mo Nass to organise the 'Kick It Out' five-a-side football tournament at Exeter College, which attracted 10 teams. The event was very well attended and Mo is to be congratulated for enabling the event which challenges racism in sport.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

St Sidwell's Centre	01392 666222
CARD Project	01392 256246
Farm Hill/Kinnerton Way	01392 410709
SCDE/Ujima Project	01392 205807
PORCH Project	01392 205850
New Developments	01392 205801
General Enquiries	01392 205800

St Sidwell's Centre

We would like to say thank you to the Church Urban Fund and Signposts for their generous donations which have enable us to fit a disabled access door, which has greatly improved access for Centre users.

The issue of people coming onto site and drinking alcohol or using illegal drugs has recently been tackled with vigour. Planting a prickly hedge along the perimeter wall prevents people from sitting there and drinking in the grounds, plus we have been given guidance on our procedures from Police Chief Inspector Adrian Brigden and Andy Lewis, our Neighbourhood Beat Manager.

We are facilitating a number of group sessions at the centre currently, including The Wren Music Trust every Friday morning, and Ki Health International, who will be holding free sessions at St Sidwell's throughout March. Ki Health is a Korean holistic approach to good long-term health.

We are also facilitating 'Cook & Eat' sessions in partnership with Exeter City Council and Entry 2 Employment. These are aimed at young people aged between 16-19 to gain skills and experience in Healthy Living and promoting the 5-a-day programme. These skills will assist them in their everyday lives as they prepare for independent living.

Museum sessions prove popular

The Royal Albert and Memorial Museum (RAMM) held their first of many sessions at St Sidwell's, this session focused on clocks. The feedback received was great and we look forward to RAMM visiting again, during their period of refurbishment at the museum.

Finally, as part of our business plan we will be visiting the Heathcote Centre in Tiverton and The Jan Cutting Healthy Living Centre in Plymouth. We aim to gain valuable insight from them to help shape the future direction of St Sidwell's. As part of this process we have applied for funding from the Triodos Bank to pay our hosts and cover our expenses.

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