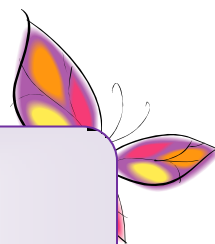


WOMEN SUPPORTING WOMEN
Supporting Positive Mental Health



Annual Report 2011

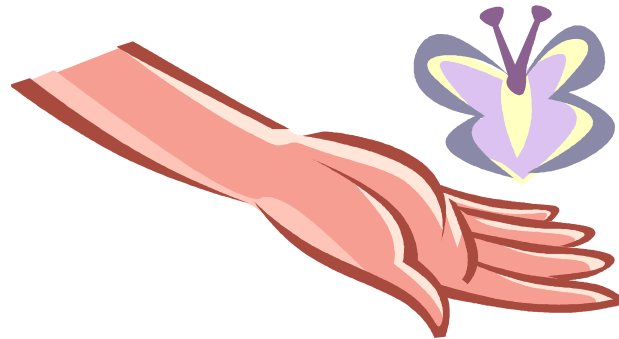
*We are not the destination
We are the journey*



WOMEN SUPPORTING WOMEN
Peter Street Community Centre, Peter Street, St. Helens, WA10 2EQ
01744 451309
2012

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MISSION STATEMENT



IT IS OUR BELIEF THAT
ALL WOMEN HAVE
THE POTENTIAL FOR
GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT.

WOMEN SUPPORTING WOMEN
ARE COMMITTED TO
SUPPORTING AND
ENCOURAGING
THEM ON THEIR JOURNEY

INTRODUCTION

What a year 2011 has been for Women Supporting Women; it has certainly been a year of change, growth and achievement. This is because of the commitment, dedication and determination of the staff and volunteers at the centre.

Our first major change was the return to Peter Street, as many of you who joined us for the Opening Day Celebrations will know; WSW began its life at Peter St Community Centre as part of the Youth Service Provision. The past thirteen years has witnessed many many changes resulting in WSW returning to where it all began. The move has meant a great deal to me personally, I first came to WSW as a student counsellor and I remember well the original support group and how it used to be. To return to Peter Street as the manager of this well respected charity, which now offers a wide and professional range of support, is a privilege. As in the beginning WSW continues to offer all support services for women free of charge, including our professional counselling service this is simply because all counsellors at the centre are volunteers or Diploma students, and all members of the BACP and each committed to offering a professional counselling provision. It has always been this way and will continue to be so. Some things do not need to change.

The second huge change is the renaming of the centre. For some time WSW has also carried the name 'The Chrysalis Centre for Change, after much thought and discussion it was felt that now was a good time to rename WSW. We are about change, we are about new beginnings and we are about moving



on, our symbol has always been the Butterfly. Our new name emerged from all of this; just as the Butterfly emerges from the Chrysalis. On March 8th 2012 WSW will become 'The Chrysalis Centre for Change' and will no longer be known as Women Supporting Women.

One of the reasons for the name change is due to our third major change at the centre. Having taught in St Helens College for some years I made the decision to apply to ABC, for accreditation for the centre. This would enable us to deliver counselling courses here at the centre with the same certification and qualification as the colleges. I am very happy to say that we were successful with our application and in January we began our first ABC Level 2 Award in Counselling Concepts and after Easter we will be delivering The ABC Certificate in Counselling Skills. It is also our intention in the near future to deliver a Level 4 Diploma in Counselling and to establish ourselves not only as a professional and caring support centre for women but also as a place of learning where you can learn how to be a counsellor in a supportive and safe environment, taught by professionals with vast experiences and who care about the profession. This is a major change for the centre as these courses will also be offered to men. This was a major factor when considering the renaming of the centre.

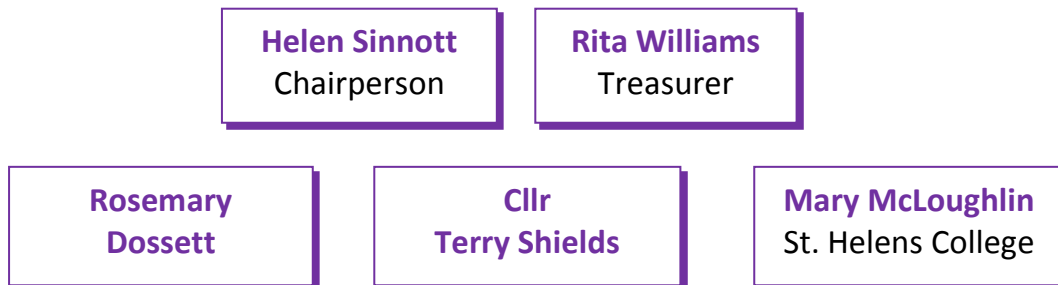
There have been other changes at the centre, new team members, new student counsellors, a new volunteer counsellor, all positive and encouraging for the future of 'The Chrysalis Centre for Change'

*Sue Clarke MBACP MIFC
Centre Manager*

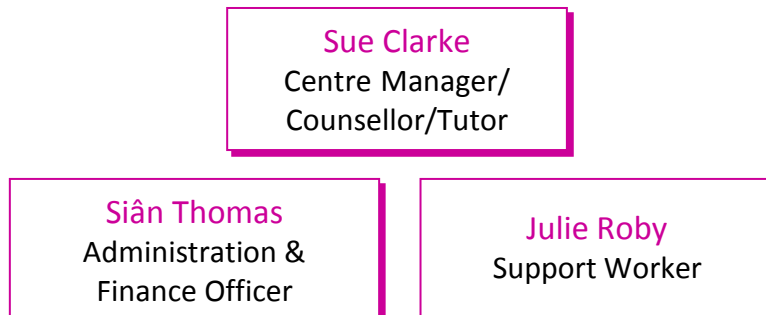
Women Supporting Women

Organisational Structure Chart 2011

Trustees



Staff



Volunteers



Professional Counselling Service

Report by Julie Roby, Support Worker/Counsellor

At WSW we are extremely proud of our counselling team who offer a highly professional service for women on a one-to-one basis. Counselling is a relationship which is based on trust and respect where the client uses the safety of the relationship to explore deeply personal issues. During the sessions the counsellor helps the client to work through feelings and emotions; facilitating awareness and supporting positive changes.

It is vital to our organisation that we only accept counsellors and student counsellors who are highly skilled and come with recommendations from sources which are reliable and professional. All our counsellors are members of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy and operate according to their codes of ethical practise.

Moving to our new larger premises at Peter Street has enabled us to expand our much needed counselling service. In 2011, WSW were pleased to welcome four new members to our counselling team resulting in a reduction of our waiting list to two months; however we will work constantly towards further reducing waiting times.

Referrals for counselling continue to grow as more people are becoming aware of our centre due to networking activities. It is our intention to continue to expand in relation to the demand for counselling; therefore we welcome all referrals, and are proud to be able to offer this service.

Counselling Statistics 2011

Counselling Hours

No of Counselling Hours	524
No of clients seen	89
DNA's (Did Not Attend)	21

Postcodes of Clients

WA5, WA9, WA10, WA11,
WA12, WN5, L35

Age Groups of Clients

18 – 30: 16	31 – 40: 21	41 – 50: 29	50 – 59: 13	60+: 10
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Referral Numbers

GP's/Health:92

Self/Word of Mouth: 54

Other organisations: 27

Referrals for Counselling came from:

Arch Initiatives

CAHMS

CBT Therapist

Changes Weight Management

CMHT

Crisis Team

Domestic Violence Social Worker

Early Intervention Team

GPs

Halton Women's Centre

IAPT

Lifestyle Team

Life Support

Macmillan Nurse

Mental Health Advocate

Mental Health Nurse

MIND

Social Services

NSPCC

Open Minds

Social Inclusion Team

St. Helens Hospital

Together

Citizens Advice Bureau

Central Link Children's Centre

Connexions

CVS

Helena Extra

Honey Rose Foundation

Internet/Website

Jobcentre

Link

Moss Bank Children's Centre

Probation Service

Smart Group Facilitator

Self/Word of Mouth

Our new counselling room



Supported Drop-in

Report by Julie Roby, Support Worker/Counsellor

The drop-in is for any woman suffering from a mental health problem. It is held twice weekly and continues to grow in popularity. The atmosphere is laid back and friendly with the women chatting to each other while enjoying a cup of tea and a biscuit. Trained support workers are always on hand to chat with the ladies and offer emotional support, separate from the group if needed. It is a place where women can find comfort and support, whether they just call in for half an hour or stay for the duration, they can come to every drop-in or once in a while.

When any woman becomes a service user, our doors are always open to her and it is a personal choice how much and for how long she accesses the support we offer. Quite often the first visit to the centre will take place during the drop-in. When attending the centre for the first time, new ladies are greeted by a support worker who will have a chat with them about our services. The support worker will explain what WSW is all about and how we can help; if for any reason we cannot meet the needs of centre users, for example; if they require practical advice, WSW will always try to refer on to someone who can help.

On the first Thursday each month we are fortunate to have a very talented lady called Jeanne who comes in to run card making sessions. These sessions are very popular and the ladies make beautiful cards which they have the choice to keep or donate to the centre to be sold, with the money helping to boost much needed funds.

Also as part of the drop-in, the women enjoy relaxation sessions where they can listen to calming music and have a hand and arm massage. These sessions are put on at various dates and are very popular with the women.

It is so important to our organisation that we offer this place of safety and support where women can feel comfortable and valued.

Supported Drop-in User Comments

"The centre has become my retreat; I know that I can rely on whoever is there to be concerned about me, that's priceless."

Supported Drop-in Statistics

Postcodes of Service users

WA8, WA9, WA10, WA11, WN5, L33, L34, L35

Age Groups of service users

18-30: 8 31-40: 9 41-50: 27 51-60: 14 60+: 32

Referral Numbers

GPs/Health: 35

Other Organisations: 20

Self/Word of Mouth: 21

Referrals to the Drop-in came from:

Citizens Advice Bureau

Community Mental Health Team

Crisis Team

CVS

GP

Helena Extra

Honey Rose Foundation

IAPT

Jobcentre

Life Support

Lifestyle Team

Making Space

Probation Service

Social Service

Victim Support

Self/Word of Mouth

Our new Drop-in/Training Room



A Social Worker's View

Report by Joan Martin, Volunteer Support Worker

In February 2010 I started working on a voluntary basis for Women Supporting Women. As a registered member of the General Social Care Council I was able to use my skills whilst working. My code of practice as a member of the GSCC is:

1. As a social care worker, you must protect the rights and promote the interests of service users and carers.
2. As a social care worker, you must strive to establish and maintain the trust and confidence of service users and carers
3. As a social care worker you must promote the independence of service users whilst protecting them as far as possible from danger or harm
4. As a social care worker you must respect the rights of service users whilst seeking to ensure that their behaviour does not harm themselves or other people.
5. As a social care worker, you must uphold public trust and confidence in social care services.

I grade myself as being particularly fortunate to being in the position of volunteering for women supporting women and being able to use my codes of practice.

Volunteering for WSW I have learned a lot about this group of services users which has been very beneficial for me in my future work. I feel privileged to have seen the positive changes in services users over a short-term period, after having the support of the centre and all the people who work in there. The quality of the team is remarkable and the effort and time they take with each and every service user through empowerment.

I have also gained a personal confidence and on reflection of the work I have done in WSW. I am very proud of myself and all of the team. Below is a picture of me, the team and some service users at the last drop-in in the Parish Church



Education & Training

Report by Sue Clarke, Centre Manager

Confidence and Assertion Course



These courses continue to be fully subscribed to and the waiting list grows constantly. In 2010 WSW offered its first free C & A and since then the courses are offered regularly and continue to successfully support the personal development of all who attend.

Student evaluation *"I found the course beneficial towards my health and wellbeing. It helped me in many ways and to be myself again. I gained confidence in myself, the environment was excellent and calming and I learned something every week. I wouldn't be where I am today if it wasn't for Women Supporting Women".*

Skills for Life Course



This course is now being offered in addition to the C & A courses and offers a natural progression and opportunity to develop skills much needed to live a fully functional and productive life. This course has also proved to be very successful and will be offered at the centre as part of the services available for the foreseeable future.

Student evaluation *"After going to college and feeling very low in confidence it was amazing to go to such a warm inviting and friendly learning environment. It has made an enormous difference in my attitude to learning. I have recommended this course to lots of people, especially those who have issues with large colleges".*

Residential Courses

Again we were able to offer a self-development weekend at Foxhill to women who were in an emotionally good place to engage in the work involved. The theme for 2011 was 'The Inner Child'. This enabled everyone to find again the child within, engage with feelings and emotions and experience the powerful



effects of feeling free to laugh, cry and have fun. Recognising and accepting the shadow or dark side of our personality was also an essential learning experience and part of weekend. The course also offered the opportunity to experience guided relaxation sessions, engage in group activities for fun i.e. rehearsing and performing 'The Wizard of Oz' and participating in games in the grounds. Experiencing the peace and tranquillity offered by such a special place can only support the valuable work achieved by the weekend.

Student evaluation *"Finding my 'Inner Child' was a strange but rewarding experience. I learned a lot about myself and also answered a lot of questions that I had. While the weekend brought forward some negative memories it brought good ones too. I enjoyed play time and of course The Wizard of Oz will never be the same again. I'm now looking forward to Foxhill this year".*



In 2011 Julie, a member of the team began her associate teacher training course at St Helens College. Julie also attended Domestic Violence Training and is now our Domestic Violence Champion. The whole team attended in house organisational training sessions and also took part in a two day forward planning and team building residential at Foxhill.

Accreditation for 2012



In 2011 WSW was successful in gaining accreditation from ABC Awards to deliver counselling courses. This was a huge achievement and forward move for the centre. Students will have the opportunity to learn in a warm, safe and supportive environment, and in addition will experience a personal development residential as part of the level three programme. This achievement, when fully established will also offer some financial support to the

centre and the valuable and successful work being achieved. The first counselling course 'Counselling Concepts' began in January 2012 and will be followed in April by the Counselling Skills Level 3 Course and a second Counselling Concepts Course will be offered later in the year.

Education & Training Statistics

Postcodes of Students

WA9 WA10 WA11 WA12 WN5 L35

Age Groups

18-30: 4 31-40: 8 41-50: 13 51-60: 15 60+: 5

Referral numbers:

GPs/Health: 21 Other Organisations: 27 Self/Word of Mouth: 44

Referrals for courses came from:

GPs	Social Inclusion Team	Social Worker
IAPT/Open Minds	Probation Service	Making Space
Hope Centre	Helena Partnerships	Arch Initiatives
Psychologist	Mental Health Nurse	Self/Word of Mouth
Tenancy Support Worker	Crisis Team	Advertising
Helena Extra	Together	P/CMHT
Coalition for Disabled People	Mental Health Advocacy	Jobcentre

Foxhill 2011

Report by Debbie Fairhurst, Student Counsellor

What can I say about Foxhill? I'm not sure if there are words to describe such a place that makes a person feel whole and helps you to resolve conflicts within yourself. I had previously been before just for one night on a residential with a counselling course I was doing but didn't feel one night was enough to fully explore myself, so when the opportunity came for me to spend three nights there doing an inner child workshop I grabbed it with both hands.

I didn't necessarily go to learn about myself because at forty four years of age I thought I'd learnt all I needed to know and what I didn't know wasn't important! WOW how wrong was I, nothing and nobody could have prepared me for the experience I had and the effect it had on my life.

Three years ago I lost my best friend who was my sister. When she died I felt she had abandoned me and I didn't allow myself to grieve. Seven months ago I lost my beloved dog of eighteen years which left me feeling very vulnerable. I wasn't in a very good place mentally and felt as though the whole world was against me. At Foxhill I realised it was okay to be sad and allowed myself to grieve in this totally safe environment. I cried for my sister and I cried for my dog but most important of all I cried for myself and realised that when we lose people we love we don't lose our memories and when we allow ourselves to think about our loved ones it is as though they never went away.

We did lots of activities but the biggest thing I learnt was to listen to myself and love myself, and how precious life is. We only get one chance at life so we need to make the most of it. My sister died of a smoke related illness and as I also smoked thirty cigarettes a day and was overweight I worried about my health. I also spent all my spare time watching TV and never did any exercise. When I came home I threw my TV out of my bedroom gave up smoking and lost three stone in weight. I now know I want to experience life to the full and reach my full potential also I want to learn all there is about me. So I ask the question again, what can I say about Foxhills? Basically Foxhill gave me back my memories and brought me out of the darkness. Thank you.



Therapy Groups

Report by Julie Roby, Support Worker/Counsellor

The therapy group was set up to help women who are experiencing problems with stress, depression and anxiety. While we strive to keep the counselling waiting list low; large numbers of referrals mean that at its lowest it is a two month wait. The therapy group provides women with the opportunity to access therapeutic interventions in a group setting. Although the group is time structured, it is led by the women and facilitated by a qualified counsellor. The counsellor uses CBT interventions, which work with negative thought processes; how these thoughts affect the way we feel and ultimately behave. The women who access the group also benefit from the non-judgemental atmosphere and acceptance of the group; this safety enables members to share feelings and experiences, practice new ways of coping and make positive lasting changes.

Depression can lead to feelings isolated and cut off from others; women who join the group are often surprised at the similarity of feelings and issues that run through the group. The interactions between members help the women to learn from each other as well as allowing the expression of difficult emotions. All the women who attend the group have shown clear movement which is recorded on their individual seven step journeys.

Comments from therapy group members:

"I would definitely recommend the group to any woman who was struggling, after making that initial start, which is scary, it makes such a difference to your life."

"It has begun to help me to re-focus and make me stronger, I am beginning to feel in control of my destiny."



Therapeutic Craft Sessions

Report by Siân Thomas, Admin & Finance Officer



Therapeutic crafts at the centre continues to play an important role in service user development. Craft sessions empower women to be creative, when many don't believe they are. With encouragement and warmth a group of women can create beautiful handcrafted items to give to loved ones. There is something special about receiving a handmade card or gift from someone. It isn't just about the end product it is the time and love that has gone into producing it that makes it a keepsake, not just another card. Creating such an item gives a sense of achievement to service users.

Creative card sessions take place monthly and without fail the classes are full with women wanting to learn a new craft or a new technique. The informal and relaxed classes allow women to feed their creative sides and enjoy each other's company in a safe and non-judgemental atmosphere.

In addition to the popular card making classes, WSW introduced Scrapbooking to service users in 2011 and ran two ten week courses one in Spring, one in Autumn which proved to be extremely popular. Scrapbooking is a creative craft which involves preserving memories using photographs, memorabilia and a range of craft products. One of the many joys of this activity is that women are creating a keepsake which will last for generations to come.

All the products used are acid and lignin free meaning they will not wear out and will keep precious photographs and memories safe. At the end of the courses women had a scrapbook album full of memories displayed in a creative way that they could be proud of.

As part of therapeutic crafts, service users get to learn a whole host of new crafting techniques including embossing, rubber stamping, using inks, punching, die cutting and much, much more. Crafting can be an expensive hobby so by accessing therapeutic craft sessions service users get to try a range of tools, machines and techniques that may otherwise be too costly.

Celebration Day

Report by Siân Thomas, Admin & Finance Officer



Once again on March 8th, International Women's Day, WSW celebrated the achievements of service users and volunteers with special guests, Lady Pilkington, The Mayor of St. Helens, Cllr Neil Taylor, Dave Sweeney and Lynn Marsden from Halton & St. Helens PCT and representatives from a range of organisations.

For the second year running WSW were proud to present students with their Level 2 Diplomas for Progression in Personal Development. This was a significant moment for many students who prior to this qualification felt they would never achieve anything. As well as the Diploma certificates we also celebrated those who had completed Confidence & Assertion and Skills for Life Courses at the centre. Three star awards were given to ladies who had gone above and beyond the services at the centre and had taken what they had learnt and put it into practice by accessing further education or finding work.

I was one of the ladies who chose to give a talk at the celebration day. I spoke very personally about my 20 year eating disorder and how it had affected my self-esteem. I urged women to look beyond aesthetics for their own self-esteem and to find self-worth in their abilities, their character traits and their individuality. The underlying issues relating to my eating disorder had involved a fear of being vulnerable so I ended my talk by removing the podium so there was nothing between the audience and myself and then I read my poem:

The Real Me

Today I'm removing my mask
I'm tired of hiding behind it
Today I'm showing you who I am
And I won't be ashamed of it

You see I'm not just a strong woman
Swathed in purple and individuality
Because I have an eating disorder
And there's a small child shaking inside me

Know that when you look at me
that my body is the pain in my head
It's my every last emotion that
I have chosen to eat away instead

Most people hide their pain inside
But I don't have that luxury
Cos every inch of my overweight frame
Screams out offending society

A society that's always telling me
We're in the midst of a crisis of obesity
Yet every night all I see
Is thin and thinner women all over the tv

I can look in the mirror
And not feel ashamed of what I see
But in the outside world
I still feel that everyone's judging me

So today I am taking my mask off
I'm revealing my ultimate vulnerability
So the child that shakes inside can rest in peace
Because I'm finally showing you the real me.

I was overwhelmed and touched to then receive a standing ovation. I was also honoured and surprised to receive a special award for my dedication to WSW from Sue which I will treasure for the rest of my life.

The celebration day ended on a high note 🎵 🎵 🎵 with Bernie Whelan from Crescendo demonstrating her vocal talents and telling us about the amazing work she does in the community. This year we chose to sing Hey Jude. Bernie had the audience laughing and singing and she brought a great sense of joy to the occasion. It was a fitting way to close what had been a true day of celebration.



We Might Be Moving

Report by Debbie Fairhurst, Student Counsellor

I have rewritten this paragraph about five times and if it wasn't for the fact that we have computers I would have a rubbish bin full of screwed up paper! So I am not going to talk about the tension before the lead up to whether we moved or not, but I will say that it was a stressful time and all team members did extremely well considering they didn't know whether they were staying or going. Once we finally knew we were moving to Peter Street Community Centre it was all hands on deck as we started to pack things for the move. I couldn't understand what all the fuss was about as there was hardly much to move. It wasn't like we were moving house or anything there wasn't a great deal to move. Let's face it one small counselling room, a very small office come kitchen come reception come administration come, Oh well you get the gist, that little office did absolutely everything and then there was the relatively small service user room with only ONE small cupboard for tea and coffee etc: So that's about it really, were moving a small establishment to a big establishment - no big deal. Give out the word that we are moving and ask as anyone got any boxes to pack things in.

The Move!

Goodness gracious me I am 44 years of age and have moved house once in my life! When I was twenty and had my first son and lived with my mum and dad I moved to the top of the blooming street with my son and my partner and all my worldly goods. Ha we didn't even use a removal van because we pushed all my belongings to my new abode in my son's big metal bodied silver cross pram. So it wasn't rocket science to realise that the move from Church Square to Peter Street would only need a few boxes! Good grief you would not believe how much stuff and equipment was fitted in such a small space. We needed tons of boxes and extra strong cello tape it was all hands on decks. The day of the move finally arrived so on the August 15th I arrived at WSW at 8am bright and early and met Joan and Siân, we decided to have a coffee while we waited, till we realised that I had packed everything even the kettle. So we sat and waited for the burly removal men to come in their big van so they could load up and we could get out of there. Three men arrived, two looked like the chuckle brothers minus the moustaches and the other looked like Ronnie Corbett and they came in a small ice-cream van! Well it was a transit van, a very small transit van. You could have knocked me down with a feather. We had to help with the boxes as there were loads and it would have taken forever. Sue had told us not to let the archives leave our sight we were to treat them like the Queen's jewels so I decided to travel with them in the back of the van with the last load. So picture this! Me sat cross-legged in a reclining armchair in the back of a very small van in the pitch black with the Queen's jewels and the chuckle brothers driving. We all arrived at Peter Street in one piece where there was an army of volunteers all working extremely hard. The removal men had left all the furniture outside as they said it was heavy and they had bad backs, you couldn't make it up, but they were a really nice bunch of blokes. So I got to the new place a little dizzy, but was happy when I saw it for the first time, it was amazing and I just felt I belonged which is a good job because there's no chance I'm going to move again. We finally found the kettle in with the office things so all went well. We have well and truly fit into the new place and a lot of the service users say it's like coming home. The counselling rooms are amazing and the vibe is all good, I can't wait for the summer next year then we can take advantage of all the outside space we have, and really make our mark on the place.

Opening Day 2011

Report by Joan Martin, Volunteer Support Worker

The official opening day for the new Women Supporting Women centre was a day to remember. The sun was blazing and the team, even though very busy, were in good spirits. Preparation for this great event took part prior to this, where service users and team members worked together to make the day a special one.

The opening day itself was a remarkable occasion, all team members had their individual roles to complete, balloons adorned the stage, the PA system was set up for speeches and entertainment, tables aligned with tablecloths – colours of the centre and buffet ready.

Team members, service users, members of the public, charitable and statutory persons all mingled together integrated.

Speeches were made and presentations were given by various bodies. Cllr Terry Shields, one of our Trustees provided the entertainment bringing with him a very talented 13 year old girl called Daisy who sang for us. Her voice was amazing and we were really grateful that she chose to participate in this special day.

On reflection the best and most memorable part of the day for myself was when Lady Pilkington officially opened the centre and the realisation that all the team members at WSW work to the highest of standards, individually and as part of a team.

The picture below shows Lady Pilkington and Sue as guests applaud the official opening of our new centre. The plaque was created by John McDowell of Photos Engraved. He did an amazing job and gave us a discount due to our charitable status.



World Mental Health Day 2011

Report by Elaine Rothwell, Volunteer Support Worker

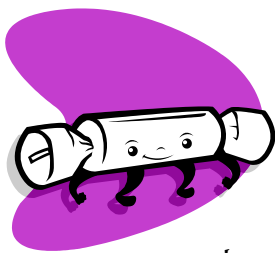
On October 10th 2011 we celebrated World Mental Health Day at WSW. We called our day, "Laugh Yourself Silly" and it was open to team members, services users, their friends, family and the general public. A lady came to teach us line dancing and we all had a great time and most importantly we had a good laugh.

As part of the day we were also able to make some humorous cards thanks to Siân and Jeanne. We told each other jokes and put on some fun music.

In the afternoon a lady came in to the centre to show everyone how to self-massage which was really interesting and helpful. She put on relaxing music so we could all wind down after a really enjoyable day. Everyone went home feeling a little bit happier and relaxed.

Enjoying some line dancing





Christmas Party & Raffle

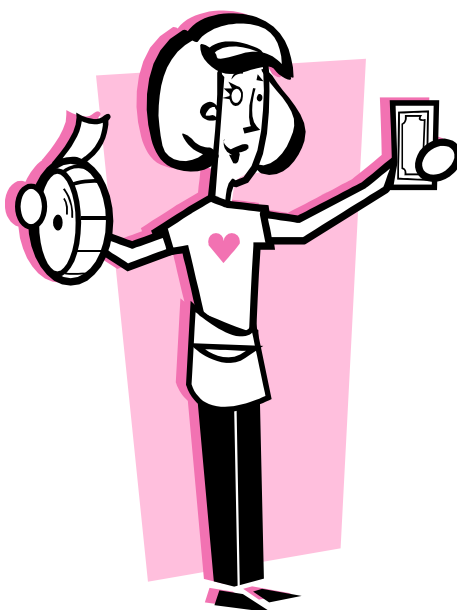
Report by Siân Thomas, Admin & Finance Officer

This year was our first Christmas back home in Peter Street and we were determined it was going to be a great celebration. Christmas is not always a good time for some of our service users but by having a party we can offer everyone a bit of fun in a supportive environment.

We started the celebrations by drawing the raffle. There were a plethora of prizes donated from businesses all over St. Helens and so everyone had plenty to be excited about. Many people won fabulous prizes really putting everyone in the party mood. As usual everyone had brought in a contribution to the buffet providing party goers with a wide range of delicious treats to eat.

And what would a party be without singing? We brought the house down with a fine rendition of "A Partridge in a Pear Tree" and some traditional Christmas Carols. By the end of the afternoon everyone was full and tired but happy and there was a really jolly atmosphere in the room.

It was clear that many of the women who won prizes were genuinely grateful and uplifted by their winnings. One lady won a massage and she was absolutely delighted at being able to look forward to having this treat just for her. So we would like to thank everyone who donated a prize to this raffle for making Christmas brighter for our service users.



Team Building and Forward Planning

Report by Julie Roby, Support Worker/Counsellor

As our centre continues to grow and thrive, planning and organising is a team effort. It is vital that our team is based on honesty and respect where each member feels comfortable working together, therefore our forward planning meeting takes place in the tranquil setting of Foxhill in Frodsham. Foxhill also provides an idyllic atmosphere that encourages the constant flow of ideas relating to the services provided and the future expansion of the organisation. This venue ensures that our team is totally focussed on planning the forthcoming year for WSW. Also the team has the opportunity to strengthen the bond we already have with each other. A good team is reflected in the quality of the services offered and the general running of the organisation.

Working together, the team consistently went through each month of the year planning and adding structure to various events such as "Laugh Yourself Silly for World Mental Health Day" and our opening day in September. Every event was meticulously planned down to the last detail. The team came away from Foxhill relaxed and fully organised for the year ahead.

Comments from the Team

"I found it very rewarding and also I am proud to be part of such a motivated team"

"I felt able to discuss any ideas I may have had and got to know members of the team a little more."

"It is a nice relaxed place where ideas seem to flow without any pressure from other commitments"

"The morale was very high"



Volunteer Fundraising Committee

Report by Sharon Ferguson, Volunteer Fundraising Coordinator

The Volunteer Fundraising Committee for Women Supporting Women during 2011 has been expeditiously busy and learning positively on the success of the initial year. It is going from strength to strength, facilitated by the dedication and determination of a number of volunteers for Women Supporting Women. Over the course of the year there have been a variety of events both internally for service users and externally to help raise awareness of the charity amongst the local community.

There have been three charity bag packs 30th Jan, 27th Feb at Asda and 11th Dec at Marks and Spencer's, which proved to be excellent fundraising events with equally positive opportunities to disseminate information about WSW. Approximately twenty women gave varying amounts of their time and rose over £600 at each bag pack event.

During the summer of 2011 WSW moved location to larger premises and this has brought about many positive changes to the charity in that there is now more scope to hold more diverse fundraising events.

Following the move it was decided to formalise the fundraising committee by establishing a group of dedicated volunteer fundraisers with key skills to offer into a core group in order to drive the fundraising committee forward and oversee the open fundraising committee. The group was named the Task Force Group and a pledge was drawn up agreed upon and signed by each member of the Task Force, there are currently six members of this group who meet every 4 weeks whilst the fundraising committee meets every 8 weeks and every service user is encouraged to be involved in when their health, commitments and time allows.

As the Volunteer Fundraising Co-Coordinator I have set up a WSW 100 Club, which currently has over 60 members. The 100 club is a monthly draw in which members pay £1 and could win £50 each month, if their allocated number is randomly draw out, by a randomly selected service user or support worker. The club runs from September to August and fees are collected annually £12 up front to ensure the prize fund is available. It has proved to be very popular and encourages people from outside the centre to join and has increased service user attendance at the drop in on the days of the scheduled draws.

We held a photography competition in the summer which was judged by Lady Pilkington at the WSW open day. Max Spielman kindly donated a 16" by 20" print of the winning photograph as a prize. The entrance fee for registering a photograph in the competition was £5 and helped raise some funds.

We hold Card Making Sessions for service users the first Thursday of every month which kindly facilitated by Jeanne, and offers service users the distraction therapy of producing something creative and positive in a relaxed atmosphere for a nominal fee of 50p or the choice of donating it to the charity for sale in our newly introduced butterfly boxes which are used at our open events to raise funds. We also currently have a number of butterfly boxes which are awaiting placement in local businesses to sell cards to a larger captive

audience. Friendship bags were also made by service users and have been popular raising funds.

Various local businesses have kindly donated some excellent prizes for raffles during 2011. Raffles are extremely popular amongst service users and 100 Club members. The Christmas raffle being then most successfully productive raffle to date and ran alongside a handmade knitted cardigan auction which proved to be fun.

A clothes collection was arranged and although there were not a lot of clothes weighed in, what was donated proved to be good funds comparative and so a further date has been arranged for 2012 in the spring.

At Christmas Santa letters and certificates were offered for a fee of £5 and this raised some funds. However chocoholics sale a good order response was created, funds were not secured as the level of order required to reach payable commission was not attained due to no stock of items at chocoholics, in hind sight next year if ran again order would need to be submitted earlier.

A book sale proved to be very popular, sales of beverages to service users continues and the range of drinks has been extended to give more available choice.

An account has been set up with a cartridge recycling company and this will be rolled out during 2012 to encourage local businesses to recycle and donate their used cartridges on our behalf.

At the time of writing this report an unwanted Christmas present swap is planned in which £2.50 is donated for each gift swap – to date it is to be confirmed if this event will be popular or lucrative.

Events being planned for 2012 are currently being forged ahead as discussed at the last Task Force meeting such as :-

- Ladies Day event theme at the AGM
- Letters have been sent to Morrison's and Asda to secure future bag pack dates.
- Make a wish Sponsor a Balloon day
- Themed quiz/Hot pot supper night – date to be confirmed
- Cute Pet Photography Competition during the summer
- Book sale and clothes weigh in – spring time
- Poetry competition – possibly on national poetry day
- Grand Easter Raffle

Continuing to run:-

- Card making sessions
- 100 Club

Future possibilities:-

- Establishing a fundraising shopping website link to our WSW website

It is with great anticipation the Fundraising groups look forward to a positive and productive 2012.

Finance & Funding

Report by Siân Thomas, Admin & Finance

In 2011 Women Supporting Women were delighted to renew our contract with Halton & St. Helens PCT. This funding is vital for the current sustainability of the Charity and offers some peace of mind to the team. In the current funding and financial climate it is evident that voluntary organisations will need to work towards self-sufficiency as grants become more and more scarce and harder to obtain. With this in mind the new accredited courses incur fees which we hope in time will offer some financial security for the centre.

In 2011 WSW were fortunate to be recipients of the following funding:

Date	Funder	Amount	Purpose
Ongoing	Halton & St. Helens PCT	£50,000	Running Costs
Ongoing	Big Lottery Reaching Communities Fund	£162,433	Get A Life Project over 4 years to 2014
Ongoing	Morgan Foundation	£15,000	Running Costs over 3 years to 2013

Women Supporting Women continue to be grateful to our funders for the support and belief they have in our organisation. Along with the sheer dedication of the team, funding is an essential part of a Charity's success and ability to deliver much needed services in the local community.

As we look to the future the face of commissioning with the PCT is in the midst of great change. As of 2013 Halton & St. Helens PCT will shut its doors and commissioning the third sector will be the responsibility of GP consortiums. Whilst change always brings some apprehension, this will give us the chance to really let GP services see what we offer and the value of our services to pass on to their patients.

As part of these changes WSW has committed itself to achieving the Star Standard in 2012. The Star Standard is a quality marker created by Halton & St. Helens Voluntary Community Action which once achieved will demonstrate publicly and officially that we are a service worthy of funding, a service that puts its services users first, a service that is needed in St. Helens and a service that not only meets but exceeds expected standards for a voluntary organisation.



IN CONCLUSION

Just as in all previous years, **2011** was a year of researching and evaluating where we can increase and develop our support for women. It became evident that more support was and is needed with regards to Domestic Violence. A member of our team is now a Domestic Violence Champion and attends both the Domestic Violence Forum and the MARAC awareness sessions. WSW is known for the invaluable support it offers to women experiencing mental health issues but since the closure of Women's Aid in St Helens the referrals for domestic violence support has greatly increased. WSW has always offered support for DV issues via counselling and personal development groups however it is with this much needed support in mind, we now are able to offer information and guidance with regards to these issues. In 2012 we intend to evaluate the need a drop-in support group for women experiencing DV issues, should the need be established, the Chrysalis Centre will work towards achieving this new goal.

Returning to Peter St offers the opportunity to develop a secluded garden area; I personally remember the small garden that was a part of the original centre at Peter St. Many hours were spent talking, supporting and encouraging in that little garden, there is certainly something quite therapeutic about a garden and the peace and beauty it can offer. We intend to recreate that garden in the Spring but we do need some help to do this, if you can

offer any  benches, pots,  flowers etc, we would all be most grateful.

We are settled now in our new home and we are certainly looking forward to 2012 and all the challenges and changes ahead. Our new centre is warm, safe and inviting and if you haven't already paid us a visit then please do so and you will be able to learn more about **The Chrysalis Centre For Change** and meet the dedicated team who have helped to establish and make this organisation what is today, a well-respected and much needed source of support for the women of St Helens.

I wish you all a peaceful 2012 and do remember to take the time to stand still and notice the good things around you; life is full of choices and time too short to miss a thing.

"It is our choices, Harry, that show us what we truly are, far more than our abilities."

J.K. Rowling,

Sue Clarke MBACP MIFL
Centre Manager