

The Beacon

April 2006



THANK YOU

Soup/pasta - We were overwhelmed by the generosity of churches & schools at harvest. For the first time we accepted food rather than just toiletries. This has meant we are able to provide soup and pasta for health service clients on a daily basis and to reduce the costs of providing lunches as part of the Lifeskills programme. Offering hot soup and pasta was a real blessing to clients during the very cold snowy week between Christmas and New Year.

Christmas Giving – We are extremely grateful to the churches that so generously supported us over the Christmas period – total £1,662

Sponsored Walks – We are extremely grateful to Students and Staff at Colchester Sixth Form College who raised £500 from their sponsored walk from Walton to Clacton in October.

And also to those who took part in the sponsored walk round Mersea Island organised by Allen Jesson which was also in October raising £2,000.



UPDATE

2005 was a record breaking year with 5,415 clients using the health service - a 60% increase on 2004.

This came at the same time as a reduction in our income. In September 05 we reached the point where we did not have enough money to continue providing a full level of services to the end of March 06. We were facing a shortfall of £30,000. We made the decision to downsize rather than close in an attempt to bring our expenditure down to match our projected income. The clinic and health services therefore reduced to only being open 4 hours a day (12-4pm). This unfortunately was still not enough to see us through to the end of March and so in November we found ourselves in the same position again. We reduced our services even further – this time restructuring the Lifeskills programme and further reducing the health staff in the mornings.

It is thanks to the sacrifices of staff and the generosity of local churches and individuals that we will now make it to the end of March.

However we will be starting the new financial year on 1st April knowing that even having downsized and cut costs as far as is practical our expenditure for the coming year (2006/7) will still total £17,000 more than our projected income. This means that during the course of the coming year we need our funding to increase by at least £17,000.

WE NEED YOU!

Volunteer Admin help urgently needed in the following areas: Typing general correspondence. Printing/updating leaflets, posters, publicity. Collecting data in excel spreadsheets and producing graphs and charts. Sage accounts: inputting data and producing reports. Entering data into our access database. We are prepared to be creative in how we fill this – e.g. working from home, a number of people each doing small bits.

For more details contact Claire Johnson Tel: 01206 761960 Email: claire@beaconhouseministries.org.uk

LIGHTHOUSE LITE BITE

Since the Autumn of 2005 on a Friday afternoon we have been able to provide our clients with coffee, soup + lite bites together with an assortment of conversations from football, family, friendships and faith.

Comments from those that use these facilities are very positive in that at one of the lowest times of the day – season – we have been able to provide these benefits. Here are just some comments:

- ☉ *"It has been a life line to us and a resource for the well being of our lives"*
- ☉ *"It has been a God send to me" – Bob*
- ☉ *"A damn good place to have a decent conversation. A good place to sound off and air your grievances. Help and support with new relationships. They were very supportive when I was going through a difficult time" - JM*

Peter a volunteer who works in the Lighthouse said *"It is a humbling experience, but also a privilege to be in a position to help in some small way, those who come to use the Lighthouse facilities."*

It is hoped that as word gets around as to what is available others will make use of the facilities. Also that those clients who have used the Lighthouse will tell others to pay a visit. The point of why/what we are here for is to serve up not only tea and toast but also to demonstrate that they are valued and are an important part of our community – a privilege to serve.

At the moment we are just running the Lighthouse on a Friday afternoon as a pilot scheme. We would like to extend this to other times during the week but do not currently have the finances to do so. Each 3 hour session costs: £45.

COMING SOON

DVD - We are extremely grateful to Maria and Nik Read & Jamie MacAlister for producing a Beacon House promotional DVD, which features a tour of Beacon House, an interview with one of our clients and some current perspectives on "the hidden homeless". Copies available from Beacon House.

1996 - 2006 – Celebrating 10 years of Beacon House. More details of celebration events to follow
Thanksgiving Service – Autumn - Date to be confirmed
Open Day – Fri 17 November

PRAYER POINTS:

PRAISE & THANKS:

- + For God's provision that has kept us going
- + For the generosity of local Christians
- + For those who took part in the sponsored walks
- + For the positive start of the Lighthouse Lite Bite

REQUESTS:

- + For clients to experience God's presence as they use our services
- + For adequate provision to continue through the next year
- + For the continuation of the PCT grants for 06/07
- + For increased support from local churches and for new sources of funding to be found
- + For more volunteers to join the team