

March 2007

the gap

because we don't want one between us and our friends
news, information and vision in this edition of the gap.

Mike Hyden – the Iron Man of the King's Arms Project

Mike, the intern based at the Nightshelter, always loves a challenge. Often this involves a ridiculous amount of physical activity which often results in some very beautiful bruises, spectacular grazes and the odd limp! More recently, he has been attempting to channel his efforts into raising the profile of the Nightshelter and some funds.

Mike writes: "I don't know if it is a "man pride thing", but if I hear of a



physical challenge I'll have a crack at it – that is pretty much the reason why I did the Bedford triathlon last year. Having recovered from the diarrhoea I got from swimming in the river, I realised it is a great way of raising funds for the Nightshelter. When someone told me about Weymouth's "middle distance" triathlon in June, I set my mind to the challenge. It's a 2km sea swim, 56 mile cycle and then a half marathon and God willing I hope to raise £2,000 - £3,500ish. Please pray that people will feel extra generous when I go



round with my sponsor sheet and for good weather on the day."

The Weymouth Triathlon takes place on Sunday 3rd June. If you are interested in sponsoring Mike, please drop us an email at project@kingsarms.org or call Mike at the Nightshelter on 01234 266085. Thanks

Farewell to the King's Arms Project

Sue Clarkson, who joined the King's Arms Project as Sue Hill, has recently left. Before her last day, she jotted down some thoughts on life at the coal face: -

"I have worked on the project now for over 2 years and have had some amazing times. When I first started, I was working in the Nightshelter and joined a team of wonderful people, who were mostly much younger than me. Previously, I had been a company accountant, but the project was a completely different way of life. The staff I worked with made me feel really welcome and accepted me as one of them, even though they were mostly in their twenties and I was 49! However, I soon got the reputation for being the Mum of the Nightshelter, mothering both the residents and the staff!

I have wonderful memories of the Nightshelter. We laughed a lot and really enjoyed being with the residents. We had one memorable evening when someone put on a Beatles CD on and we all sang along for about two hours. I remember balmy evenings sitting chatting in the back garden and really getting alongside people, and also being regularly beaten at Scrabble! The night shifts were times of humour, tiredness, a good time to talk to anyone who got up for a coffee, and a time to really get to know another member of staff.

I met my husband in the Nightshelter. He had come to work there a month before I did. We started going out together and this soon developed into a romance. We were married last year, proving that the Nightshelter is a very special place for lots of reasons!

I moved to working for Onward in November 2005. This was a position as a lone worker with homeless people and has brought such amazing pleasure and also some sadness. One of my clients died from a suspected overdose and this was a difficult time. It seemed such a waste and so pointless.

However there is nothing quite as good as getting someone housed who has been on the streets for a while. It is a privilege to see the change in a person who was homeless and now is housed and has stopped their drug or alcohol use. Everyone I worked with had such potential and really wanted to change – I shall miss it all.”

From inside Barton House- One staff member's experience

Chris Grech, a Support Worker at Barton House, is also moving on. Chris came to us last autumn and asked if we had any vacancies for a short term contract – the answer was “yes” and he has been a God-Send. This is his story:

“I began working at Barton House in November 2006 and even though it has only been four months it feels like I have been part of the team here for much longer. The team itself is multifaceted with each individual contributing their own unique skills and attributes. Working as part of the team has felt more like a church small group than just work colleagues as we share both our social and spiritual lives together, supporting and encouraging one another. The work itself has presented its own challenges from housekeeping to supporting residents but even in times of inconsistency God has always remained faithful. Time and time again through the challenges and through obstacles Christ has continued to lead us through. I have seen the power of prayer accomplish far greater than what we have been able to offer ourselves. During this time I have also seen an incredible change in myself, in my faith and in my heart. Although I started Project as an opportunity to serve, I have received far more than what I have given. I have learnt to rely more on God, even in the least significant and have acknowledged our great need for the Lord in all things daily. It has been a privilege to work alongside the residents and to see their development and growth. I have been impacted by their honesty, openness and encouraged by their friendships.

It is now with excitement and faith that I embark on a new adventure working with Energize as their Project Officer for their Youth and Adult skills services. Here I continue to be given the opportunity to work with individuals and groups in educating and developing personal growth through workshops and experiential learning activities. I also leave Barton House to pursue future long-term possibilities to work as part of a Church Plant team in Spain.” (More about Energize below)



‘Learning to Learn’ at Barton House

Learning to Learn is an initiative led by Energize; a Bedford based social enterprise charity. Through activity based workshops *Learning to Learn* helps individuals not currently in education to tackle new skills and build confidence with a focus on encouraging individuals in their ability to continue learning new things in the future. Over the past few months Energize have been providing these workshops for the residents at Barton House with activities such as Drumming sessions, Indoor Climbing and Golf, with funding for these being provided by ‘The Learning Partnership- Bedfordshire and Luton’. Tracy, a Barton House Resident commented, “these activities have brought us closer together as a house and it was a good laugh. It gave me an opportunity to do something I would not have normally done.” Pete, also a resident at Barton House expresses, “it was good to do something out of the house as a group and that’s what makes it so enjoyable. You learn a lot about each other in that type of environment and people come out of their shells.”

There are currently a number of job vacancies at the King's Arms Project – if you are interested in finding out more please either email project@kingsarms.org or phone the office on 01234 306501. Or, if you would like to see first hand the work of the King's Arms Project, please contact us for a visit.