

## **Newsletter Items June/July 2005**

### **Vital new support group for families with a child with mental health problems**

In the past we have expressed our concerns at the lack of support for families with children with mental health/learning difficulties aged 15-17 as carers repeatedly told us the message was 'wait until you are 18 for support'. A carer from the Ribble Valley Rosemary Andrews is keen to establish a support group for families (parents and for brothers and sisters) of children with a mental health problem. The first meeting was held at Blackburn Library on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> May at 7.30p.m.(yes it clashed with the Liverpool football match). We were disappointed but not surprised that Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in Preston would not pass on letters to families to let them know about the support group. The first meeting had an excellent presentation by Kandy Giles from the Adolescent Services Unit at Prestwich. Kandy explained the affect on parents, on siblings(brothers & sisters) and on the sufferer. The families who attended thought that the support group was essential and also felt that the children had to wait until they were 18 for support. A further meeting will be held in Preston at Dr Ghorri's surgery Woodplumpton Rd (near Cadley Causeway) at 7.00pm. on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2005. If you know of any families with a child with a mental health problem please tell them about the support group. Rosemary Andrews can be contacted on 01254 823377 or be email at [gatehouse38@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:gatehouse38@tiscali.co.uk) or contact Peter on 01772 200173.

### **Commitment to Carers**

A new booklet published jointly by Rethink & the Department of Health 'Commitment to Carers' will be available for Carers Week. It can be a devastating experience to discover that someone you love and care about has a mental health problem. Carers need both information & support to be able to help that person effectively. The booklet explains what relatives, partners & friends should expect from the mental health service, how to get help in your caring role and how to get the information you need to help the person you care for. Copies are available from Carers UK or contact Peter on 01772 200173.

### **Two new on line discussion forums [www.carersuk.org/Forums](http://www.carersuk.org/Forums)**

Carers UK have launched two new discussion forums. One forum 'Carers Voice' is a discussion forum for carers and former carers. It is intended to be a community where carers can meet other carers and share views and experiences. I know that an increasing number of carers find they can use the Internet when their caring duties prevent them leaving the house so it can help reduce the impact of isolation. The second forum 'Supporting Carers' is for professionals and people who work to support carers. It is intended for Local Authority staff, Primary Care staff and staff who work in Carers Centres. It is hoped that it may also be of interest to carers working for change in their local areas. Having checked out both forums they are both certainly interesting ,though in the early days the carers forum is dominated by one or two carers.

### **Carers Week 2005 13<sup>th</sup> June to 19<sup>th</sup> June**

The theme for Carers Week 2005 is work, rest and play. We will have a Carers Day at Alston Hall on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> June with activities including Gardening and Family History. Also on Monday Making Space will have a pampering day at Singleton Lodge focusing on relaxation techniques. On Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> June the Preston Asian Carers Forum will have a hands on presentation by the Infection Control nurse plus food. On Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> June carers can enjoy a day at Oswaldtwistle Mills courtesy of the Princess Royal Trust for carers. On Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> June there will be an Awakening Call Conference at Ribblebank Resource Centre aimed at second generation Asian carers who care or may care in the future for people with learning disabilities.

In addition 12 carers and helpers will enjoy a weeks holiday at the Pontins Holiday Centre Blackpool. organised by the Princess Royal Trust for Carers.

### **Two leisure surveys for Carers Week**

In one survey local authorities are being asked what special provision they make for carers, how they promote benefits available to carers, and what restrictions ( e.g. are free passes only available when the carer is accompanying the person they care for ). The second survey is being carried out with Premiership football clubs in England and Scotland. The results of both surveys will be publicised on [www.carersweek.org](http://www.carersweek.org) at the start of Carers Week 13<sup>th</sup> June.

### **Carers Emergency Card Scheme**

In the February/March newsletter we mentioned the Carers UK Back me up campaign –supporting carers when they most need it. There are only 25 Carer emergency card schemes in the country and one

is in Preston operated by the British Red Cross. The card is an orange credit-sized card that is carried by carers and is used as an instant source of identification in the case of accidents. The registration number and telephone number are linked to a database where help is co-ordinated. Carers complete an enrolment form which holds information about them, their dependant and any action that needs to be taken in the event of an emergency. Identification is by reference number to protect the identities of the carer and cared for. The card offers 24 hour emergency cover for carers and carers are less anxious about going out. Carers have peace of mind that their situation is understood and emergencies catered for.

You can join the scheme by completing an enrolment form from Community Services Dept (Health & Social Care, British Red Cross Lancashire Branch ,Pittman Court, Pittman Way, Preston PR2 9ZG. Telephone 01772 709555. Or contact Peter at the Carers Information Centre on 200173.

### **Balancing Life & Caring Booklet**

Prompted by new rights brought in by the Carers(Equal Opportunities) Act this booklet gives information about balancing caring with other activities, such as work ,learning and leisure. The booklet helps the carer to think through their options and signposts them to where they can get help.If you would like a copy please contact Peter on 200173.

### **Home Visiting Optician**

We have been advised of an organisation that does home visits by an optician which is something carers have enquired about in the past. The Group is Rose Optical Services ( Free Eye Test & Glasses subject to eligibility &private tests are available)and though we have not heard from any carers who have used the service it is backed by Age Concern and Princess Royal Trust for Carers. It provides Full VisionTest, Comprehensive eye health check, spectacles provided where necessary. Contact details are Freephone 0800 731 0031. E mail [info@roseoptical.org](mailto:info@roseoptical.org) . There is also a web site [www.roseoptical.org](http://www.roseoptical.org) but it does not offer any further information. Carers who have been told by opticians that they do not have the facilities for disabled people or who have struggled into an opticians pushing a wheelchair may appreciate this service. We would welcome feedback from anyone who uses the service.

### **Carers Rights Day and Disability & Carers Festival Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2005**

The Popular Annual Disability and Carers Festival will be held at Preston Minster on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2005. This provides an excellent publicity window for Carers Rights Day. We hope that all carers will support this event and hope to meet 'hidden carers' that we are unaware of.

### **Young Carers**

The Carers Information Centre also embraces a young carers project whereby carers up to the age of 18 years who care for a family member can be provided with one to one support, advice on the illness of the person being cared for, breaks from caring and the chance to meet other young carers. Recent outings for Young Carers have included Bowling; Cinema, Climbing Wall at West View Leisure Centre, and Windmill Animal Farm. If you know of any young carers in the area who may need help please discuss with Margaret on 01772 200173.

### **Lancashire Asian Carers Forum**

The Lancashire Asian Carers Forum (LACF) meets quarterly at various locations around Lancashire. Local members of the working group for the LACF are Yakub Gangat and Jaya Patel. The last meeting was at the Bridge Centre, Eldon St, Preston on 9<sup>th</sup> May when 60 carers heard Peter Dennett from Preston City Council talk about the practical application of the Disabled Facilities Grant. For further details about the meetings or about transport to the meetings contact Peter on 01772 200173.

### **Preston Asian Carers Forum**

The Forum meets on the first Tuesday of the month at the Ribblebank Resource Centre, Gerrard Street, Preston, between 1 - 2.30p.m.Topics for future meetings are 14<sup>th</sup> June Infection Control, 5<sup>th</sup> July Area Mental Health Manager, August No meeting, 6<sup>th</sup> September British Red Cross

### **Lancashire Carers Forum**

Lancashire Carers Forum (LCF) is a meeting whereby carers from all areas of Lancashire can discuss their problems and raise issues with members of the Social Services, representatives of Health Trusts (Primary & Acute) and elected members. Experts are invited to answer questions on issues of importance to carers. Meetings, which are held at the East Cliff Offices, Preston, last from **11.00a.m. –**

**2.00p.m.** Including a buffet lunch To help carers meet other carers coffee is available from 10.15 a.m. and after the meeting. Two voting carers from each area are allowed but **additional non-voting carers can attend**. The next meeting of the Forum is on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2005. Please note that the very popular annual conference will be held at the Woodlands Chorley on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2005. If you wish to attend a Lancs Carers Forum meeting/conference please contact Peter on 200173 or call into the Carers Information Centre.

### **Preston Carers Support Group**

The Preston Carers Support Group meets on the last Tuesday of every month.. Future presentations: 26<sup>th</sup> June Presentation on the New Preston Carers Centre Project & Carers UK AGM in the CVS meeting room Lancaster Rd ,Preston, 26<sup>th</sup> July Megabowl. 30<sup>th</sup> August British Red Cross at Deepdale Resource Centre Preston.

### **Preston Carers Strategy Group**

This group which has representatives from Preston PCT, Social Services and Carers meets every two months and is making progress on raising awareness of carers in Health Centres and GP surgeries. A three part carers identification card is being distributed to all GP surgeries and Health Centres. One part is retained by the carer, one part by the health centre and one part returned to the carers information centre. If you have any carer's issues which you would like raising at the next meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> July please contact Peter on 200173. Remember if you are a carer let your GP know that you are a carer.

### **LANCASHIRE COLLEGE COURSES**

Lancashire College are running a 48-hour residential taking care of the carers 'recharge for mind & body' at Lancashire College Southport Rd Chorley on the following dates:

8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> July Pewter Work, Indian Head Massage, Introduction to Confidence Skills, Introduction to Aromatherapy, Personal Safety

20<sup>th</sup> -22<sup>nd</sup> September Details later

7<sup>th</sup> -9<sup>th</sup> October Details later

14<sup>th</sup> -16<sup>th</sup> November Details later

For those caring for 20 hours or more the cost is £25.

For enrolment forms and/or further information contact: Donna Galway or Lorraine Richardson at Lancashire College, Southport Road Chorley Lancashire PR7 1NB

Tel 01257 516325 or 01257 516303

### **Carers Activities**

A Carers Day on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> June (in Carers Week 2005) doing Gardening and Family History.

19<sup>th</sup> July Barge Trip

We are planning taster sessions on henna painting, colour therapy, etc and a family session on nail art.

### **Longridge Carers Group**

Although outside our area for Carers Project purposes we share the same Primary Care Trust and work together on the Preston Carers Strategy. The Longridge Carers Group meets on the first Wednesday of every month between 1.00 to 3.00p.m. in the Health Education Room at Longridge Community Hospital, St Wilfrids Terrace. For further information contact Kathleen Eastwood at Carers Link, Link House 23 King St Accrington BB5 1PR Tel 01254 387444.

### **Preston Carers Web Site**

We announced in the August September newsletter that the A-Z Directory of Carers Services in Preston was available on the revamped website. This also includes the latest information on support group activities and the latest newsletters. Guests can now sign in and pass comments on the web site. The site has proved very successful and we are now approaching 1000 'hits' The website address is [www.prestoncarers.org.uk](http://www.prestoncarers.org.uk)