

NEWSLETTER

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Dementia—Alan Mollere writes

I am grateful to OBN for many things which is why I would like to write something for the Newsletter. First of all a big thank you to those who organized and made it possible for me to attend seminars on the subject of Dementia.

I was lucky to attend a seminar in Oxford, given by Tibbs Dementia Training, which gave a broad description of the subject. This seminar, given by Margaret Anne Tibbs herself, was a perfect opener to the subject and all the more impressive and weighty because Ms. Tibbs spoke from her own personal experience.

On the 27th April this year, again via the OBN, I attended another seminar, this time at the SPECAL(Specialized

Early Care for Alzheimers) Centre, in Burford, Oxon. The presentation by the founder, Penny Garner, was quite wonderful as is the book which describes the SPECAL method, Contented Dementia, by Oliver James. A copy is now available in the OBN library.

Ms Garner's presentation was in this case, as with Ms. Tibbs, all the more meaningful because she was speaking from experience. Personal experience is obviously a big deal in my book.

Whether or not you have had personal experience of dealing with dementia it would seem that the odds are in favour of your having to deal with it at some stage of your life. Then, to that must

be added the odds of contracting it yourself. Therefore, at the risk of breaking a cardinal rule, that of shying away from giving advice, I can only add that it seems only common sense to learn the basics of dementia for yourself. And, I can see no harm in doing a little homework on diet and exercise just to see for yourself if Omega 3 oils (for example) might just help the blood circulation to the brain as well as elsewhere. There must be a word for using your brain to protect your brain; maybe it's just called being smart !

Thank You

Thank you to all those who completed and returned the recent questionnaire forms devised by the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation. The forms have been returned to them and the

information you provided will be used to demonstrate to the Cabinet Office and other government departments how befriending can improve social inclusion and add value to services that

support the elderly and those living with physical disability.

June's County Gathering

June's County Gathering took place on a warm sunny evening in Witney. We received a hearty welcome from the Witney support group who hold their monthly meetings in the church where we met. County gatherings are a time for volunteers from across the county to meet up, perhaps for the first time, or often to renew friendships made during their initial training. The gatherings provide an opportunity for socialising and to receive training. This time our speaker was Bob Whorton, the Chaplain at Sobell House Hospice in Headington. Spiritual sup-

port is 1 of the 4 aspects of Palliative Care, and the broad theme of Bob's talk was 'The spiritual needs of the dying'. Bob came to this subject from a spiritual rather than religious perspective, and identified the importance for each of us working or volunteering in this field to have an 'awareness' of our own thoughts, feelings and needs, as we accompany someone through a major transition in their life. This awareness gives us greater capacity to be alongside the person we are supporting in a way that is right for them, and reduces the opportunities for our own

fears and unmet needs to stand in the way of offering respectful, safe and compassionate support. The Philosophy of the OBN Training Course emphasises the importance of awareness in just this way; and in Bob's talk the place of Befriending could be clearly seen within the Palliative Care framework. The talk stimulated a range of questions and responses, and hopefully this important subject is one that will continue to be explored within the organisation.

Spiritual needs

A Volunteer's view of 'The spiritual needs of the dying'

A few weeks ago, a group of befrienders gathered on a light, summery evening in Witney to listen to Bob Whorton, Chaplain from Sobell House Hospice give a talk on the spiritual needs of the dying. He talked about the "spiritual dance", the special type of communication that can go on between him and the people

he ministers to. This is often not so much about the words that are spoken: it may be more about the ease with which the dying person can unburden themselves, sensing that their listener is selflessly accepting what they have to say – no matter how quietly or ferociously it is said. We all started to think about how

this might relate to our own befriending. It also got us wondering about what we each felt about the role of religion in tending to the emotional needs of the dying- is it "right" for clergymen and women to take on this role or should it be the role of a layperson? Plenty food for supper and for thought!

Remembering

We were saddened to hear of the death of Arthur Williams, the Befriending Partner of South Oxon volunteer Angela Coombs. Arthur had only recently been diagnosed with terminal cancer but sadly his health deteriorated more rapidly than had been expected. Although the befriending relationship only lasted a couple of months, Angela did make a real difference in supporting both Arthur

and his family. We are grateful for her invaluable input at such a difficult time. Our thoughts are with Arthur's wife Mary and their family at this sad time.

Nick Owen who was our counselling & psychotherapy co-ordinator until April 09 has been in touch to break the sad news that his wife Gill died suddenly at home on 12 June. Our

thoughts are with Nick and his family at this time.

Cheap as Chips!!

Is your car running on diesel? Would you like a more ecological way of running your car?. Orinoco - the scrap-store in Headington - is now selling bio-diesel: it is cheaper, environmentally friendly..and it does not smell of petrol...but of chips!

If you want any further information contact Orinoco, The Oxfordshire Scrap-store Bullington Community Centre, [Peat Moors \(off the Slade\)](#), Headington. OX3 7HS.

Phone: 01865 761113 / 07960 661748. (Opened Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from 11.00 till 16.00)

Is your Befriending Partner looking for an alternative to residential care?

Able Community Care are a nationwide provider of Live-in Care Schemes for elderly and disable people.

We have a small number of their current brochures in the office or for more information tel: 01603 764567 or visit their website at www.uk-care.com

All contributions to the newsletter welcome!

Your chance to contribute

A reminder – we welcome contributions to the newsletter from volunteers and befriending partners.

want to share something of your experience of befriending.

You may have information to share about local resources, or you may

Submissions should be sent to your coordinator.

Support Groups over the summer

The Counselling & Psychotherapy support group will take place at 6.45pm on 9th July at the office. There will be no support group in August.

Befriending

The City & North Oxon support groups will take place on 7th July at 7.00pm at their usual venues.

The West Oxon group will take place on 14th July at 7.00pm in Witney.

The South & East group will take place on 15th July at 7.00pm venue to be confirmed.

THERE WILL BE NO BEFRIENDING SUPPORT GROUPS IN AUGUST, PLEASE SPEAK TO YOUR CO-ORDINATOR ABOUT ANY SUPPORT YOU NEED.

Advocacy

Advocacy Support Group meetings will take place on 21st July and

18th August 7 – 9pm at the OBN office. If a large number of volunteer advocates will be away on the date of the August meeting, it will be cancelled.

Did you know about the Emergency Carers Support Service?

This is for adults who provide unpaid care for adults who depend on them because of illness and frailty. It offers free emotional and practical support to any adult carer once registered to the service. This might include confidential telephone support, cover for an emergency situation or urgent appointment or infor-

mation about resources and services available to carers in Oxfordshire. Adult carers can register on 01865374430 or on-line at www.a4e.co.uk/ils/oxfordshire

Please let the carers of your Befriending Partners know of this service

whether they live with the ill person or not, it could be a lifeline.

Emergency Carers Support

And finally...from Moira

It is goodbye from me as I prepare to leave the OBN at the end of July.

As some of you will know I currently drive 450 miles a week to and from the office and am taking up a new post

with a national charity which will reduce my home to office commute by some 410 miles!

I've been amazed and humbled by the work and commitment that everyone involved in The

Oxfordshire Befriending Network has and the experiences I have had here will stay with me for a long time.

The Oxfordshire
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The Oxfordshire Befriending Network aims to improve the quality of life for those with life-threatening and terminal illnesses. We do this by providing trained volunteers in the capacity of befriender, advocate or counsellor to give support in the home, the hospice or the hospital, For more information about our services, to make a referral , to help us raise funds or to find out about our volunteering opportunities,

contact us

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