Hi Everyone

Welcome to the second edition of this Young Carer Co-ordinator E-Newsletter, sent to you as part of the Schools Awareness Raising Campaign at Edinburgh Young Carers Project. Firstly, I would like to wish you all a Happy New Year from everyone at the Edinburgh Young Carers Project, and a special thank you to all the schools we worked with in 2013 for embracing a positive approach towards supporting young carers. I hope you enjoy your read!

Mo Whelton (Maternity Cover)
Schools Project Manager
Edinburgh Young Carers Project

Schools Awareness Raising Project - Update

We’ve had a great few months with the Schools Awareness Raising Project delivering assemblies and PSE pupil workshops to many schools across the city.

As you may be aware, many young carers remain ‘hidden’ due to a variety of reasons. Throughout the last quarter of 2013, many young carers have been identified either through self identification or through referral from schools. What this shows is that the Schools Awareness Raising Project is meeting its overall aim, which is raising awareness and increasing identification of young carers in educational establishments to insure early identification and early intervention of support.

However, our campaign would not be achievable without the continued support from teachers across the city, including those schools we have worked with recently, such as St Augustines, St Thomas of Aquin’s, Broughton, Holyrood, Liberton and Royal High to mention a few.

In the year ahead our focus will be towards the North and East of Edinburgh and with an emphasis on many Primary Schools in this area. Some schools in this area, Primary and Secondary, may have heard from me already but if you haven’t feel free to get in touch!

Due to continued funding from the Big Lottery to support our campaign, we have been delivering some exciting new support groups, which I will discuss in the following sections.

Finally, I would like to congratulate Tracey Stewart on the birth of baby ‘Joel’ and we hope both Tracey and Joel are doing well. This gives me a chance to introduce myself, I will be in post as the Schools Project Manager while Tracey is on maternity leave. So if you have any questions about the Schools Awareness Raising Project, please do get in contact.

With thanks to our partners and funders for their ongoing support to the Schools Awareness Raising Project:

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Service News
E-NEWSLETTER

It’s been an exciting 2013 with lots of positive areas of development at EYCP. The project has identified five key strategic areas that we are looking forward to focusing on over the next three years...

1. Providing specialist support services for young carers
2. Developing EYCP capacity across Edinburgh to deliver growth in volume and quality of support to young carers
3. Promoting the development of support for young carers
4. Working effectively with relevant partner agencies across the sector, and
5. Informing Policy and Practice

Fundraising

Christmas can be a difficult time of year for some young carers. Due to ill health and shortage of income, some families find it hard to find the extra financial resources to take them through the Christmas period. We were very fortunate to be chosen by a group of young people to take part in their fundraising project with one of the HOTS teachers. Kelly and myself spent some time with the pupils to raise awareness of young carer issues and the group really enjoyed getting involved in our interactive Monopoly game devised by one of our Peer educators.

This innovative group of young people designed and made raffle tickets and wrote letters to organisations asking for items to be donated so they could raise funds for our project. Within a very short space of time—a total of £360 was raised which is really fantastic! We were delighted to receive the funds in time for Kelly and myself to purchase a selection of Christmas presents (see photo, any guesses as to what’s inside the large green one that looks like a giant sweet?).

All the staff from the project helped to hand deliver these presents and it was really lovely to be Santa for the day and see the lovely big smiles which greeted us from the young carers.

A special thank you to this lovely group of young people and their teacher Ms Barclay. I look forward to continuing working with the HOTS team raising young carer awareness and issues.
From October to December last year Kelly (Development Worker for the Schools Project) delivered a Breakfast Club for a group of young carers at Holyrood High School.

On a Tuesday morning at 8:30am, young carers were given the opportunity to attend a young carers breakfast club which offered an opportunity to discuss their caring role, family relationships, support in school and future goals.

The group also completed the Carers Strategy review. This offers young carers an opportunity to have their voices heard in relation to their needs being met. One issue that arose from this discussion was what support is available in the transition from being a young carer to an young adult carer, while looking to build on their on independence. This transition can be a difficult time for young carers, what with concerns for the cared for person along with making future plans for further education or employment.

We are now delighted to hear that the Director of Children and Families has fully endorsed the comments of young carers and EYCP staff on this Joint Carers Strategy. This is a real positive step forward which will hopefully give some strength to future young carers policy and development.

The breakfast club was a real success and through word of mouth and support from guidance, the number of young carers attending the group increased. We look forward to continuing working with Holyrood High School in 2014 and other Secondary Schools in the North and East of Edinburgh.
Spotlight on Young Carer After-School Groups

We delivered a very successful after-school group for pupils from Boroughmuir, James Gillespie’s and St Thomas of Aquin’s High Schools. The aim of this group is to provide support for a group of young carers to manage their caring roles more confidently. This included a gym session to encourage better health and wellbeing — where we noticed an improvement in the behaviour and attitude of many of the young people.

Due to this session, some young carers have been attending a gym and many others have suggested they would like to use the gym more often as they really enjoyed it.

Other sessions included a pamper and relaxation session, as it’s really important that young carers take some time out of their busy lives as carers to relax and feel they have had some special time to themselves. As we felt this group of young people were really benefiting from the support they were receiving, we extended the sessions for another six weeks up until Christmas - they were all delighted with this news!

Overall, the young carers really enjoyed attending the after-school group as it offered an opportunity to discuss any issues that were affecting them either in relation to school or home life. In addition, and most importantly, the young carers all had fun and built some lasting friendships.

The session ended with a Christmas party at the Edinburgh Young Carers Project, where we ate some delicious food, played games and Santa delivered an early Christmas present to our lovely group of young carers.

We hope to be able to offer more after-school or lunchtime support groups to those schools we will be working with in the East of the city, so please get in touch if you would be interested in working with us to set up one in your school or cluster area.

Edinburgh Young Carers Project—Library

Thanks to Mazar Charitable Trust, Blackwells Book Shop and Simon Ratcliffe at Edinburgh Central Children’s Library; Edinburgh Young Carers now have a small library of over 80 books.

The young people at EYCP can borrow a selection of books, and the only thing we ask is that they give each book they read a star rating and a small one paragraph review. The library is proving to be very popular, which we are delighted to see.

Young Carers Support Payment

The Carer’s Support Payment was first introduced last year and is available again currently. Young Carers can apply for a one off payment of £250 to do something special for themselves. Young Carers who are recorded on SEEMiS are eligible to apply for the payment and ASL team leaders have been sent guidance on this process, along with the application form. Only Young Carers who do not attend a Young Carers organisation should be supported by school staff to make an application.

The carers support payment will be allocated on a ‘first come, first served’ basis. All applications must be sent to the address on the application form by 18 March, 2014, at the latest.

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