The CHAT Shop

CHurches Acting Together in Arthur's Hill

Newsletter June 2009

Fantastic News.

Since the latter part of 2008 CHAT has been working on securing the future of both the CHAT Shop and our Youth Music Project and ***we have succeeded***.

The Northern Rock Foundation has awarded us a grant for three years to pay the salary of our Music Project Co-ordinator Tim Hutchinson. This is simply fantastic as it means we will be able to give real depth to a Project that has already exceeded all our expectations.

The Tudortrust have also awarded us a grant for three years this time to pay the salary of the CHAT Project Manager. This is equally fantastic as it means that we will be able to continue working on turning our vision for CHAT into reality.

Changes at CHAT

In case anyone missed it the Yours & Mine Cafe closed on 31st January 2009 and the ground floor of the CHAT building came back to the CHAT Shop for our use. We have decided not to lease out the space as a cafe but are in the process of restructuring and decorating throughout so that we can use it for our own projects. So if anyone asks you the cafe has gone not CHAT and we are not reopening it.

Community groups can now therefore book the ground floor for meetings etc. subject to availability. Cost is £5 per hour meeting space with an additional £5 per hour for the use of the kitchen facilities conditions apply. Contact Caroline for further details.

Youth Music Project

Around the projects

Members of the Youth Music Project have been involved in helping with the designs for the Stanhope Street banners. Once artist Jane Gower has finished her aspect of the work the young people's original artwork will be returned to the CHAT Shop. We plan to display it in the ground floor meeting space.

Between the 9th and 13th February 5 members of the Youth Music Project came into the CHAT Shop on work experience. They learned how a charity works and acquired new technical skills that have enabled them to help out with recording duties during other groups' sessions. It must be noted that all five young people worked exceptionally hard during their week and we were all impressed by their attitude and commitment.

Women's English Conversation Classes

In September Sharon Carney became our tutor for the English Conversation classes. Over the last 9 months she has worked hard developing our class resources and delivering effective inspirational teaching.

Our handouts have become much more pictorial and are therefore much easier for our participants to use. It's wonderful to see them make the connection between everyday items and the English word for them.

Since January the Nunsmoor Centre has been supporting our work by contributing half the costs of the Beginner's Class. This, combined with grants from both Wingrove and Elswick Ward Committees, has been fantastic as it has meant that we have been able the first two classes of 2009. We are currently fundraising for the next 3.

Sharon has also developed a much more in depth English Conversation Class for our BME Volunteers who wish to develop both their volunteering and their spoken language skills. The pilot went very well and we are now running our 2nd class which is fully booked.

Advocacy Project

We have had a small number of people coming to the CHAT Shop for help with a range of different needs and hopefully this number is set to increase when we have the whole of the ground floor at this projects disposal. We currently have 7 trained volunteer advocates, a complete infra-structure and a newly painted office. Work in the pipeline includes the laying of the new carpet, painting the former cafe space, printing the leaflets and setting up the office so it is a private, user friendly space in which to work.

Projects in the pipeline

We have two further projects that CHAT is looking to develop this year as follows:

50+ Active Living

Current plans include looking to base activity sessions at the CHAT Shop. Initially these may include arts and crafts, which is something we keep getting asked for, and then through consultation we will build the project from there.

The Chill Zone

This would be our second youth project targeting young people who need somewhere to go and something positive to do either during the day or in the evening. We are currently talking to local young people and potential partners in this venture as well as looking at different youth project models across the region to both get an idea of what is possible and identify what would work for us.

We are going to be very busy over the next 3 years so watch this space and remember volunteers are always welcome.

For further information please contact:

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