



Client News

Two clients have been given Leave to Remain. Both are from Iran – a woman, and a young man with learning difficulties. Their visitors are supporting them through the LTR process.

Yoga

After a successful 6 week pilot last year we now have a yoga group for women who meet once a week for an hour to experience the benefits of exercise and breathing techniques.

New Volunteers

We are delighted to welcome a steady stream of new recruits. Most have visited AMC and met some of our visitors and clients. Some new volunteers are planning to become visitors, while others are already involved in supporting our work in different, essential ways.

We are planning to hold another Welcome Evening shortly, and also another Part 1 Training Session in March (date to be confirmed). The Part 2 Training Session for everyone who has done Part 1 will be on Saturday 21st April, at Highfield Church Centre.

The Part 3 Training for new visitors who are working with their first clients demonstrated their huge commitment to their clients as well as the complexity of the work they are doing. We are so pleased to welcome them as fully trained visitors.

The Training Team



Christmas Football Tournament

The SWVG Christmas football tournament was a great success. Beside the cold weather the 25 players still had fun and although we had to hire the pitch this time we still raised over £250. We are looking forward to the next tournament in the summer.

Winchester Community Choir

Rachel Masker and Hazel Still were invited to attend the Choir's Christmas Concert on 12 December. What a brilliant concert it was, led by Carol Robson, a popular and enthusiastic conductor. The choir was very talented, giving a lovely mixture of well known and less well known carols, poems, and readings by choir members. Festive, buzzing atmosphere, with mince pies and tea served in the interval.

£1,800 was raised in ticket sales, and half will be donated to SWVG, shared with Read Easy who support adults to read. We had no idea what to expect and were delighted to find a packed hall in the UR Church on Jewry Street, almost a sell out. We will be invited to tell the Choir about our work early in the New Year. Thank you to Anne Leeming's neighbour who nominated us as a charity deserving support!

Call for a Regular Information Exchange

We're calling for a regular information exchange to use our experiences as effectively as possible in order to help others who may be in similar circumstances. We have two items to start this off:

Free Nursery School Places:

If your client has a two year old, it is very likely that they are eligible for 15 hours of free nursery education, commencing the term after their second birthday. To access this your client needs to:

- Access www.southampton.gov.uk and enter two year old funding in the search box
- Click on the "Nursery Education" hyperlink and register on the Portal
- Click on the application form on the left hand side
- Add the child's details to the "My Family" box
- Complete the application form

If they are eligible they will be given a code to take to the nursery provider.

Please note:

- a) The website (as of 9 January 2018) is not working, but if you call, it can be done manually
- b) If your client cannot complete the above steps themselves you can do this on their behalf.

Top Tip for encouraging a baby/toddler to communicate if the parent's first language is not English

Advice from a Speech and Language Therapist is to encourage parents to talk in their own language. It is better to provide good quality language in the natural tongue than pigeon English. The child will develop English from listening to others but it may well be later than other children.

Self-Care and Vicarious Trauma Course

In November I attended a one-day course in London run by Freedom from Torture called "Self-care and vicarious trauma". It was a multidisciplinary course for people from a range of settings working across health, social care and legal backgrounds. The course came out of the growing awareness of the impact of working directly or indirectly with survivors of torture. It is almost bound to affect you in some way.

"The expectation that we can be immersed in suffering and loss and not be touched by it is as unrealistic as expecting to walk through water without getting wet." - Rachel Remen 1996

There are many terms to describe the effect on helpers: vicarious trauma, secondary traumatic stress, compassion fatigue and burnout. Vicarious trauma is defined as a state of exhaustion or dysfunction that could be biological, social or psychological as a result of exposure to compassion stress. We pick up on clients' trauma and some of our reaction may mirror what clients are feeling. Broadly, vicarious traumatisation is characterised by feelings such as apathy, exhaustion, disillusionment, an alienated attitude towards clients and feelings of guilt and failure.

In some ways we are well protected in SWVG because we are volunteers and are not doing this work day in day out every day, we do not have too many clients and we are trained for our role. However, visitors may still become stressed and overwhelmed by the client's situation. If this is happening to you talk to someone - your backup, another visitor at the support group, one of the coordinating team.

It was an interesting and valuable training day. They now run separate courses for Home Office and immigration staff as they too can be affected.

Chris Stephens

Upcoming Events

The SWVG New Year's Party

This will take place on Saturday 27th January, 12.30 till 14.30.

Please note the **new venue**: Edmund Kell Unitarian Church, Bellevue Road (off London Road), Southampton.

Please let Celia Cox or Claudia Glyn know if you are coming.

Celia: cox.hear@btinternet.com or 07860178516

Claudia: claudi_glyn@hotmail.com or 07751213735

Refugee and Migrant Women's Lobby of Parliament

Would you and/or your client like to join this?

Women for Refugee Women is a charity that supports women who have come to the UK to seek safety from persecution (<http://www.refugeewomen.co.uk/>). Most of the women they work with are survivors of rape or other gender-based persecution.

On International Women's Day 8 March 2018, they are joining with other charities to hold a refugee and migrant women's lobby of Parliament. MPs will be asked to join us at the lobby, and to sign a pledge supporting refugee and migrant women's rights to safety, dignity and liberty. For more information about the lobby, see: www.allwomenscount.co.uk

They have invited SWVG to join forces with them ahead of the lobby of Parliament. If you are interested in attending the Lobby and/or inviting your MP to attend it, then please contact William Brook-Hart (SWVG Campaigning Group) at wbh147@gmail.com

Requests for Volunteers

PeaceJam 2018 Annual Conference

In March 2017, two of our members ran a couple of workshops about asylum seekers and refugees as part of PeaceJam's Annual Conference. There was a wonderful atmosphere, and it was a brilliant opportunity to engage in conversations about asylum with young students, and tell them a bit about what we do at SWVG. There was also an opportunity to attend an inspirational speech by Leymah Gbowee, Nobel Peace Prize winner.

The 2018 Conference is being held in March, and the laureate this year will be Tawakkol Karman, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011 (take a look at this link for more information about her: <https://nobelwomensinitiative.org/laureate/tawakkol-karman/>). We have been invited back to run another workshop, and we are looking for one or two more volunteers to lead the workshop. Our workshop will be on Saturday 3rd March 2018 at the University of Winchester. If you are interested in helping, please email Sue Turner (sueturner7@gmail.com).

Dates for the Diary

27 January - New Year's Party

5 February - General Meeting

The deadline for material for the February Newsletter is 20 February 2018. Please send contributions to Naomi Hartley at naomihartley1@gmail.com.