

Volunteer for a Better Life in Fife!



Volunteers warming up
at the Green Gym
See page 4 for the full story

Health has always been an area of great volunteer involvement and our recent statistics bear this out. Since 1st April this year 63% of the new volunteers who have registered with VC Fife have indicated an interest in an opportunity which has a health benefit to the client group involved. This includes Befriending – 28%; Care – 30% and Counselling – 15%. On the other side of the coin 12.6% of new volunteers have indicated that they are looking to volunteering to aid their own recovery or to cope with a long- or short-term condition. This can include mental health issues, drug or alcohol dependence, physical disability or visual impairment.

In this edition of eVOLVe you'll find examples of organisations which take on volunteers to help their client group and the volunteers, in return, reap rich rewards.

Celebrating Fife's Voluntary Sector 2010



Our annual awards ceremony will take place on the **24th November** at the Rothes Halls and this year it's going to be bigger and better than ever!

Volunteer Centre Fife is working in partnership with CVS Fife and VONEF to recognise the achievements of both volunteers AND voluntary organisations in Fife. The event has been awarded funding by Celebrating Fife 2010 to help ensure that it is a fun occasion for all. More information at www.volunteeringfife.org

Improving Health through Volunteering

Fife Coaching Academy

Fife Coaching Academy was formed in 2006, with the ethos of providing opportunities for individuals to develop their potential and learn new life skills. Being involved in coaching provides the volunteer with a healthy option through active participation.

The academy is geared towards sporting pursuits, which enable a large number of participants and volunteer coaches to flourish in their chosen sports. They have at present some 28 volunteer coaches from a variety of ages and backgrounds. The wellbeing of each individual is enhanced through their enjoyment of becoming active in the role of coach and demonstrating their skills and newly-acquired knowledge to the kids.



Self-esteem and confidence shine through and a sense of individual pride in what you are doing aids motivation and development. Tammy Band has successfully completed 200 hours of coaching and received her MV Award for this.

FCA is looking for more volunteers. They provide support, coach education and, more importantly, social inclusion for all. For more information visit www.fifecoachingacademy.co.uk or contact Volunteer Centre Fife.

At the very Heart of Volunteering

FACT: British Heart Foundation (BHF) Scotland is the nation's heart charity; its mission is to play a leading role in the fight against heart and circulatory disease, so that it is no longer a major cause of disability and premature death.

FACT: Heart and circulatory disease is Scotland's biggest killer; around 19,000 men, women and children die from it each year; another 600,000 are living with it.

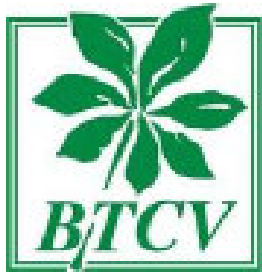
FACT: Men in Fife are 67% more likely to die of heart disease under 65 than men in SE England. Women are faring worse: they are twice as likely to die prematurely as women in the south.



Last year, BHF Scotland provided funding for two Health Coaches as part of Hearty Lives Fife, an innovative partnership between BHF Scotland and NHS Fife. Community-based, they help provide a supervised cardiac rehabilitation programme for patients building up their fitness and confidence after a heart attack or heart surgery. They also help them to make better lifestyle choices to increase their chances of living more healthily for longer.

Getting the right start in life can lead to a healthier life in the longer term. *Jump Rope for Heart* and *Ultimate Dodgeball* are two initiatives currently being introduced in schools to encourage activity amongst children and to raise awareness of heart health at a young age. These initiatives and research cannot be funded without the help of volunteers. BHF Scotland volunteers helped raise over £25 million last year across the whole of the UK to fight heart disease. There are many ways to help: get involved with schools and young people, build relationships with local businesses, help at BHF Scotland events, put on an event with your friends and family, or help in one of our shops. For more information contact Ffyonna Scott scottf@bhf.org.uk

A Healthy Environment



BTCV is a conservation charity that works to achieve positive change in people and the environment.

There are two groups in Fife - the BTCV group and the Green Gym group. BTCV volunteers do all sorts of outdoor work to improve their physical and mental health and learn new skills. They have worked on the sand dunes at St Andrews, the Ecology Centre in Kinghorn and also for the Forestry Commission.

The Green Gym is a smaller group with a strong focus on building health and confidence. Recently-completed work includes helping with a school's wildlife garden and creating a flower bed for the Royal British Legion.

BTCV /Green Gym takes on a wide range of volunteers and endeavours to meet their personal aspirations, whatever the difficulties. This approach is particularly important to Kath Webster, the Volunteering Development Officer. "The project is going really well...we get referrals from Back-to-Work, Home-Start, GPs and others. The volunteers who work with us are looking to improve their health and confidence and learn new skills...the project is also a positive model of capacity building. Two of the volunteers are now Volunteer Officers who started as conservation volunteers, completed training courses and showed themselves ready for a responsible role."

If you are a volunteer and are interested in the Green Gym or if you have a project that Green Gym volunteers could help with please contact Kath Webster at k.webster@btcv.org.uk



Talking Tandems is a developing cycling project that involves individuals who are blind or partially-sighted in mainstream cycling activities thus improving basic fitness levels and reducing the risk of long-term health issues in later life.

"By loaning tandem cycles, cycling accessories and car racks to volunteers we provide users with a personalised, flexible and affordable service," said Janet Brereton, Chairperson. "This results in our cyclists setting realistic goals that contribute to their overall health and well-being, changing lives in varied and positive ways."



To date, Talking Tandems have assisted individuals to return to cycling after losing their sight, actively

encouraging social inter-action with local cycling groups and preparing more experienced tandem cyclists to take part in more challenging charity cycle rides.

The project promotes learning by doing, involving all participants in opportunities to develop personal fitness, cycling skills and abilities through mentoring and training courses designed specifically with cyclists in mind.

Anyone wishing to volunteer with Talking Tandems and learn more about this developing project can contact Janet Brereton, telephone: 01592 201 328, email: info@talkingtandems.org or log on to their website: www.talkingtandems.org.

Enjoy the ride!

Help with Healthy Eating



beat (formerly the Eating Disorders Association) is the UK's leading Eating Disorders charity providing information, help and support for people affected by eating disorders, in particular, anorexia, bulimia nervosa and binge-eating disorder. Eating disorders are complex psychological illnesses which affect people indiscriminate of age, background, race or gender. They are typically characterised by stigma and shame, which can create a barrier to accessing support and treatment.

Anorexia nervosa has one of the highest overall mortality rates of any psychiatric disorder and as an organisation we are committed to raising awareness and widening our services throughout the UK. beat's vision is that **Eating Disorders Will be Beaten** and we believe that with the right support people can overcome and recover from their eating disorder.

Volunteers make a real difference to this vision and help to maintain the valuable services we offer to support people affected by eating disorders. beat has a variety of diverse volunteering opportunities from fundraising to working on our national helpline. We are currently keen to recruit volunteers to help facilitate our Self-Help Groups which support people who have an eating disorder, and those caring for and supporting them through their illness. Whilst many of our volunteers have had personal experience of an eating disorder this is not a pre-requisite as full training and support will be provided by beat to all volunteers.

Volunteer vacancies can be viewed on the following section of our website <http://www.b-eat.co.uk/Supportingbeat/Volunteering> Contact details: Main Office Number: 0300 123 3355, Helpline for people aged 18 and over: 0845 634 1414, e-mail: help@b-eat.co.uk, Youthline for people aged 25 and under: 0845 634 7650, TXT: 07786 20 18, fyp@b-eat.co.uk

beat is a registered charity no. 801343

Cooks' School

Jacquie Mellon, the Volunteer Coordinator for Give Something Back in Central Fife, recently helped support a six-week long healthy cooking programme with 4 participants based at the Ecology Centre in Kinghorn.

The programme was run by the Community Food Development Worker who provided the cookers and led the group with a sessional worker. The Ecology Centre provided the room, the participants and fruit, vegetables and eggs from the site. While the main aim was to cook healthy, affordable food they also looked at budgeting, healthy snacks, incorporating the "5 a day" into our diet and comparing takeaway food to home-made.



There was discussion around heart disease, high cholesterol and high levels of fat in food. Evaluations were completed at the end of each weekly session and the participants received a certificate and a free goody bag on completion of the programme.

Invaluable Support from Volunteers

LINK

East Fife Mental Health Befriending Project

LINK provides a befriending service for people who are isolated due to ongoing mental health difficulties. The Project recruits, trains and supports volunteers, male and female, and matches them with people referred to them by a recognised key worker. Some of LINK's volunteers have experienced poor mental health themselves at some time and the Project provides an empowering opportunity for them. Many befriendees have moved on to become volunteers in their own right. In addition, volunteering as a LINK befriender can be the pathway to a reference for future employment.



After volunteer training - which is run by professionals in the mental health field - a volunteer befriender will be matched with a Service User and a regular pattern of contact and support out in the community will be established. This will usually be a social or leisure interest which the person would find difficult to do on their own or without support. The more volunteers who are recruited and trained the better the general knowledge and understanding of mental health issues in the community.

Gillian, Befriender for 12 years, says: *"I have been matched with various clients each with different needs and personalities...it has given me real pleasure to see the difference befriending has made to them."*

Shirley, Befriendeed, explains how LINK has helped her: *"Previously...I would not even drive on my own. Now I drive to meet my befriender and it's a time to be relaxed and enjoy someone's company."*

A CPN from St Andrews comments: *"The LINK befriending service is a valuable resource enabling people with a range of mental health problems to access social support and companionship."*

For more information contact Caroline Ward on 01333 312015.

LINK also has an Adolescent Befriending Project in East Fife. Contact Jane Mclver, jnmaciver@aol.com or Volunteer Centre Fife on 01334 659134.



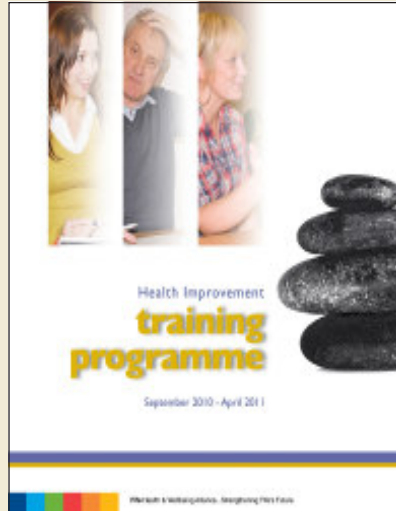
Fife Intensive Rehabilitation and Substance Misuse Team

F.I.R.S.T. is a Fife-wide organisation which supports people experiencing problems with alcohol or drugs. Their aim is to assist their client group back into a healthier lifestyle without the need to use alcohol or drugs and volunteers are invaluable in this process. Supervised by the Rehabilitation Worker, they assist clients with the everyday skills most of us take for granted - social activity, budgeting, time-management and attending appointments.

Volunteers are also involved with the Drop-in Service, meeting new clients and chatting with them while they wait for assessment. They assist with the groupwork programme which includes Walk & Talk, Bowling and Pottery. More formal groups, including Motivation, Relapse Prevention, Women's and Men's groups, help improve clients' confidence, self-esteem and assertiveness skills. Volunteers who have helped with these sessions feel rewarded by being able to help others, but have also learned more about themselves in the process and have been able to improve their own skills in these areas.

At F.I.R.S.T. the whole focus is on encouraging clients to make changes towards physical, emotional and social well-being, and volunteers play a big part in this, and benefit themselves in the process.

For more information please contact Caroline on 01592 585960, caroline.mackenzie@firstforfife.co.uk



The Health Improvement Training Programme which runs until March 2011 contains a wide range of free training courses which are open to all staff and volunteers from public and voluntary sector organisations in Fife. The aim is to provide workers with the opportunity to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence to improve the health and well-being of local people, and to reduce health inequalities.

Training course topics cover key local and national priorities such as mental health and suicide prevention, drug and alcohol awareness and tobacco issues. Core Skills courses on topics such as Community Development and Health and Group Work Skills are also available along with new courses on Child Healthy Weight and Seated Exercises for the Frail Older Adult.

The courses themselves are interactive and use a variety of methods from presentations to group work sessions. Feedback from participants indicates that they appreciate the opportunity to gain information and share ideas in a relaxed atmosphere and setting. The chance to network with people from other organisations is also highly valued.

'I enjoyed the information sharing, acquiring new knowledge and meeting a variety of people all enriching the experience.'

'Very good and very informative, relaxed, very well presented'

'The courses have helped me improve my practice and have given me further information on how to approach and deal with problems I might encounter in the course of my job.'

The training programme is managed by Health Promotion Fife and is delivered in partnership with numerous NHS Fife, Fife Council and voluntary sector organisations and services.

For a copy of the 2010 to 2011 Health Improvement Training Programme, please contact Karen Stirling at karenstirling@nhs.net or 01592 226488 or view the courses available online at www.healthyfife.net/training

For information on training provided by Volunteer Centre Fife's Training Co-ordinator see back page and read Jane Maciver's success story on page 7.

Volunteering in a Sheltered Environment!

Volunteer Centre Fife has been working closely with staff from Housing and Neighbourhood Services to develop a number of exciting new volunteering opportunities at Sheltered Housing Complexes across Fife. Until now, volunteer involvement at these complexes was patchy at best, and was almost always instigated and managed by residents. Over the past few months, however, we have been meeting with Housing Officers to roll this out more evenly and to support tenants with the recruitment and management of new volunteers.

Sheltered Housing complexes give people the support needed to live independently where they might otherwise struggle. The complexes also facilitate social interaction between residents which also greatly improves their quality of life. Volunteers would be involved to enhance this service in a number of ways, but what the volunteers actually do would be decided by the residents. One complex might decide to recruit a volunteer for their lunch club, another might want somebody to lead an exercise class, whilst the next might require a gardener to keep the complex looking its best.

Eleanor Haggett, an Operational Manager for Housing and Neighbourhood Services, said "we eagerly look forward to working with Volunteer Centre Fife and recognise the valuable contribution they can make to our older tenants who, whilst wishing to maintain their independence, are unable to participate fully within the community for various reasons. This approach to partnership-working will bring added value and enhancement into the lives of our older people."

This is a positive development for Volunteer Centre Fife also, particularly given the increasing number of people approaching us wanting to volunteer. Working in a care setting is very popular, and these new opportunities will greatly improve the choice we have to offer.

If you are interested in volunteering in a local Sheltered Housing complex, please contact your local Volunteer Centre.

Well done Jane!



Jane Maciver of LINK East Fife Mental Health Adolescent Befriending Project was recently presented with a Customised Award at SCQF in recognition of achieving Level 7 Managing Volunteers.

"Although at first I found it challenging getting back into the way of learning after a 20-year break, the training was very flexible and affordable. It was good to reflect over the time I have spent in my post and to recognise how much I have learnt. It was very good for professional and personal development and I would highly recommend this educational opportunity to other voluntary sector workers. I felt very well supported by both Volunteer Centre Fife and Volunteer Development Scotland and I would urge others to take up the chance now to gain this qualification before the funding finishes in June 2011, as it can realistically be completed in three months."

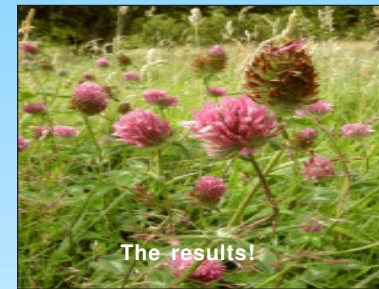
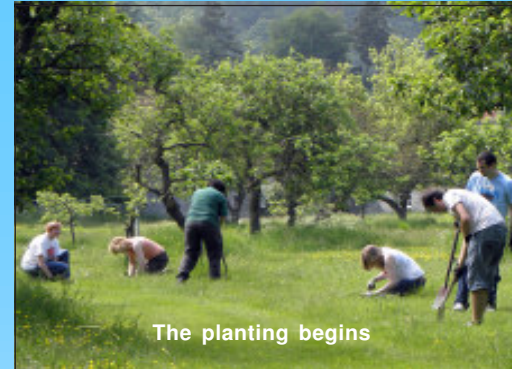
Falkland Revisited

During Volunteers' Week 2010, staff from Volunteer Centre Fife swapped their PCs for trowels and their stilettos for wellies (the girls anyway!) to help Sonia Ferras-Mana, head gardener at Falkland Palace Gardens, to plant wildflowers in the wildlife garden.

Just a few weeks later the fruits of their labours were very much in evidence with the wild clover in full bloom and many other splendid specimens. Sonia was delighted with the results as were visitors to the gardens.

Volunteers are needed all year round to help in the Gardens and in the greenhouses. You don't have to be green-fingered or knowledgeable about plants to get involved. However, if you do know about plants you could act as a garden guide.

For more information contact Sonia by phoning 07713786306 or e-mailing sferras-mana@nts.org.uk, or get in touch with your local Volunteer Centre Fife office.



VC Fife Contact Information

Training

For information on FREE training courses, including in-house and training tailored to your organisation's needs, plus information on accreditation: contact Mary Ray, Training Co-ordinator on 07717 390214, mary.ray@volunteeringfife.org

Support into volunteering

To find out about the Give Something Back project in Central and West Fife contact Jacquie Mellon on 01592 645540 gsbcentral@volunteeringfife.org or Biff McMahon on 01383 732136 gsb@volunteeringfife.org

MV Awards/16+ Learning Choices

Linda Turnbull, youth@volunteeringfife.org

For general enquiries: contact your local Volunteer Centre Fife office.

www.volunteeringfife.org

8 For info on every aspect of volunteering - advice about benefits, expenses, Disclosures, preparing to volunteer, links to other voluntary organisations, information on volunteering opportunities throughout Fife