



Work with Older People 2004-2005

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We are currently working with approximately 150 members who regularly attend Marchmont Centre and join in most of the activities. As we are living longer we are continually concerned about our health and our quality of life. We are fortunate to have 2 exercise classes a week at Marchmont Centre (Tai Chi and Qi Gong) which Westminster/Kingsway College fund for us. These classes are very well supported and the older people thoroughly enjoy them.

Currently the activities we have at Marchmont Centre are (and we are always open to new ideas)

- Bridge
- Drama
- Tai Chi
- Hoy
- Qi Gong
- Swimming
- Silver Threads Bingo
- Friday Bingo
- UK Online Computer Session

We also have our over 60s Lunch Club which runs from Monday to Friday, where you can have a freshly cooked main course and pudding at low cost. This is an essential part of Marchmont Centre as it is a social opportunity for our local elders.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are an integral part of the activities at Marchmont Centre. Most of the groups have a volunteer, usually an older person, who helps with the smooth running of the activity. My special thanks go to all the volunteers that help run these activities throughout the year.



VE DAY

This year was a special year for older people as it was the 60th anniversary of VE Day. We were involved in the fundraising/planning/organising of a street party in Cromer Street, which was attended by approximately 500 people. It was a good opportunity for the elderly and youngsters to mix together.

HOLIDAY

This year, for the first time, we took 44 older people on an 8-day subsidised holiday to Yarmouth on the Isle of Wight. The group thoroughly enjoyed themselves as there was no sense of urgency any more and lots of smiling faces and healthy glows from being in the sun. As a worker I get great satisfaction from these holidays, seeing everyone together and enjoying themselves, away from all their cares, and although we did have some rain it was a hugely enjoyable holiday.

We can't thank the funders enough for their generosity and if the smiles on the pensioners' faces are anything to go by, they all had a thoroughly good time and hopefully we can do another full week's holiday next year.

We held a Cheese & Wine Party a month after the holiday and the older people were still enthusing about the trip which is always a good sign.

We would like to thank the Thanet Trust and St Andrew's Holborn for their generous donation towards the cost of this holiday.

DAY TRIPS

The day trips in the summer are always popular. This year we went to:-

- Clacton
- Worthing
- Hastings
- Eastbourne
- Tiptree Jam Factory

We also had our very popular shopping trips to France. In May we went to Boulogne and then in October we went to Dunkerque for the first time. They were both full and it was an opportunity for new members to join in the activities that we provide.



Work with Black & Minority Ethnic Elders



The issues facing black and ethnic minority groups in the UK such as racism and discrimination, cultural isolation and lack of access to resources is well documented. However we would say that these are so much more prevalent and more evident in the older community simply due to the language barriers which face this community as a whole. Having left behind their native lands in the hope of better futures for themselves, the people involved largely made up the labour force, doing hard manual work, on long hours with very limited pay, leaving them unable to socialise or educate themselves in order to learn the language spoken in what was becoming their new home. As a result today although some of them have been living in the country for over 20 years, their spoken English is very limited.

We have established that a lot of the difficulties facing them today are primarily due to this problem. This is such a major issue that it will be a barrier to almost anything that they have to do on a regular basis. Going to the doctor and speaking about their symptoms may be a problem; reporting a housing repair without being able to explain themselves poses a problem; reporting an incident to the police poses a problem if they are

not able to fully comprehend themselves. Even small issues which we take for granted such as perhaps trying to book a little trip and not being able to purchase a train ticket. With such a large number of such people facing these issues day in day out is why Kings Cross Brunswick Neighbourhood Association is such a key influence in this community. In many ways we feel that we have given this community so much more independence and act as a voice to bridge the barriers, which so far has socially divided this community.

At KCB we provide activities and sessions on a weekly basis which enable the community to have access to some of the services which they may have difficulty in providing for themselves.

Monday

Advice Session
ESOL Class (English Language Class)

Tuesday

Advice Session
Computer Class
Health Talk

Wednesday

Exercise Class
Lunch Club
Group Consultation

Thursday

Advice Session



The group put forward questions related to their health and well being in the presence of an interpreter who was able to translate their specific questions. These sessions have been extremely valuable and popular with a large attendance.

- Addaction-Impact Project also held several talks to raise awareness on drug and alcohol abuse, a topic, which is quite often a taboo amongst the elderly community.
- Primary Care Trust were also invited into the centre to sit with members of the community, again with the presence of an interpreter to help explain to them all the medication they were taking, exactly what it was prescribed for and for which specific symptoms. This gave them a better understanding of their own illnesses and the importance of taking their medication as prescribed.

- We are now also introducing a weekly Doctor's session where a Bengali speaking Doctor will be advising the elderly people on all aspects of their health.
- Day trips are an important activity which have been organised by KCB. They have been hugely successful and popular amongst the BME community. During the summer months we organised several trips to fruit picking farms around the Country. Such activities offer groups an opportunity to explore the country that they live in, away from the confines of London.

We have been very pleased with what has been accomplished by KCB this year and will continue to carry out my work so that we can assist BME elders in making use of welfare services, reduce isolation and vulnerability amongst the community and strive to encourage local people's involvement in issues that affect their lives such as regeneration programmes.



The advice sessions particularly have highlighted many issues and concerns facing the community as a whole. We have taken these on board at KCB and have involved other organisations, which will be able to provide advice and help to the community.

- Well & Wise were invited into the centre on a monthly basis, to take interactive group discussions.