



Newsletter – August 29th 2011

Hi everyone, autumn seems just around the corner and we are fast approaching the completion of our second anniversary. The Debenham Project has continuously evolved over that period until now we provide a wide range of services, activities and opportunities for family carers to get support – but most of all to know that we understand what their practical and emotional difficulties are, and are “there for them”. A tremendous thank you to all who help – volunteers, professional support workers, the local authorities, the charities, the NHS and the many people who advised and supported our work.

Right at the beginning of the project I was often asked “what is it like to be leading such a project?” The answer I usually gave is that it was as if “we have let the tiger out of the cage and I am the one hanging on to its tail”, and so it still is to today. The project continues to evolve rapidly and managing it is more about responding to the direction it wants to go in than trying to control and contain it. So, each newsletter I seem to be able to report something new. For example, following a “taster” session of chair-based exercises, we have, working with a local gym, now introduced a regular fortnightly programme of Exercise Therapy”. What a difference can be made with some simple exercises that we can do whilst sitting in a chair – removing stress, reducing pain, improving posture, and so on. It’s gentle and fun - not at all about “no gain without pain” – and you can do it at home - less of the gym and more of the lounge! Already the “club” has 14 members!

In another example, we got to know in our Carers’ Club of an elderly gentleman who has lived “a very interesting life” and who now devotes his entire time as family carer for his wife. Over a 10 year period he constructed a series of the most remarkable precision scale agricultural models which he used to display for charity. However, this past 20 years they have rested unseen in his loft. So here is a date for your diary:

October 1st and 2nd at St Mary’s Church, Debenham
Harvest through the Ages – an exhibition of traditional farming wagons and carts together with a flower festival and other traditional country skills.

Please tell all your friends and colleagues. It will almost certainly be his last opportunity to see his creations on display for charity and we would like to make it a special occasion.

In my last newsletter at the beginning of July, I mentioned our delight at our

being one of the 3 shortlisted nominations for Suffolk ACRE's annual award for community achievement – The Probert Trophy. I am now even more delighted to report that, at the Suffolk ACRE AGM and Awards Ceremony, The Debenham Project was announced as the winner. I am so proud of everyone who has made this success possible – there are countless individuals in our local community who have “done their bit” (and continue to do so) for the project, and I would like to thank all those in local government, the NHS and the charities who have freely given of their goodwill and practical support to make the project a success.

It seems that this is the “Season of Awards” as we are also to be given one of Mid Suffolk District Council & Rotary Club of Stowmarket Gipping Valley Community Achievement Awards. The encouragement that this gives is very important – it visibly demonstrates that what we have been doing is valued, not only by family carers who directly benefit, but also by the wider community. It helps to develop a confidence which can lead “who knows where” but certainly to a strengthening wish to help and “make a difference”.

Very Good News! I was delighted to learn within the last few days that we have been fortunate enough to receive an award of £10,000 from the Suffolk Foundation. This is a charitable organization that seeks to support community based projects. In this case it is donated by the Improve and Prove Fund and recognises what the project has achieved thus far. It is given to encourage the further development of our services. With this, and our own funds, we hope to tackle some of the difficulties that family carers find in getting professional personal care for their partners, parents, friends, etc in our rural area.

An almost final point, if you would like to know more, please think about visiting our website www.the-debenham-project.org.uk where you can access all our newsletters, and much more. Particularly, you can see information about the “Harvest through the Ages” exhibition and “Flower Festival”, and also our success with winning The Probert Trophy. If you are a bit unsure how to contact us on the web please call in at The Library Resource Centre, Cross Green, Debenham and ask Melanie or one of her staff to help you.

Finally, I want to make sure that no one who helps our project goes unrecognized. We have many people who give a financial contribution to our work – sometimes large but often just a small amount, but it all adds to what we can achieve. The amount does not matter, it is the expression of caring that is important – Thank You. If you would like to know more please see our display in the Post Office, ring 01728862003, call in at the Library Resource Centre, or visit our website at <http://www.the-debenham-project.org.uk/>.

With my best wishes and kind regards,

Lynden