



THE LINK

For all the latest news from the Volunteer Link Scheme

First Aid Training

Our volunteers had been very keen to have First Aid Training, which is not something we have usually been able to provide due to costs. We were happy to be able to respond to the need and provide the training requested by our volunteers. We are very grateful to The Thomas Wall Trust whose support made it possible.



Michael demonstrates the recovery position with Priscah.

Thursday 16 November saw the first of two training sessions that will give all our volunteers the opportunity to participate. The First Aid course was run by St John Ambulance and covered the following

topics: resuscitation of adults suffering from chest pain, stroke, low blood sugar, urinary tract infection, choking, bleeding and asthma, as well as demonstrating the recovery position.

If you have poor eyesight and would like a large print version of this newsletter, please call the office on 020 8832 7422

A Word From Amelia

Firstly may I wish all volunteers and clients a very Happy New Year. The office was closed for the week during Christmas and New Year, and we do hope that this didn't inconvenience anyone. I would also like to take this opportunity to apologise if you have had any difficulty in getting through to us on the phone – we have been made aware that there were problems and hope that these have now been sorted out. On 4 November Liz Roberts, Donata Fernandes and Veronica Rowe received an 'Exceptional Achievement' award at a special ceremony to mark the 35th anniversary of Ealing CVS and CSV Make A Difference Day, the biggest annual nationwide celebration of the contribution volunteers make to the local community. We are so grateful to all our volunteers and it was wonderful to be able to thank three longstanding volunteers at this lovely occasion.

Amelia Clarke
Manager

NEW YEAR 2012



The course proved to be very interesting and



Michael explains First Aid techniques.

educational. Michael Moore who led the course was very enthusiastic and provided a great balance of information and humour at a level that was easy to comprehend and learn from as well as being very engaging. The practical exercises such

as the use of Annie the resuscitation doll, were particularly helpful in understanding how to implement the training.

It was a very beneficial experience and we hope not to have to apply any of the skills learnt, but feel reassured now that we have the knowledge to do so!



Rie Zylinska practices resuscitating Annie.

Digital TV Switchover

All televisions will start to switch to Digital this year and in London the switch starts on the 4th April 2012 with BBC2. BBC1, ITV1, Channel 4 and Channel 5 will switch on 18th April. This means that if your television receives only five channels you will need to upgrade your TV in order to continue to receive these channels along with the digital Freeview channels. Digital Freeview channels are free to watch once you have a digital receiver set top box or digital television. If you already watch Freeview on a new TV or a set top box, you will need to retune it on or soon after 18 April. If you do not update your television then you will not be able to watch TV at all.



Are you ready for Digital TV?

- Do you get more than five channels on your TV?
- If you have more than one TV in your home, are they all ready for digital?
- Will you find it easy to use digital TV equipment?
- Do you know what you need to do for switchover?

If you answered no or don't know to the above questions you may be eligible for The Switchover Help Scheme.

The Switchover Help Scheme Eligibility

The scheme can help you switch your TV to digital if you:

- Are aged 75 or over, or
- Get or could get
 - Disability Living Allowance
 - Attendance Allowance
 - Constant Attendance Allowance
 - Mobility supplement, or
- Have lived in a care home for six months or more, or
- Are registered blind or partially sighted.

Anyone who is eligible should have received a letter from the Switchover Help Scheme.

You can also check to see if you are eligible by checking online or you can contact the Switchover Help Scheme:

Check online: www.helpscheme.co.uk
Email: info@helpscheme.co.uk
Call free on: 0800 40 85 900

Alternatively if you are at all concerned you can ask your volunteer who will contact the VLS office or you can call us directly.

Keeping In Contact By E-mail

Volunteers can download visit forms and guidance from the website:

www.volunteerlink.org.uk

If you would like to receive information by e-mail: befriending@volunteerlink.org.uk

Contacting us in an emergency

In an emergency, it is much better if you telephone us. We are not in the office on Wednesdays, but our reception service can alert us to any problems!

Phone the office on 020 8832 7422.

Word Of Advice Regarding Sales & Services



You may have experienced visitors and phone calls trying to sell you things you may not be sure you need. If you are considering a care service, companies will usually want to visit you at home to discuss it with you. In our experience they are not very open about their pricing structures for what they are offering.

We suggest that if at all possible, you ask your volunteer or someone else you can trust if they can be with you at these meetings. Your volunteer will not be able to make the decisions for you but will help ensure you're not pushed into anything as sales representatives can often make promises that are not fulfilled, or the services can cost a great deal which may not be initially apparent.

DONATIONS

Our service is free to those in need, and there is no expectation that clients donate to the scheme unless they want to and can afford to.

If you would like to help us you can send a cheque (made payable to Volunteer Link Scheme) to our office address.

Client And Volunteer Interview

This season's interview is by our volunteer Steve Corkett who has interviewed his client Nerissa Buchanan.



Steve begins by introducing himself....

I was born in London, and have lived there for most of my life (with short spells in Hull, Australia, York and Amsterdam). My career in finance eventually led to a role of Finance Director for Nestlé, from which I was fortunate enough to take very early retirement five years ago. Since then, I have spent my time doing a lot of travelling, but have also got involved with a number of different voluntary organisations and have now been visiting Nerissa for five months.

Steve continues by interviewing Nerissa... Please can you tell me a bit about yourself?

I was born and grew up in Jamaica. My childhood was spent in a country area, but after school I worked in the Courts Office in Montego Bay. The lust for travel is in our blood, and in my early thirties I decided to travel to England on my own.

I spent three years at Training College, doing Domestic Science. I then spent time at Weybridge Technical College, Brompton Hospital and Haverhill Training College, developing my career in catering. I also gave birth to my daughter Hilary during this time. Hilary lives and works in East London, but comes to see me as often as she can.

How long have you lived in Ealing?

I moved to Ealing in 1971, to take up my job as the Assistant School Meals Officer, boarding first of all on Pitshanger Lane, and then in the eighties buying my own house in Hanwell where I still live today. Ealing schools were a good place to work –

especially if one had the right boss! I retired from Ealing Council over twenty years ago, and I have done various voluntary duties since then, including befriending at the VLS, serving in the Oxfam shop in Ealing, helping out at the local church, and acting as secretary for the Anglo-Caribbean club.

Nerissa, what was it like being a volunteer at the Volunteer Link Scheme?

I grew up with people around, and have always loved company. I overheard people talking about the Volunteer Link Scheme, and thought that I would try it. My client was a partially sighted lady, who initially lived in Acton, then moved to Hanwell. She was originally also from Jamaica, and eventually it was like I became part of the family. I saw a great deal of them, and probably did more for them than I should have done! The relationship ended after around ten years, when my client died, shortly after the death of her husband.

How would you describe our befriending relationship?

Living on my own, I don't see many people, and feel very lonely at times. I very much look forward to the visits. We talk about the past, and about what I have mislaid over the previous week (bus pass, bank cards or other important documents!) We mainly drink tea and play Scrabble! Whilst we are doing this, we put the world to rights!

What do you think of the VLS and volunteering?

The VLS has been very helpful for me. Becoming a volunteer is a very good thing, because it can give you a different perspective on life.



What would you say to someone considering joining up as a client?

Do it – especially if you enjoy the company of other people. I do really enjoy having somebody to visit, to help me get over the 'down bits'.

Steve ends with his final thoughts...

The Volunteer Link Scheme has enabled me to connect with people that I wouldn't normally come into contact with, and this has been a very positive experience. Nerissa is a wonderful lady, and I thoroughly look forward to my visits to her.

Funding News

Our corporate supporters, Aegis, recently held a raffle at their launch party and donated the proceeds to the VLS, we are so grateful for their donation of £5,000.



Aegis present their generous donation to the Volunteer Link Scheme.

We are also delighted to announce that we have been awarded a grant of £25,000 over three years from The Lloyds TSB Foundation for England and Wales. We are extremely grateful that a large national foundation has recognised the work of a small local voluntary organization. This is a satisfying acknowledgement of the work our volunteers do week in week out. Having a three year grant really helps to underpin our financial security in these economically uncertain times.

Keep Warm In The Cold

The cold weather can have a serious impact on your health. Keep well during the winter by staying warm.



Tips for keeping warm:

- Keep your home warm. Your main living room should be between around 18-21C (64-70F) and the rest of the house at a minimum of 16C (61F). You can also use a hot-water bottle or electric blanket (but not both at the same time) to keep warm while you're in bed.
- Wrap up warm, inside and out. Several thin layers of clothes are better than one thick layer. Don't forget to wear hats, gloves and scarves if you need to go out.
- Keep active. Move around at least once an hour and don't sit down for long periods of time. Even light exercise will help keep you warm.
- Make sure you're warm enough, especially at night, and have stocks of food and medicines so you don't need to go out during very cold weather.
- Keep curtains drawn at night and doors closed to block out draughts.
- Have regular hot drinks and at least one hot meal a day if possible. Eating regularly helps keep energy levels up during winter.

The Met Office provide the weather forecasts for broadcasts on radio and TV, so listen in to these bulletins regularly to keep up to date with the weather.

For advice on keeping warm you can ring the Age UK helpline on: **0800 00 99 66**

You may be able to claim grants to help heat your home. Contact:

- Warm Front for free on: **0800 316 2805** or visit www.warmfront.co.uk/doiqualify
- Winter Fuel Payments on: **08459 151515** or visit www.direct.gov.uk/winterfuel

Hello To:

We'd like to welcome the following volunteers who have joined us over the past few months:

Viktorija Kalinina
Catherine Spratt
Gabby Kloss
John Lloyd
Aretha Thomas
Sarah Towers

Goodbye And Thank You To:

Eddina Aceng
Katie Charing
Rachel Foxon
Marion Latch



The Link is published by the Volunteer Link Scheme, a registered charity (no. 1072538) that befriends housebound and isolated people in Ealing Borough.

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The Volunteer Link Scheme has achieved the nationally recognised standard in befriending services.

