

Welcome to our first newsletter of 2004. Last year was a successful year for Carers of West Lothian where we achieved many goals and were able to reach out to more carers than ever before.

With our eager and enthusiastic staff and Management Committee team working relentlessly behind the scenes, this success looks very much like continuing throughout 2004 and beyond.

As part of core activities our Carer Support Staff continue to provide information, support, and a listening ear to an increasing number of Carers. Our recently updated Carers Information Pack and Directory of Respite Services all add to the quality of the service that is offered.

The first 'Who Cares? Training course' for Carers of 2004 is currently underway. This course has been tailored to the requests of Carers caring for children with special needs, and similar courses will be run in the forthcoming year designed to meet the needs of Carers in specific caring situations.

We also plan to set up and organise support groups over the next year, beginning in the Spring with a pilot group for Carers caring for dementia sufferers.

Given the popularity and success of a Carer Awareness training session for professionals working within the Strathbrock Partnership Centre in October last year, we now plan to run more of these courses in 2004, extending them to professional partners throughout West Lothian.

Our programme for developing volunteering within the organisation is well underway and we look set to have new volunteers helping us carry out the ever increasing core services within the next few months.

Over and above the core activities we have a number of projects that are developing successfully and will continue throughout the following year. As a result of the growing number of Carers identified and supported through our Outreach Project, Carers of West Lothian has been granted permission from the Community Fund to employ a second part-time Outreach Carer Support Worker. Awareness and the development of services for Young Carers in West Lothian has expanded with the appointment of our Young Carer Development Worker in August last year.

Throughout 2004 Carers of West Lothian will continue to support and help carers in as many ways as possible. We will seek to identify, and subsequently offer a service to, hidden Carers, and will do this through promoting the organisation using posters, leaflets, website and local press. Above all Carers of West Lothian will strive to do this through partnership working and linking with others to provide the very best for Carers throughout West Lothian.

If you are interested in finding out more about any of the forthcoming courses or groups, or further information on the services mentioned above, please contact the Carers Centre on 01506 771750. We operate a 'drop-in' Centre at Strathbrock between 10.00 am and 3.00pm Monday to Friday, and welcome anyone who visits.



Young Carers Development worker Wilma Philpot with Occupational Therapists Connie Smith and Sally North.

Donation for Young Carers

A special thank you for the donation of £63, goes to the Community Care Team who work from the Strathbrock Centre. The Team donated the money they would have spent on christmas cards to enable Carers of West Lothian to fund outings and equipment for our Young Carers.

- Just one example of the benefits that Partnership Working can bring!!

Autism Library

- Signpost has taken over the administration of the Autism Library and there is now a new card-based, self-service borrowing system in place.
- Borrowers simply write their name on the card in the 'in' box corresponding to the book they want to borrow, and place the card in the 'out' box, reversing the process when they bring the books back.
- To join the autism library, please take a fee of £3.00 to Beatlie Campus and complete a registration form.
- Registered users can borrow a maximum of 3 books for 3 weeks.
- The library has over 200 books, including many new titles which have recently been added.
- The library now stocks multiple copies of some of the more popular titles, so if you have tried to borrow a book before but found it is always out on loan, you may find a copy available now.
- If you have not visited for a while or wish to join, why not pop along to Beatlie Campus, Livingston and check out the new stock.

Don't forget

Signpost have their own library, free to registered users (fill in a form), which contains books of interest to parents of children with all kinds of special needs. You can borrow up to 3 books at a time, for 3 weeks, renewable on request.

Signpost offers information and support for families of young people with special needs.

Contact them:

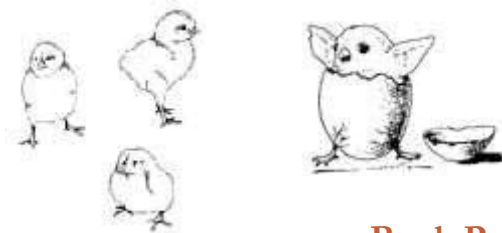
Telephone: 01506 431123

E-mail: enquiries@signpost-online.co.uk

Write to: Signpost, FREEPOST NAT9123, Livingston, EH54 0BR

Website: www.signpost-online.co.uk

Office open: Mon-Thurs 9.30-2.30pm, Fri 9-12



Book Review

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time - by Mark Haddon

"The dog was lying on the grass in the middle of the lawn in front of Mrs Shears' house. It looked as if it was running on its side, the way dogs run when they think they are chasing a cat in a dream. But the dog was not running or asleep. The dog was dead. There was a garden fork sticking out of the dog."

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time is a murder mystery novel. The detective, and narrator, is Christopher Boone. Christopher is fifteen and has Asperger's, a form of autism. He knows a very great deal about maths and very little about human beings. He loves lists, patterns and the truth. He hates the colours yellow and brown and being touched. He has never gone further than the end of the road on his own, but when he finds a neighbour's dog murdered he sets out on a terrifying journey, which will turn his whole world upside down.

I know very little about Asperger's, but understand so much more the way the autistic mind works after reading this. Christopher is a brilliant creation, and Mark Haddon's depiction of his world is deeply moving, very funny and utterly convincing. I loaned the book to a friend who has children with Asperger's. She thought the book delightful and she felt it gave her a deeper insight into how her children thought and behaved.

It is well worth a read, and you can borrow the book from our modest library at the Strathbrock Centre.

Victoria Clarke, Administrator

Young Carers Development Worker Update



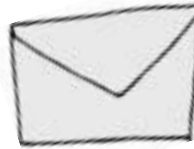
I have been in post for six months now and I can't believe how busy I am getting and what I have achieved in the time I have been working for Carers of West Lothian. It is very exciting to think about what's happening and what is in store for us in the future. Since the last newsletter I've been out meeting more people. I have begun to realise that this has been a major part of my job, making links and possibilities for the future!

I am still working with three individuals and meet them on a regular basis to take them out of their home for a short while to give them a break from their caring responsibilities. It also gives them a chance to talk about what is going on for them and to give them support. We have had enough referrals to start two groups. The first one begins on the 3rd of March and I will be co-working with Tracy Waddell, Senior Community Education Worker. This group is made up of seven 13+ Young Carers. The second group will be with a younger age range and I will be working with Nicola Davies-Jenkins, Youth Strategy Worker. It is hoped that the second group will start in March and we will presently be doing home visits.

I have been asked to deliver short presentations to St Kentigern's Assemblies about Young Carers and what it is like to be one. I have so far attended one session and have another four to do. It was nerve wracking, but enjoyable!

Another Young Carers Forum Meeting has been called and will be on **Monday 16th February**. This is aimed at Young Carers aged 11+. So if you would like to know more or would like to come along, give me a call on **01506 776999**. I would love to hear from you!

Wilma Philpot
Young Carers Development Worker



Young Carer's Letters

Wilma has been taking me out for 3 months. We have been going out to bowling, golf, table tennis and at Christmas we made cards. We stopped for the holidays and have now started to go out again.

Written By Gareth Campbell



Young Carers - Newsletter

Hello my name is Megan Forbes I am 11 years old. I have been a young carer for over a year it has been really good fun at first I went to the group on a Tuesday night but now I've got individual work with Wilma. When I went to the young carers group I done all sorts of things like swimming, ice-skating, laser quest, horse riding, arts and crafts games we also got a beauty therapist in. Out of all those Horse riding and swimming were my favourite. But now I'm with Wilma we do similar things like bowling, McDonalds which I love, made Christmas cards, went to the cinema for a Christmas treat. It is obvious what one is my favourite MCDONALDS!!! It was a good experience it got me away from home for a wee while and I met other people with similar problems in their life. The staff is very kind, funny and supportive. I hope you enjoy it as much as I did.





“Carer Support Co-ordinator alias Intrepid Explorer!”

While some were stocking up for the winter freeze and Asda being closed over the Christmas period I was emptying my cupboards and filling a suitcase.

On Boxing Day I set off on holiday to Singapore, Australia and Thailand. An extreme way to avoid the worst of the winter weather but I was not complaining! So at 3am on Boxing Day morning while the rest of the country slept off their Christmas Day hangover I headed to Glasgow to begin the first leg of my journey.

The first leg took me to Singapore. This was partly to split the journey to Australia up and partly to investigate the positive reports I had had of the country. I wasn't disappointed! Singapore, due to its size, is a collection of skyscrapers competing with each other to be the tallest. Although the picture I have painted may not be the most attractive mental image I found it strangely striking. There was not an ugly building in site while the air pollution often found in bustling cities was not obvious. Overall, the atmosphere of the country was what grabbed me. I felt relaxed and welcomed. It was enjoyable speaking



Lee with the backdrop of Sydney Harbour behind

with locals about their images of Scotland, our weather and our culture.

After Singapore I was off to Australia. First stop, Sydney for New Year. The first thing that hit me after stepping off the plane was the heat and a realisation that summer really did mean summer in Australia. After finding our hotel it was off to the Botanic Gardens to claim our spot for the New Year firework show. It felt slightly strange having to apply sun lotion six hours before the 1st of January!

However, the combination of sun, wine and a great firework show ensured that I will remember this New Year for the rest of my life.

After Sydney I headed North to Cairns, the gateway to the Great Barrier Reef. A quiet little town with more pubs than people. However, this did not distract me from the main reason I was there which was to dive at the Great Barrier Reef. After three hours of sailing I eventually arrived at the Outer Reef and went for the dive I had been looking forward to. A wonderful experience but I would have preferred not to have shared the water with a shark!

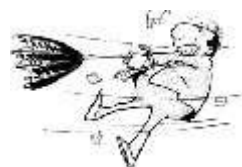
From Cairns I headed back down the East Coast to Surfers Paradise. Despite wonderful beaches and a great atmosphere I didn't enjoy it as much as I thought I would. I think the main reason for this was that it was a bit over the top. A huge effort had been made to attract tourists but ultimately the town had gone too far. Neon lights and fast food shops competed for business along busy streets.

Beginning the final leg of my trip I set off for Brisbane. Brisbane has a reputation for being a laid back and sleepy city and from what I saw this was not unreasonable. This was exactly what I was needing before I set off to Thailand!

So, relaxed and refreshed after my short stay in Brisbane I boarded my plane to Thailand. I have heard rumours and stories about Thailand and Bangkok in particular. Well, after spending five days there I can confirm most of the rumours are true. If you are looking for a quiet and relaxing holiday I wouldn't recommend Bangkok. However, I found it strangely appealing and enjoyed the fast pace of the city. There was always something going on and you couldn't help being swept off your feet and finding yourself in the middle of it all.

On the 17th of January it was time to come home. A lot of memories boarded the plane with me but also a realisation that I was going to have to adapt to a 30 degree drop in temperature very quickly!

**Lee Morris,
Carer Support Coordinator**





Norwich Union Breaks for Carers 2004

Following on from the success of last year's initiative, where twelve carers and their families spent a week in Blackpool, I am delighted to offer this opportunity to carers this year. Again the initiative will run during Carers Week (14th - 18th June) and aims to provide a much-deserved break to carers from their caring role. Again these breaks will take place at the Pontin's Holiday Centre in Blackpool and will be free of charge.

The holidays are primarily aimed at Carers. However, it is recognised that in some cases there will be more benefit to the Carer if they are accompanied by other family members and/or the person they care for. It must be noted that the holidays are not supported by nursing, medical or social care staff and sadly it is not possible to cater for individuals with severe disabilities or complex medical conditions.

Whilst Pontin's are working to meet the needs of people with disabilities there are currently only two fully accessible chalets. Therefore, people must be able to manage within a 'regular holiday chalet setting'. While we do not wish to exclude anyone this is the reality of the facilities available. We know from previous experience that inappropriate referrals to the holiday lead to disappointment.

There are other holiday providers that specialise in catering for a variety of needs and we would be happy to give details of them if you think this holiday may not be suitable for your needs.

Any carers who would like to apply for a place on this initiative should contact me, before April 5th on 01506 771750 and express their interest. However, as places are limited to twelve it may not be possible to cater for everybody and it may be the case that carers are chosen at random.

Annamarie Keast (Carers Support Worker)

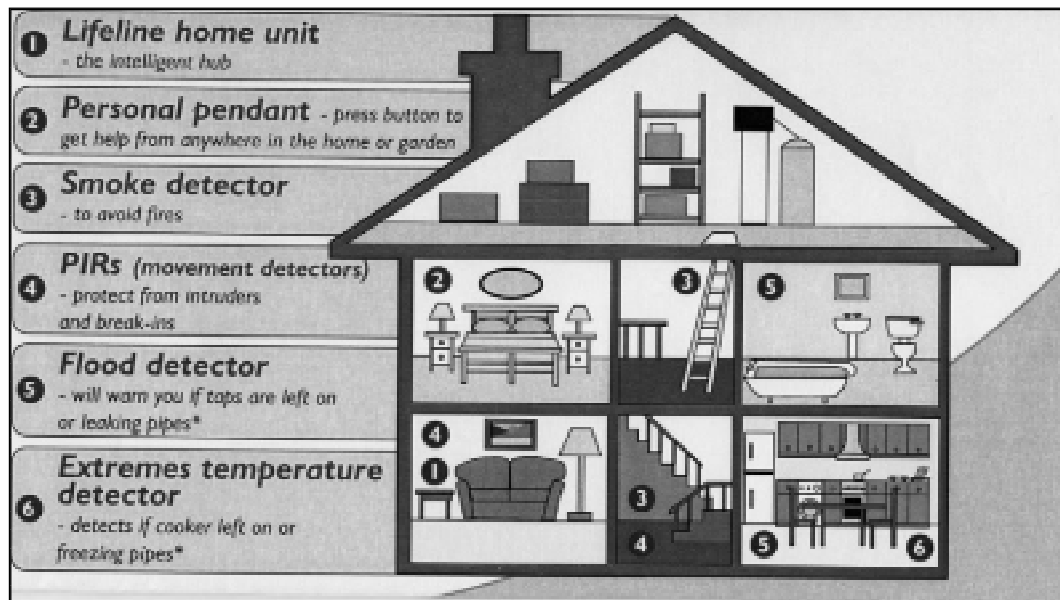


Taking Care of the Carer: A Recharge for Mind and Body

Following the success of their previous residential courses especially for unpaid Carers, Lancashire College is now announcing details of the next such 48-hour course. The date is **25 – 27 June 2004**. They offer a friendly atmosphere, comfortable surroundings and good food, and the college is easily accessible by car or public transport. There are a limited number of en-suite bath/shower rooms available at a supplement,

You will enjoy learning in a relaxing and friendly environment, and sharing the company of other Carers outside their usual caring role. This is an opportunity for Carers to participate in a programme specially designed in consultation with Carers and Carer's organisations. Some of the subjects taught are:- personal safety, confidence for life, handmade greetings cards, relaxation techniques and laughter therapy. Please note the cost is £25, and includes all tuition, meals and accommodation. Previous courses have proved to be popular with Carers. In the past some Carers have been funded by organisations in their own locality, such as Carers' groups.

For enrolment forms and/or further information please contact Donna at the Carers Project Team, Lancashire College, Southport Road, Chorley, Lancashire, PR7 1NB. Tel: 01257 276 719 Fax: 01257 241 370 or e-mail: donna.galway@ed.lancsccl.gov.uk



Home Safety Launch

West Lothian Council in partnership with Tunstall launched their new service
- Home Safety Service For The Over Sixties - on 1st December 03.

The Home Safety Service provides a 24 hours a day telephone link between a basic package of technology installed in the service users home and the West Lothian Careline monitoring service. This ensures service users have access to help when it is required. The service user can get help from pressing a single button or through detectors being automatically activated around their home.

The equipment provides protection from:

- Intruders (break-ins)
- Floods (taps left on or leaking pipes)
- Fire (smoke detectors)
- Extreme Temperatures (freezing pipes or cooker left on)

If the service user requires assistance a friendly operator from West Lothian Careline will answer their call and activate the appropriate response.

How do I apply for the service?

The service is available to all people in West Lothian who are over the age of 60 years and other vulnerable people.

If you wish to find out more about the service please contact the Health and Care Team on 01506 771770.

Alternatively application forms are available throughout West Lothian from Council Information Services, Local Social Work Centres, Health Centres and Local Council Housing Offices.

How much does the service cost?

There is a charge of £4.87 per week for the service. This covers the cost of the following

- The monitoring service provided by West Lothian Careline
- The service provided by the Health and Care Team
- The cost of servicing and maintenance, battery replacement and depreciation of the equipment. (equipment is serviced once a year, batteries replaced once a year, 24 hour service to report faults)

If the applicant is assessed as needing the service by the Home Safety Service there is a grant available from West Lothian Council depending on the income and savings of the applicant's household.

Carers of West Lothian Carers Centre

Strathbrock Partnership Centre
 189a West Main Street
 BROXBURN EH52 5LH

Phone: 01506 771750

Fax: 01506 858882

Email: office@carers-westlothian.com

Web: www.carers-westlothian.com

Opening Times
Monday to Friday
10.00 am - 3.00 pm



A Volunteer's Experience



After retiring I thoroughly enjoyed the freedom and having time to plan trips and make impromptu arrangements. Gradually I began to feel the need for something with more purpose and satisfaction. I had thought of voluntary work before, but I was wary of getting over committed.

The timing was right when I was attracted to the Carers Outreach Project's advertisement for Volunteers in July last year. The Project's aims to reach out to Carers were of particular interest to me. Also training was to be given and it specifically said, "If you have up to four hours per month" which seemed a good starting point for a new commitment.

The Training was over four weeks, two hours once a week and covered all aspects of the Project with background information as well as an update on its progress. It was invaluable in getting to know the staff and getting an insight into the variety of ways in which volunteers could help.

As a volunteer I have been on a rota attending Health Centres and St. John's Hospital with a publicity board and being available to respond to any queries. I have assisted in the office with some admin tasks and follow up telephone contacts to Carers after their response to 'mailing shots' from Health Centres. Volunteers also attend the Team Meetings, which keeps us abreast of what is happening.

I have found a sense of purpose and satisfaction as a volunteer and thoroughly enjoy being involved in the local community.

Ann Haughie
Volunteer with Carers Of West Lothian



Volunteer with Carers of West Lothian

Our Carers Outreach Project aims to reach out to carers across the whole of West Lothian through health centres and St John's Hospital. At present we are in the hospital, Linlithgow, Dedridge and Bathgate health centres. We are seeking volunteers to join the Outreach Team in providing information and support to carers. If you are interested in community work please contact Lee Morris on 01506 771750.

If you wish to volunteer for the Outreach Project, and you have about 4 hours per month to spare, are aged 18 and over, we would love to hear from you.

All volunteers receive out of pocket expenses. An induction and training programme is provided and a professional staff team supports volunteers.

Who Cares? Training Course for Parent Carers

Carers of West Lothian is running a course for Parent Carers starting on the 4th of February 04. It will be run over 6 weeks in Strathbrock Partnership Centre on a Wednesday from 10.00 to 12.30 including refreshments and lunch. The course has been tailored to meet the needs of parent carers and includes a wide range of topics.

Topics include:

- Overview of Carers of West Lothian
- Support from Carers of West Lothian
- Young Carers Development
- Social Services and Parent Carers
- The role of Health Visitor/Community Childrens Nurse
- Carers Benefits
- Education for Children with Special Needs

The response from parent carers interested in the course has been excellent. If you think you would like to attend a similar course, or have any suggestions about other courses you would like to see on offer please contact Annmarie Keast on 01506 771750 for further information and a registration form.



A Simnel Cake for Mothers Day

“I'll to thee a Simnell bring
'Gainst thou go'st a mothering,
So that, when she blesseth thee,
Half that blessing thou'lt give to me.”

Almond paste: 400g icing sugar, sifted, 250g ground almonds, 1 large egg yolk, beaten lightly, 3-4 tablespoons orange juice, 5 drops almond essence.

Cake: 250g flour, pinch salt, 1tsp nutmeg & cinnamon, 300g currants, 250g sultanas, 90g mixed peel, 160g butter, 160g caster sugar, 3 lge eggs, 200ml milk to mix (serves 6-8)

Almond Paste – Place icing sugar & almonds in food process bowl, process, slowly dripping in egg yolk, orange juice and almond essence. The mix should form a pliable paste, which is divided into 3 portions, two rolled into rounds the diameter of the tin and the third divided into 11 balls for decoration.

Cake –use a 24cm round cake tin, butter base and sides and line with baking paper. Preheat oven to 160C. Sift flour, salt and spices together, stir in fruit & peel. Cream butter and sugar thoroughly until light & creamy then beat in eggs one at a time, until the mix is fluffy (reserve a drop of egg yolk for brushing over top layer of almond paste). Stir flour and fruit into creamed mix adding a little milk if necessary to give a dropping consistency.

Place half the mix into the greased and lined cake tin. Place one round of almond paste over the top. Cover with remaining cake mix. Before baking the cake give the cake tin a sharp tap on a level surface – this settles the cake mix preventing holes from forming in the cake. Bake in centre of the oven for one to one & quarter hours or until a skewer inserted in the centre of the cake comes out clean. Turn out the cake onto a wire rack; peel off paper and leave to cool. A weighted plate placed on top of the warm cake will level it off.

Cover the top of the cake with the second round of almond paste and place the 11 balls evenly around the top of the cake. Brush with a little beaten egg and very lightly brown under the grill until the almond paste turns light golden brown. Remove and leave to cool.

Carers On-line



**Challenging Behaviour
Foundation**

Website <http://w.thecbf.org.uk/>

[information leaflets2.htm](http://w.thecbf.org.uk/information/leaflets2.htm)

Have a range of leaflets which you can order by filling in the form which is on their website. You will need to print this off and send by post with a stamped addressed envelope for each of the leaflets you require.

There is a wide range of leaflets available –

- Basic Information about challenging behaviour
- Getting A Statement • Communication and Challenging Behaviour • Physical Interventions for Challenging Behaviour • 52 week residential schools/colleges list • Book List for Parents/Carers
- Book List for Professionals • Contact details for organisations and publishers • Parents Perspectives • Specialist Equipment and Safety Adaptations • Functional Assessment • and last on the list - Self Injurious Behaviour(SIB)

Intouch, the Eczema & Allergy Newsletter can be found at

Website <http://www.talkeeczema.com>

- Allergic Child link from this site will take you to

Website <http://keepkidshealthy.com>

which is a paediatrician's guide to your children's health and safety. The age range of guides is from newborn to adolescent, and I found **atopic dermatitis** covered in some detail. Annmarie Keast our Carers Support Worker downloaded a beautifully illustrated book from this site, called 'Under My Skin' – a Child's Guide to Atopic Dermatitis by Karen Crowe, illustrated by Norm Bendell and sponsored by Fujisawa limited.

Useful Telephone Numbers

Advice Shop	01506 776444
Benefits Agency Enquiry Line	0800 8822 00
Disability West Lothian	01506 774030
Handicabs	01506 633953
Local Volunteer Enterprise	01506 650111
NHS Helpline	0800 224488
Samaritans	0131 2219999

Please note that views expressed throughout this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of Carers of West Lothian. We cannot endorse or recommend any service advertised within this publication.

Printed by Brian Currie Printers, 81A East Main Street, Broxburn EH52 5EE, tel: 01506 854033