

# MESMAG Autumn 2008

## Residential Weekend

Yorkshire MESMAC (North Yorkshire) held a highly successful residential weekend at Lockton near Pickering. The weekend from Friday September 12<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> attracted 15 participants mainly from North Yorkshire and was held at YHA Lockton, a modern youth hostel that was ideal in every purpose. Feedback and evaluations from the weekend suggested that this was the best residential weekend we have held. Participants had the opportunity to raise issues, develop social networking links whilst having free time to venture into Pickering and the countryside around Lockton.

Feedback from those who attended includes:

“Thank you for a nice weekend, the best times.”

“Nice to meet other guys for a chat and a joke.”

“Was an excellent weekend. Good fun and great people. Good food and plenty. Accommodation clean and comfortable.”

## Older LGBT Conference Spring 2009

Yorkshire MESMAC, in association with Age Concern (England) and Help the Aged, are staging a National Conference in Spring 2009. The conference will be held at The Priory Street Centre in York and will identify specific issues surrounding older LGBT people. The day conference will include guest speakers, workshops and a live theatre group who will enact a play around older LGBT people. Lunch and light refreshments will also be available at the conference. For further details regarding this conference, please contact Pete Blackburn Community Development Worker at Yorkshire MESMAC in York Tel: 01904-620400 or email [p.blackburn@mesmac.co.uk](mailto:p.blackburn@mesmac.co.uk)

## Scarborough Highlights

Now in October we see two more groups open for LGBT communities. Tuesday the 7<sup>th</sup> October saw the first meeting of a Scarborough and Ryedale District LGBT forum. This forum will be for all LGBT people of all ages and will be for you to raise your concerns; this could be about the treatment you get at your local GP, it could be that you want to start a gay swimming group, whatever's on your mind bring it to the forum. The forum will be your group to steer in whatever direction you feel it needs to go; we'll help you get it off the ground and then you'll use it to tackle whatever issues you want to. Come along and have your say or just watch what goes on! 6pm till 7.30pm at the Coast and Moors

Voluntary Action Annex, Allatt House (just near Sainsburys) - refreshments will be provided. Contact Ellen Hill for more details: 01904 620 400, [e.hill@mesmac.co.uk](mailto:e.hill@mesmac.co.uk)

Also in October Yorkshire MESMAC will be starting a youth group in Scarborough for all people under the age of 25 who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered or questioning their sexual orientation. The youth group will be a safe space where young LGBTQ people can access support around issues and socialise with their peers. There will be different activities such as watching films, talks on sexual health, decorating t-shirts and much more. The group will meet up with other LGBTQ youth groups from across the region at Pride events and days put on especially for young LGBT people. We will meet fortnightly on a Wednesday night between 6 and 8pm at a discreet location in the centre of town. The next session will be on the 29<sup>th</sup> of October. Contact Ellen Hill for more details on 01904 620 400, call or text: 07899 016 239 or email [e.hill@mesmac.co.uk](mailto:e.hill@mesmac.co.uk)

## New Activity Group in Wakefield

Planning is underway to start up a new activity group in Wakefield, the aim is to make it fun and interesting while increasing fitness levels, having access to weight management and nutritional information, helping to increase confidence and self esteem and creating a social network.

The two facilitators, Jeff Platts and Mark Tyson, both Yorkshire MESMAC employees, are both qualified fitness instructors. “We aim to cater for men of all fitness levels and abilities, even if you have never really taken part in any form of exercise before, we can all start somewhere”. For information please contact 01924 211116 or email [j.platts@mesmac.co.uk](mailto:j.platts@mesmac.co.uk)

## Residential Weekend for Begin

A residential weekend is planned for the Service Users of Begin on 21, 22, 23 November 2008. The likely destination will be Blackpool and yes, the pleasure beach is running that weekend for out of session socialisation!

Please contact the staff of Begin to reserve a place on 01924 211 117.

Children are invited and childcare will be provided during working sessions.

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## Wakefield Pride

Although it doesn't seem long since this year's Wakefield Pride Not Prejudice event took place, work is already underway planning for the coming year. Organisers would like people to be more involved throughout the next year, rather than just attending on the Pride day itself. We are planning monthly social events, with the final event being the Pride event, it's a good excuse to get together with friends and have fun while raising funds for Pride 2009 and hopefully give people a sense of ownership too.

The first fundraiser took place on the 4<sup>th</sup> October, "Jail Break" organised by Jo King and Jackie Womack from the Rainbow pub, teams of two, handcuffed together and dropped off somewhere in Yorkshire with no money or mobile phone, there was a prize for first team to make it back and a prize for the team who raised the most money. The first team which was dropped off in Hull made it back to Wakefield in two and a half hours. Jackie from the Rainbow said the day went really well and that the participants said they would definitely take part again.

November 12<sup>th</sup> sees a night at "Super Bowl", we are hiring the upstairs function room and alley and are looking for teams to enter a knockout competition, so get your glad rags out for some fun, you will need teams of 5, £10 per person, with food included. Bring your friends along too.

If you would like any information or would like to take part in or have any ideas for social / fundraising events, please contact Jeff on 01924 211116 or email: [j.platts@mesmac.co.uk](mailto:j.platts@mesmac.co.uk)

## New Faces

Recently Yorkshire MESMAC have welcomed some new staff to our group of services and said goodbye to outgoing staff. As part of a growing organisation we welcome the changes and the new challenges this often brings.

### James Taylor, Social Support Manager

James joined Yorkshire MESMAC in September 2008 as the Social Support Manager working from Begin in Wakefield and the Our Project in Bradford.

James qualified as a Registered Mental Health Nurse in 1984 then as a Registered General Nurse in 1990 before completing a degree in Health Science.

He has worked in a number of healthcare fields including hospital and community settings.

James has extensive experience in providing healthcare to disadvantaged groups on a clinical and managerial level and was involved in the Australian Nurse Practitioner Working Party that provided healthcare to socially and physically isolated Australians.

### Brad Smith – Community Development Worker for the Our Project, Bradford

Brad joined the OUR project in September 2008.

He has lived and worked in Bradford for the past 3 years working with vulnerable adults with a range of issues including; mental health, drugs and alcohol, health, debt, homelessness, housing related problems and sexuality issues etc. Prior to coming to Bradford he served in the Armed Forces.

Brad is looking forward to working at the OUR project to promote healthy living, tackling stigma and educating others on matters relating to HIV and living with HIV.

### Mark Tyson - Community Development Worker for Begin, Wakefield

Mark joined Begin on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2008.

A graduate of Bangor University, Mark first trained to be a fitness instructor. He ran a number of popular community based fitness classes throughout Leeds and presented Master classes to instructors nationwide.

Mark then worked for Leeds City Council's homelessness section providing advice and support to homeless people in a number of different roles. He ended his Housing career as the Customer Services Manager at the Housing Advice Centre in Leeds responsible for homelessness assessment.

He then moved on to the Democratic Services Department where he project managed the Council's Scrutiny Board which covered Education and Social Services. His final project, working with a group of young people scrutinising bus services, won a national award from The Centre for Public Scrutiny for Good Practice in Community Engagement on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2008.

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## **Linda Mudenda - Community Development Worker for Begin, Wakefield**

Linda joined the staff of Begin in September 2008. Before that Linda volunteered with the Citizens Advice Bureau in Wakefield and Pontefract as a Generalist Advisor.

## **Victoria Flanagan - Administrative Support and Reception for Begin, Wakefield**

Vicky joined Begin at Yorkshire MESMAC on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2008. As well as administration roles, her background also involves teaching undergraduate sociology students and she is currently conducting postgraduate research that investigates the ethical impact of U.K. legislation on the identity of women sex workers. Vicky is looking forward to contributing to the further development of Begin.

## **Ann Marie Maguire - Volunteer Co-ordinator**

Ann Marie joined the Yorkshire MESMAC staff team in March 2008, as Interim Social Support Manager for the Begin Project in Wakefield, and moved on to take up the role of Volunteer Co-ordinator in September 2008. Prior to becoming a member of staff Ann Marie was a Yorkshire MESMAC volunteer for Leeds LGB Switchboard, vice chair of the Volunteer Advisory Group (VAG) and was a member of the Board of Trustees.

After finishing her degree at the University of Plymouth, Ann Marie became involved with the National Union of Students' Women's and LGB Campaigns. She then worked for several years in Students' Unions in London in both advice work and membership services. Ann Marie also worked on a Sure Start programme in Tottenham, North London before moving to Yorkshire in 2004, where she spent the previous 3 years as a Volunteer Centre Manager.

## **Clive Spendlove – Mental Health Wellbeing Worker**

Clive has been involved in Gay community building since setting up a Gay group in Wakefield in 1979. He has also been involved in various organised attempts to respond to discrimination against LGBT people and to raise awareness about sexual orientation.

He has been working as a mental health musician since 1992 and trained in mental health nursing in the mid 1990s, since when he has worked in various mental health services within the Health, Social Services and Voluntary sectors - with adults and older adults.

His particular interests relating to mental health work have been: -

\*working with every dimension of each person, including mental, emotional, intellectual, social, physical;

\*the potential for health and personal development within active involvement with music;

\*relationships between health and "spirituality"

## **James Moore – Mental Health Wellbeing Worker**

James has lived in Bradford since coming to University from Northern Ireland in 1979. After qualifying as a social worker in 1983, he worked for a number of years in various social work settings dealing with adults with mental health difficulties. In 1991, he transferred to the training & development area where he worked as a Mental Health Trainer and co-ordinated the Training Consortium for social workers operating under the Mental Health Act.

James currently also works as Mental Health Advisor for Bradford University.

As a Gay man, he was involved in the founding of Bradford Gay Switchboard in the mid 1980's and was involved, on a voluntary capacity, with various HIV organisations in Bradford in the mid to late 1990's.

## **Jeff Platts - Community Development Worker, Wakefield**

Jeff returned to work in the Wakefield office in August after a gap of nearly two years. Whilst away Jeff spent twelve months at college studying for a YMCA Certificate in Personal Training and is working towards incorporating these skills within his work.

Jeff says "I'm really happy to be back with Yorkshire MESMAC and working in Wakefield, there are lots of interesting things happening within the organisation and it feels good to be part of it."

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## Building Update

The building shared by Begin and Yorkshire MESMAC has received a boost with a large wall mural painted by one of the service users. The picture took over 4 months to complete and covers an entire wall of the meeting room. The mural depicts a country scene that brightens the room considerably and brings the outdoors into a room without window.

Thanks go to the service user for his time, effort and not least, his skill for bringing the room to life. Further modifications are scheduled including the installation of a cooker and extraction system to the kitchen to allow drop-in clients to prepare fresh food each week.

## World AIDS Day Conference

Begin is co-hosting an HIV conference with South West Yorkshire Mental Health Trust on World AIDS Day 2008. The conference is being held in the conference facility of Fieldhead Hospital, Ouchthorpe Lane, Wakefield, WF1 3SP from 10.30am.

Speakers include Dr Priscilla Nkwente of the Black Health Agency, Professor Darren Shickle of the Academic Unit of Public Health at the Institute of Health Sciences at Leeds University, Peter Wetherburn of Sigma Research and Dr John Lee and Dr Andy Tobin of the Josephine Butler Centre for Sexual Health. A number of interactive workshops will take place during the day.

For further information and to book a place at this event please call Begin on 01924 211 117.

## New Group Commences

Begin at MESMAC in Wakefield is commencing a new drop-in group for HIV positive people.

The drop-in will be from 5pm to 8pm every Thursday evening commencing 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2008.

People are welcome to pop in for a drink and nibble or a chat, build a wider network of support and friends, talk through any problems or concerns and share experiences and information with other service users and staff.

This new drop-in session is in addition to those currently running on Tuesday (1-4pm) and Saturday (1-4pm).

For further information please contact any of the Begin staff on 01924 211 117.

## A Grand Success

A residential weekend was held at the Grand Hotel in Scarborough for the service users of the Our Project in October.

28 service users and children attended and a great deal of work was achieved as well as a great deal of fun (and shopping)!

Thank you to all those that attended the weekend, your efforts made it a great success and hugely enjoyable.

## C O N T A C T U S

### Leeds Office (Head Office)

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### Bradford

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### North Yorkshire Offices

Tel: 01904 620 400

### Wakefield

Tel: 01924 211 116

### BLAST Project

Tel: 0113 2444 209

### OUR Project

Tel: 01274 740 548

### Begin at Yorkshire MESMAC

Tel: 01924 211 117

### Leeds LGB Switchboard

Tel: 0113 245 3588