

Thames Valley Partnership News Update



Issue 11

May 2016

Special points of interest:

- ◆ News
- ◆ Projects
- ◆ Future Events



'protecting victims, supporting offenders and their families'

The Thames Valley Partnership works in partnership with the statutory, private and voluntary sectors to provide long-term sustainable solutions to the problems of crime and social exclusion. We work to protect victims and reintegrate offenders. Our strength is in collaborative working and integrated approaches across sectors, particularly linking Criminal Justice services to voluntary sector and Local Authority providers.

Longford Prize

In November last year we were awarded a 'highly commended' as joint runners up for this year's Longford Prize *'The Longford Prize recognises the contribution of an individual, group or organisation working in the area of penal or social reform in showing outstanding qualities of humanity, courage, persistence, originality and commitment to diversity.'* We were mentioned at the dinner at Church House, Westminster where the Longford lecture was delivered by Michael Palin and where our nominees Geoff Emerson and Tim Newell were attending.

Farewell Debbie!

March found us saying a fond farewell to our administrative assistant, Debbie Coles. Debbie worked at the Partnership for 19 years and we wish her all the best for the future. We were all pleased to help her celebrate her time at the Partnership and joined her for a leaving lunch and evening meal attended by many of her colleagues, ex-colleagues and Partnership friends. Best Wishes Debbie!



Debbie and Trustee David Faulkner

NEW LEAF GOES CRACKERS TO HELP THE NEEDY!

Space required for new social enterprise

New Leaf is developing a brand new social enterprise called OOTBox (Out Of The Box) making luxury re-useable crackers and home décor items from materials destined for landfill. The items will then be sold through the website and at craft and farmer markets. The enterprise is set to launch in Buckinghamshire in 2016, providing suitable premises can be found.

OOTBox will offer training and employment opportunities to vulnerable groups in Buckinghamshire including ex-offenders, unemployed young people not in training, education or employment and the homeless.



Whilst there is a lot of support for people who are 'work ready' there are fewer opportunities for people who are classified as difficult to engage with or who have involved in the Criminal Justice System or lack qualifications. We will work with these groups providing a package of support and training to enable them to gain the skills and resilience required to enter the job market.

Community support for the enterprise has been amazing and we have had offers of end of line materials from local manufacturers and financial support from Little Kingshill Baptist church. We are however struggling to secure a workshop or office space to run the enterprise. Landlords love

what we are doing but are reluctant to rent their properties to us due to the nature of the people we are supporting. We would love to hear from community groups or landlords who could help us.

The enterprise has received the backing of the Lloyds Banks School for Social Entrepreneurs Programme. The programme provides a place on a comprehensive course fully funded by Lloyds Bank, a one-to-one business mentor and a grant from the Big lottery to support the development of the enterprise.

More information can be found on the enterprise website (www.ootbox.co.uk) and Facebook page (www.facebook.com/outoftheboxse) or by contacting the Caroline Stevens directly on 01844 202001 or via email to info@ootbox.co.uk.

Arts

Modelling Change



Modelling Change was our creative project for teenage girls in the Oxfordshire area, which finishes on May 25th. Participants displayed pieces of artwork at Fusion Arts to coincide with International Women's Day on March 8th and during the Womanity festival on Sunday March 6th. We continue to work with researchers from the University of Sussex and have another visit planned for May.



Please contact judy@thamesvalleypartnership.org.uk for more information.

Elizabeth Fry hostel, Reading: Journeys and Stories

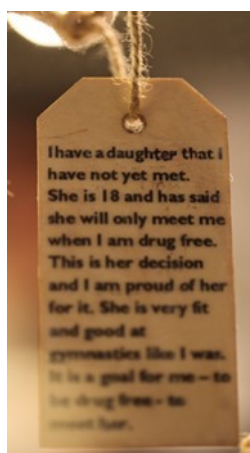
'Journeys and Stories' has been running very successfully in Elizabeth Fry Approved Premises since last year in conjunction with Reading Museum. The residents have visited the museum 3 times for sessions with the curators and the Action Learning support is now underway with staff. We are pleased to also be working alongside the Museum of English Rural Life (MERL) and part of the exhibition will move on there during July when renovations enable the museum to re-open to the public.

The exhibition which opened in April runs until July 9th.



Judy Munday, Arts Manager,

judy@thamesvalleypartnership.org.uk



Family Matters/Court Desk

Additional funding has enabled the Family Matters project to reach out to families in two prison visitor centres – HMP Bullingdon and HMP Woodhill. It proved invaluable in one case where Caroline met the female partner of a remand prisoner at the Visitors' Centre at Bullingdon Prison and was able to arrange to meet her on sentencing day at Reading Crown Court to offer her ongoing support.

A new volunteer has been taken on to work at the court desk in Oxford. Kate's previous experience working in the court for Victim Support and her additional knowledge of the 'system' has proved invaluable.

A Family Matters Stakeholders event was held at HMP Woodhill in October 2015, to raise awareness for professionals of the effects imprisonment has upon children and their families. Additionally, the event encouraged a range of support services to discuss working towards shaping future service provision for families visiting HMP Woodhill. A follow up event took place on the 17th March to feedback developments, progress and ways forward. One of the actions coming out of the October event was for the prison to host a 'through-the-gate' visit for community support agencies. This was organised through us and very well run and managed by the prison team who gave a very interesting insight into what it was like for a family to visit a prisoner, including seeing the inside of a cell. We were overwhelmed with interest - 30 colleagues turned up on the day (the maximum allowed) well prepared with their photo ID and having left their precious mobile phones in the car!!



For further information contact: Caroline Raimbach, caroline@thamesvalleypartnership.org.uk

THAMES VALLEY RESTORATIVE JUSTICE SERVICE

The victim-initiated Restorative Justice (RJ) project, funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Thames Valley, began in April 2015 and was officially launched at the House of Lords on the 20th October 2015.

The event was hosted by Lord Blair of Boughton, the former Metropolitan Police Commissioner, in collaboration with Anthony Stansfeld, the PCC for Thames Valley. The PCC awarded the three year contract for his Victim-Led and Pre-Sentence RJ service to Thames Valley Partnership.

Thames Valley Partnership has 15 years' experience in championing and delivering RJ services in the region and is responsible for **Thames Valley Restorative Justice Service (TVRJS)** who are delivering the service.

Lord Blair, a former Chair of Trustees of Thames Valley Partnership welcomed 50 guests to the launch event where the service was described in a series of presentations, including from victims who had benefited from a pilot project.

Gerry a victim of childhood sexual abuse who met her abuser in prison said:

***“Restorative Justice has not only given me the tools to resolve a lot of pain,
but it gave me the key to a functional life.”***

Speakers included, amongst others, Becci Seaborne, Assistant Director for the new project and Anthony Stansfeld, Police and Crime Commissioner, who commented:

“I am delighted to have funded this new service which will offer victim-initiated and pre-sentence RJ to victims of crime in Buckinghamshire, Berkshire and Oxfordshire. Restorative Justice (RJ) is a powerful tool in helping repair the harm that has been done to those affected by crime.”

“The testimonies yesterday from those that have been through the RJ process were truly impressive. They showed us how empowering and valuable it is to have the opportunity to explain to the offender the impact of the crime and to have their questions answered.

“I wish to thank them for sharing their stories and I know that the service will help many more victims of crime in the future recover from the experience.”

The official House of Lords launch was later followed up with a local event at The Clare Foundation this March, to further engage Thames Valley agencies.

Ray Fishbourne, Chair of **Thames Valley Restorative Justice Service (TVRJS)** Advisory Group, who spoke at the Lord’s event, was also asked to give evidence to the Justice Select Committee’s Inquiry on Restorative Justice on Tuesday 19th April. The purpose of the session was to look at the effectiveness of Restorative Justice, the progress made towards the Ministry of Justice’s action plan and obstacles facing the delivery of high quality restorative justice. It followed the submission of written evidence provided by 42 stakeholders including TVRJS. We provided a comprehensive paper which addressed the key questions the committee wished to explore.

Ray was one of six witnesses invited to give evidence. They appeared in two panels of three in what was a ‘One –Off Evidence Session’. Ray’s evidence drew on his 16 years’ experience of setting up and managing TVRJS and referred to the quality of our delivery in the Thames Valley endorsed by the Restorative Justice Quality Mark and highlighted a number of challenges and opportunities.

These included:

- The lack of evaluation in terms of health benefits for victims when considering the costs/benefits of restorative justice.
- The need to benchmark the various RJ training and qualification pathways
- The on-going challenge and complexity of timely and effective information sharing between the many agencies involved to ensure the appropriate information is in the hands of the practitioners who need to work with all parties.
- The need to develop ‘deep reach’ approaches in order to raise effective RJ awareness within communities.
- The opportunity to enshrine victim entitlements in any future draft law supported by a mandatory responsibility on all relevant agencies to share data for the purpose of restorative justice.

[Click to Read our Submission](#)

Listen and watch Ray’s evidence via this [link to Parliament Live TV](#).

TecSOS

The big headlines are:-

- We have just exceeded 10,000 UK victims of domestic abuse who have used a TecSOS device.
- The Vodafone Trustees have signed off the budget submission which totals half a million pounds over the next 12 months.
- The budget includes a substantial sum of money to design and develop the next generation of handset (TecSOS 3).
- The Met police have agreed an order for 1,000 handsets and the West Midlands have ordered 300 handsets.
- Vodafone Foundation are holding a thank you event at the House of Lords to celebrate reaching 10,000 users and to thank those who have helped us get this far. This will include the presentation of a number of awards. The date has yet to be finalised.
- The Foundation also held a 25th Anniversary event in London on Tuesday 3rd May 2016 and TecSOS was a major part of the evenings activities. Vittorio Colao (who is the global CEO for Vodafone) was in attendance.
- The back-office service desk was launched nationally on 23rd March 2016.

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