

# FOCUS

Newsletter of BCM (Belfast Central Mission)

Welcome to BCM's IN FOCUS. We hope you find it interesting and, as always, your comments or suggestions are greatly appreciated.

**Please Note:** At BCM we endeavour to keep as much of our printing costs in-house to ensure costs are kept as low as possible.

- Advice & support for people in need
- Residential care for older people
- Care in the community for young people and families
- Housing support services for young people and for older people
- Support services for care leavers
- Short breaks for older people
- Christmas support programme
- Support for children with autism and their families

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## EAGLE Autism Support Services

EAGLE (Embracing Autism Through Guidance, Love and Education) Autism Support Services at BCM offers intensive emotional and practical support to improve the lives of local children and their families in the period immediately following diagnosis of Autism, throughout the Greater Belfast Area.

Autism is a life-long disability which affects the way a child communicates and relates to the world around them. EAGLE is a holistic service which supports families in all aspects of life impacted by the difficulties associated by Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

Early intervention is delivered by the parents and supported by the Project Manager and Project Worker. Where appropriate a Children's Worker is assigned to the family to provide respite and to help develop the child's communication skills. With guidance and support the team improves each child's communication skills and gives them a better understanding of the world they live in. Since 2001 EAGLE has supported **770** families and currently has **32** families availing of the home intervention scheme. At the time of going to press the annual Summer Scheme is half way through and this year had 13 children attend and eight volunteers giving up their time to assist with this excellent project

EAGLE offers numerous services that include:

- ◆ **Summer Scheme** – for children aged 6-9 years with ASD.
- ◆ **Visual Support** – Strategies to help with daily living eg behaviour charts, timetables and schedules.



Some pictures from the Eyrie and EAP Youth Clubs

- ◆ **SIBSKLUB** - meets quarterly for children who have a brother/sister with ASD.
- ◆ **Parent Support Group** – quarterly meetings give members the opportunity to meet people in a similar situation and also receive training.
- ◆ **EYRIE Youth Club** – for children with ASD and their brothers/sisters
- ◆ **EAP** (Early Adolescence Project) for adolescents with Autism aged 11-14 years to help them prepare for 2<sup>nd</sup> level education, increase their independence and give them opportunities to practice their social skills in a safe and supportive setting.

The enclosed leaflet was written by some of our young people using their own words.

## Parents' Support - Ards & North Down

BCM's Parents' Support Project aims to enhance the life chances of young parents by improving their self-esteem, life skills and parenting skills.

Parents' Support is based in Newtownards and offers support to young parents from across the North Down & Ards area.

Support Workers Karen & Liz show these young parents ways in which they can stimulate their children and encourage their child's communication and social skills.

Parents' Support work with the 16+ Social Work Team, from where the majority of their clients are referred. Ages range from 16-25 years.

Karen says: "Parents' Support offer all aspects of support with the individual following the initial meeting. We offer advice and support to the whole family unit. Some of our work is very complex and involves working with child protection cases."



Some young parents receiving their awards for completing their courses with Kilcooley Women's Centre



Parents and their Children enjoying Corrymeela

"Parents' Support run family group mornings at the Regent Street Methodist Community Hall. The church Outreach Team have been an invaluable asset to the project and the support offered to our group goes way beyond what we could ever have expected. Their involvement makes an enormous difference to our whole project."

The project has established great links with Kilcooley Women's Centre and in partnership have completed many exciting activities with our parents' group. It is planned for further group sessions to commence in September 2014.

Along with a greatly appreciated donation from George Best Belfast City Airport Community Fund, Karen & Liz helped to raise enough funds to secure their

planned holiday to Corrymeela, Ballycastle on the 4<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> August by attending numerous car boot sales. A total of five families participated in this trip. Nineteen people in total and of course not forgetting our fantastic volunteer Jane Hawkins, who was recently awarded the BEM for Volunteering, Congratulations!

## Thank You

BCM would like to thank the following:

**Kilcooley Women's Centre** for their continued support of the Parents' Support Project, Ards & North Down.

**George Best Belfast City Airport** for their contribution towards the Parents' Support holiday to Corrymeela Ballycastle

**Department of Social Development - Community Activity Grant** for their contribution towards BCM's Volunteer Forum

**Trusthouse Charitable Foundation, Garfield Weston Foundation, Wolfson Foundation, Ulster Garden Villages** for their individual pledges towards Copelands, Dementia & Nursing Care



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## Linen Hall Library Exhibition 22nd October - 29th November

The Governors of the Linen Hall Library, Belfast will be hosting an exhibition of BCM photographs, documents and artefacts to coincide with our 125th Anniversary celebrations. 'Through Changing Scenes' commences on 22nd October and concludes on 29th November. On display will be some of the BCM Archive's nationally important collection of early twentieth century Hogg images of life in the Belfast slums together with a variety of items representing BCM's involvement in the life of the city.

**This exhibition is open to the public and is free of charge**



During the weekend of our 125th Anniversary celebrations (8th - 9th November), a further exhibition 'Within Living Memory' will also be available to view in Grosvenor House. It

will focus on the life of the Grosvenor Hall congregation since the end of World War Two.

A GIFT OF LOVE - Please consider supporting BCM in your will. For more information contact Rev Richard Johnston on Tel. 90241917, email [superintendentsoffice@belfastcentralmission.org](mailto:superintendentsoffice@belfastcentralmission.org) or visit [www.belfastcentralmission.org](http://www.belfastcentralmission.org)