

FDAMH Newsletter



December | 2011

MSP Inspired by FDAMH



MSP Siobhan McMahon was inspired by a recent visit to the Victoria Centre. During her visit, on 25th November, Siobhan spoke to service users **and staff and took time to view service users' permanent exhibition of art and poetry.** Siobhan says "It was a truly inspiring visit and it will live **with me for a very long time.**" **Siobhan will be taking forward several cases for individuals she spoke to on the day and we all look forward to welcoming her back to FDAMH in the future.**

Falkirk Mental Health Awareness Week 2011

Our Mental Health Awareness Week 2011 events got off to a great start with the seeme / Forth Valley Community Health Partnerships Conference at Falkirk Stadium on Monday 10th October - World Mental Health Awareness Day.

Colleagues and Friends from across Forth Valley heard a speech by our Minister for Public Health Michael Matheson MSP on how the Scottish Government supported the fight against stigma and discrimination in mental ill health. All the people at the conference were invited to discuss and write down how they or their organisations were going to contribute to the never ending fight against stigma and discrimination in mental ill health. Special thanks to seeme and Forth Valley Community Health Partnerships for funding this event.

Other events for the week included an exhibition at FDAMH for members of the mental health community across Forth Valley featuring NHS 24,



The Stall in the Mall

Breathing Space, and NHS Inform; the annual stall in the mall; and a gig at Behind The Wall featuring our co-patron Alan Bissett, Adam Donaldson and Glenn Merrilees. Our thanks to everyone involved.



The Gig at BTW

Adam (above) and Glenn (below)



Having our say on the Mental Health Strategy

FDAMH members are keen contributors to the consultation on **Scotland's Mental Health Strategy 2011 to 2015.** Jackie, Chaz and Robbie have been contributing to consultations locally and nationally. Along with colleagues from Falkirk Council, NHS Forth Valley and Cheryl, our student Social Worker from the University of Stirling, FDAMH representatives have been **putting together FDAMH's response** to the Scottish Government consultation document, ready for submission before the 31st January 2012 deadline. Jackie, Chaz and Cheryl have also attended the NHS Forth Valley consultation at Forth Valley Royal Hospital and on Wednesday 7th December Jackie Cheryl and Neil will attend the National Consultation at Heriot Watt University in Edinburgh.

Also in this edition...

Super Students
Service Updates
Media Group gets dramatic
Carers News

Diary: It's Party Time!!!

Hello Fay.....

We would like to extend a welcome to Fay Cusker (third year student of social work) who joined us on 8th November and will be with us until next Spring. Fay will be participating in all of the activities that go on in FDAMH so everyone will get a chance to meet her and spend some time **with her. This is Fay's first impression of FDAMH:**

"Well some may wonder what I could possibly say considering I have only been within the establishment for a few days, however, my observation of the organisation so far has been that of support, encouragement, assisting and enabling. So, FDAMH emanates all the elements below and is what I see, what I feel and what service users tell me.

The staff are keen in partnership and collaborative working whether that is statutory, voluntary, private and independent agencies /organisations. They have commitment and drive in delivering a service which meets the needs of individuals, families, groups and communities.

The organisation will be a contributing factor to my learning and development in this, my final year. I am grateful for the opportunities which FDAMH has to offer me in developing my skills and knowledge, likewise, allowing me, to contribute to the developmental needs of service users and the organisation as a whole.

F=Friendly, Fair, Forward thinking, Fun, Fantastic.

D=Delivery of excellent service, Discovery of self, Development of skills and knowledge, Drop in service, Development of organisation, Devoted staff, Diverse.

A= Appealing, Adult, Assessment, Assistance, Access to services, Activities, Arts and crafts, Advocacy, Accountability.

M= Mentoring, Motivating, Media group, Monitoring and evaluation, Modern service."

...and Goodbye Cheryl

"Having spent almost 3-months on full-time placement at FDAMH, its almost time to leave. I have had a really good experience and have found FDAMH a really stimulating learning environment. This was my first experience of working within the mental health field and I think that all of the staff, service users and volunteers make FDAMH a really positive environment to be a part of. They play a vital role in supporting people affected by mental health, and during my time here I have gained a real sense of the importance of the organisation for the local community. I received a very warm welcome upon my arrival and have been made to feel a part of the team by all of the staff and service users who are involved with the organisation."

Cheryl has been a fantastic asset to FDAMH and has started some excellent work that will be continued by Fay. We wish her the very best for the future.

Board Presentations

John McPherson and Marion Wright recently stood down as members of the Board of Trustees and our thanks go to them both for their contribution to the organisation.



John had been vice-chair and in recognition of his many years service a small present-

ation was made by our Chairperson, David McClements.

At the same time the board wished to thank Joyce Cottle, a founding member of FDAMH, for her support over the years and her recent input to the 30th birthday celebrations.



Complementary Therapies Available at FDAMH

Service users attending any of our projects, volunteers and staff continue to benefit from free therapies.

Soothing hand massage, kindly provided by a red cross volunteer, is available fortnightly on Mondays, 1-3pm in 15 minute slots.

Sheila McDougall provides reflexology and Indian head massage one day a month. Slots last for half-an-hour between 10am and 2.30pm.

Heather McCabe and Heather Le Marquand of the Complementary Healthcare Clinic are also regular volunteers at the centre.

Our thanks to them all for their continued support which is greatly appreciated by all who receive the therapies.

If you would like to have a therapy please put your name on the sheets on the notice board in Drop-In or ask a member of staff.

Remember that you can use your mobile phone to text a donation to FDAMH anytime.



To send a £2 donation to FDAMH text: FDAM00 £2 to 70070

FDAMH receives every penny you donate! You can send amounts of £1, £2, £3, £4, £5 or £10 just change the amount you put in your text!

The Verse Factor Final

We reported in our last newsletter that Jackie Mercer's poem 'Clarty Cow' had been shortlisted for a national poetry contest being run by Bipolar Scotland. Here Jackie tells us what happened next when she and a group of supporters attended the final:

"The trip to Bipolar Scotland's event at the Contemporary Arts Centre in Glasgow was a huge success. I was awarded a certificate for being shortlisted to the final twelve. I read my poem and it got the biggest laugh and applause! All of the Media Group was there to support me, including Jane Shirra (Link Worker), and my daughter came too. I'd like to thank everyone for supporting me, it was greatly heartfelt and I couldn't have done it without you all. It was a great day out—roll on next year!"

Our Poets Online

After headlining our campaign in the RBS Community Force competition with his poem 'Stigma', Glenn Merrilees has continued to use YouTube to get his poetry out to a wider audience. This includes Glenn's poem Lady H, which is a fictional piece, written to raise awareness of drug abuse for kids (Stop before you Start). You can view his poems by searching on YouTube for SuperRainbow46. Glenn and Jackie are both publishing their works online through Firebird Poetry—just go the Firebird's site and search for Glenn Merrilees and Jacqueline Mercer.

Clarty Cow by Jackie Mercer

"Ya clarty wee cow" ma maw used to say
 Every week wen a had tae hae a bath on a Sunday
 But can a no jist hae a wash
 As a made a mad dash
 Past the swinging hand that you can hear
 Jist as it clashes wi your ear
 Aw maw wit wiz that fir av no dun anything
Look she'd say at the tide mark ring
People will call you a "dirty wee tramp"
 So rub, rub, rub wae a cloth that was damp
See it's no coming off a telt ye yer black
 Noo get in that bath before your arse is also black
 Aw awright but am no missing Coronation Street
 Hurry up then hen av got ye a special treat
You'll no believe wit ma treat wiz tae be
 Cod liver oil-AH! Bit it had orange in it yee hee
 That was one of my five a day
 But do you no wit the best treat wiz fir me
 No more baths until next Sunday.

RBS Community Force

Thanks to everyone who took the time to sign up and demonstrate their support for FDAMH in this contest, which offered a cash award of £6,000. Sadly, despite a respectable show of support, we did not gain enough votes to be a winner.

Projects and Groups

Befriending Service

Our Befriending Service matches people who have become isolated with trained volunteer befrienders. This befriendees experience highlights the substantial benefits that having a befriender can bring:

"I was introduced to the befriending service in late autumn of 2008. After an initial interview by Stuart and Margaret I was introduced to a lovely lady. We hit it off straight away, and started meeting in Falkirk, the only problem with that was I could only get off the bus at the Town Hall, and I could not walk into the town on my own so she had to come and meet me at the bus stop. We would make our way to Callendar Park by the back roads because I did not like people round me.

It was a really bad winter and we would walk round the park, sometimes dripping wet but she never seemed to mind or make me feel guilty about the weather. After a several weeks we started going to different parks around the area but always places where there were very few people.

About six months later I trusted her enough to go to a certain garden centre, I panicked in the place but she reassured me. We would hurry through the inside and go to the plants outside, several weeks later we started to walk through, then we went into the cafe within the centre. The next step was to wander round the outside and the inside of the garden centre and go for a cup of tea.

Very slowly I built up enough confidence to wander through the town with her and go into cafe's, then we started going swimming, only at quiet times but it is something I always enjoyed, while we were there I taught her to swim. It has been a struggle but with her help I have overcome many obstacles, I have many more to overcome. I know that if she had not been there my life as I now know it would not be possible.

I give her and the befriending scheme my heartfelt thanks for my changed life."

Drop-In

Drop In Christmas Party

Service users are organising a Christmas Buffet to take place in Drop-In on Friday 23rd December, 12pm to 3pm.

Tickets are £5, including a scrumptious lunch of soup, a finger buffet and dessert. Plus there will be a surprise for everyone!



For a ticket please see Jackie Mercer or Glenn Merrilees in Drop-In

Festive Opening Hours

Drop-In will be open as normal excepting the following dates:

Friday 16th December—Closes 12 noon in time for the Christmas Party at Falkirk Stadium (starts 2pm)

Friday 23rd December—Ticketed event 12pm to 3pm (see opposite)

Monday 26th December—Closed

Tuesday 27th December—Closed

Monday 2nd January—Closed

Tuesday 3rd January—Closed

Spooky Fun

Visitors to Drop-In enjoyed plenty of laughs and some traditional games by organising themselves a Halloween Party. With spooky decorations and a brilliant buffet, the event was a steal at £1 each. Well done to all who helped to organise it!



Anxiety Management Course Update

Link Service Update

Following on from the September Newsletter, we are pleased to report on the second group of 6 service users who have completed the above course, run by Jane Shirra our Link Worker. Again 5 of the 6 evaluated participants showed reduced levels of anxiety by the end of the course, with one person scoring the same at start and end. These results are very positive and the course is continuing to develop with feedback from participants. Jane will continue to monitor the impact of running such a worthwhile course. Should anyone be interested in attending a future run of the course please contact Jane on 01324 671612.

Link Service Update

The Next Step Course, run by Forth Valley College tutor Margueritte McCreath and supported by the Link Worker Jane Shirra, is now in full swing. As part of their studies members of the course have been doing voluntary work with the Helix Project and are also helping to organise the FDAMH Christmas Party (more details on the back page).



Pictures: (Far Left) Next Steppers relax at Falkirk Stadium before heading off for their tour of the Helix Project (Left).

The Arts and Craft Group continue to enjoy card making with the expertise of Elizabeth-Ann and Cliff. The group meets on Tuesday afternoons at the Victoria Centre. If you are interested in joining them please see information on the back page.

Media Group

The Media Group, have dived whole-heartedly into a drama project thanks to a successful grant application to 'see me'. Drama is a new medium for the Media Group, which has previously had great success in producing writing and art works.

The group are really excited and have already started drama workshops with Cammy Fraser, drama teacher and writer for the project. This work will lead to a drama production and also an accompanying DVD. The aim is to increase people's understanding and awareness of stigma and discrimination and personal journeys of recovery. The group are looking forward to performing the play to wide and diverse audiences and will use the DVD to further enhance the promotional work done by members of the group. We will let you know when you can come and see our stars perform!

see me
LET'S STOP THE STIGMA OF MENTAL ILL-HEALTH
www.seemescotland.org

Immediate Help Service

We continue to offer help without appointment during opening hours to people who need it. We feel this is an extremely valuable service, with staff often offering support to people who have run out of places to turn. We recently received this letter, praising the service.

Dear FDAMH

Re: Immediate Help Service

I'd just like to say that I have found the above service very helpful, I have referred people to the Immediate Help Service and the right help was provided at the right time for the people in distress and their families. This service definitely fits the needs for those people who are in crisis and in need of Immediate social or emotional support.

Thanks

Rhona Mackie

Mental Health Nurse Practitioner

Counselling Service

"Hi, My name is Liz Trodden and I am the new Counselling Co-ordinator at FDAMH. Although I took up this post on 7th Nov, I am not new to FDAMH as I have been a volunteer here for 5 years. I am excited at the prospect of familiarising myself with all of the aspects of the counselling service that, as a volunteer, I was not involved in, meeting and supporting all of the volunteer counsellors and working with other members of the FDAMH team.

I am not the only new person to join the counselling team at FDAMH and I would like to offer a warm welcome to our seven new trainee counsellors who will be joining us over the course of the next month or so."

A Counselling Volunteer's Perspective

"As a volunteer counsellor, I work with clients on a one to one basis, which is an aspect of therapeutic practice that can sometimes be quite isolating. Balancing this, however, are the warm environment and staff that work at FDAMH who I have always felt really welcomed by. I feel as if I am part of a bigger team and in turn, it provides the support I need to do my work. What I, and other counsellors do, is to offer a safe, supportive relationship which our clients can use to explore their own concerns. I believe that the client is the expert on who they are and my job is to assist in helping find the answers that they seek. The reward that I personally gain from doing this is seeing how clients move from an uncertainty as to how talking can help, to trusting the process and using it to help themselves. One of the fundamental values I hold that supports my practice is my belief that we can all learn and grow given the support to do it. Receiving wonderful feedback from clients who have found their own resources to do this through trusting the time and space that we, as counsellors, provide makes it incredibly worthwhile."

Carers News

Where to start if you are a carer or care about someone with Mental Health difficulties

Don't Do It Alone

It might feel like you're the only one dealing with this but actually the experience of looking after a family member, partner or friend with mental health problems is more common than you may think. At the start caring can be bewildering, confusing and demanding. No one is super human and most carers need some support and back-up. It may feel like a shock when caring first starts. Fear, sorrow, shock, anger, loss and anxiety are just some of the normal emotions experienced by carers during this stage. Without support and guidance, carers can feel like they are left out in the wilderness, and that can be very isolating.

Caring can dominate life to the extent that some people don't feel like their old self anymore. Sometimes there are feelings of anger, guilt, resentment and loneliness and carers can be vulnerable to anxiety, stress and depression, especially as they can gradually experience a loss of their sense of self.

FDAMH Carers Project Can Help

In our meetings you can form friendships with other carers and talk about the things you might not be able to tell your family or the person you care for. All meetings are run by carers and therefore understand how caring can affect your life and can offer you a listening ear, support and information.

As some group members testify;

"My confidence has increased with my knowledge and knowing my feelings are normal. Everyone has been very open and honest while sharing their experiences"

"Being able to talk about mental health in a relaxed, informative way through good leadership and company"

"One was allowed to change views and ideas, ask questions without feeling embarrassed or uneasy"

"I know the most important thing for me was meeting people who at one time were strangers but I now class them as my friends. Good friends, who I know I can trust not to talk about my problems, only to be there to listen and support without judging me. I learned I wasn't the only person with the problems of the world on my shoulders and that others were in the same place as myself."

Anyone thinking about coming along - I can guarantee a warm welcome. Friends can talk forever, but good friends listen. My thanks to you, all my friends.

Living with Mental Health Problems – A free course for relatives, partners and friends.

Running for 2 hours a week over 7 weeks, this course will aim to give you:

- Information about mental health
- Ways of dealing with stress and feelings of anger
- Ideas for coping with change
- Ways of supporting and communicating with your friend or relative
- An opportunity to discuss and share ideas with others

When? The next course will commence February 2012.
Where? Victoria Centre

If you would like to register or find out more please contact Neil Sowerby, Carers Worker: 01324 671608 (reception 671600) or email: carers@fdamh.org.uk

Carers comments on the Carers Education Course September – October 2011

"When I decided to go on the course I had a lot of negative feedback from my service user. Trying to put me down and I was beginning to question myself as what to do. Thankfully I took control and trusted my own judgement. Now I am so pleased with myself that I did. I found the course very beneficial for my own needs and also the people I know. I will not allow the person I care about rule my life or my decisions on what I feel and need for my own well-being. Sometimes we all need support and help so thank you"

"The course was presented fantastically, obviously there is a lot of work and organisation goes into these courses. The facilitators were very compassionate and understanding. They made me feel very relaxed and they have taught me so much, not just for being a carer but a lot to do with taking care of my own well-being".

Carers Rights Day Information Session

Come to FDAMH to find out more about carers rights and the support services available!

Drop in between 1.00pm and 4.00pm on Friday 2nd December to speak to the Carers Worker and learn what FDAMH has to offer carers of people with Mental Health difficulties.

Carers Support Group Programme



These support groups are informal meetings for carers to just come along to meet, have a coffee, catch up with other carers and gain information, advice or support. Or just drop-in to any of the evenings that you are available or takes your fancy.

Wednesday Night Support Group Programme

This group meets on the first Wednesday of every month at the Victoria Centre, 7 to 9pm.

7th December	Eddie Kelly, Service User and Carer Reference Group presentation
21st December	Carers' Xmas Dinner
4th January	Mutual Support
1st February	Rhona Mackie, NHS Forth Valley Liaison Psychiatry and Fiona Farquharson, Parasuicide Worker
7th March	Mutual Support
4th April	Therapeutic Counsellor—Mindfulness/Yoga and CBT tasters

Tuesday Night Support Group

This group meets on the third Tuesday of every month at the Victoria Centre, 7 to 9pm.

This is a relatively new group of carers who have formed strong bonds through attending the carers education course and have continued to meet within FDAMH. For further information call Neil: 01324 671 608

Coffee Mornings?

Interested in having a coffee/relaxation morning and opportunity to meet other carers for an informal chat and relaxation session. A number of carers have come up with the idea of meeting socially in the centre, if you are interested or want to find out more give Neil a phone.

Carers Christmas Meal

The carers group have decided to hold their Annual Xmas meal in FDAMH this year.

It will take place on 21st December from 6.00pm – 10.00 pm.

Please feel free to come along and meet old and new friends for a very informal “hot pot” Christmas meal and warm welcome.

Helpers in Our Community

Crisis Numbers

Breathing Space (6pm – 2am):
0800 83 85 87

Samaritans (24 hrs): 08457 90 90 90 or
01324 622066

NHS 24: 08454 24 24 24

Emergency Social Work Services
(EDT): 01786 470500 or
0845 277 7000

Hospital - Forth Valley, Larbert:
01324 566000

Hospital – Falkirk: 01324 624000

Hospital - Stirling: 01786 434000

Saneline 6pm – 11pm: 08457 678000

Childline 24 hrs: 0800 11 11

Social Work Services Brockville, Falkirk:
01324 506400

Falkirk Police: 01324 634212

Addiction Services

Alcohol Link: 01259 726632

Signpost Recovery (Drug and Alcohol
Addictions): 01259 726602

Addictions Support and Counselling:
01786 450721 or 01324 874969

AA: 0845 769 7555

Mental Health Services

FDAMH – Falkirk and District
association for MH: 01324 671600

Dunrowan Resource Centre:
01324 639009

Westbank Day Clinic: 01324 624111

Caledonia Clubhouse: 01324 501720

Specific Services

Forth Valley Advocacy: 01324 557070

Open Secret: 01324 630100

Care Survivors: 0800 121 6027

Rape Crisis: 01786 471771

National Domestic Abuse Helpline:
0808 2000 247

Citizens Advice Bureau: 01324 611244

Homeless (ARC): 503600 or
0800 587 4440

Relationship Scotland: 0845119 20 20

Debt Advice: 01324 504343

Victim Support: 01324 633433

Hopeline UK: 0800 068 41 41

Cruse Bereavement: 0844 477 9400

Welfare Benefits Help: 01324 501404

Helpful Web Sites

www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk

www.chooselife.net

www.livinglifetothefull.com

www.papyrus-uk.org

www.livingworks.net

www.moodgym.anu.edu.au

Diary

Falkirk Service Users and Carers Reference Group 2011 Meetings

Service Users and Carers Reference Group meetings will be held in Drop-In, FDAMH, The Victoria Centre, 173 Victoria Road, Falkirk. Meetings will be at 10.30am on the following Tuesdays:

6th December 2011	3 rd July 2012
10 th January 2012	31 st July 2012
7 th February 2012	4 th September 2012
6 th March 2012	2 nd October 2012
3 rd April 2012	6 th November 2012
1 st May 2012	4 th December 2012
5 th June 2012	

Further details are available from: Eddie Kelly, Service Users and Carers Involvement Support Worker.

Call: 01324 671609 or email: eddie.kelly@fdamh.org.uk

Women's Group

The Women's Group meets on Thursdays between 11am and 1.30pm in the Drop-In Centre at FDAMH.

Dec 8th	Crafts
Dec 15th	Textile Craft
Dec 22nd	Secret Santa/ Festive Fare
Dec 29th	Discussions/ Resolutions

Alternatively, just come along for a coffee and a chat. Contact the Victoria Centre for details. Remember—we keep an up-to-date programme on our web site at: www.fdamh.org.uk

FALKIRK CREDIT UNION

Falkirk Credit Union provide community banking on a non-profit making basis. Its services are available at the Victoria Centre on Wednesday mornings at 11am. Anyone can use the service. Come along to find out more.

Arts and Crafts

The Arts and Crafts Group takes place on Tuesdays at 1pm to 3pm. Speak to Jane Shirra or just come along.



FDAMH Christmas Party



2pm to 6pm on Friday 16th December 2011
at

Cafe Westfield, Falkirk Stadium

Live music - The Tonkerers

Buffet

Quiz

Raffle

Tickets £6

Available from FDAMH Reception



The centre will be closed on Friday 16th Dec from 1pm and for public holidays on Mon 26th Dec, Tue 27th Dec, Mon 2nd Jan & Tue 3rd Jan