

December 2006



Welcome to Volunteer News, our newsletter for and about all our volunteers.

Age Concern Kingston could not operate without its growing band of dedicated volunteers.

We want to know what you think.

If you have any comments or feedback on this newsletter, or other issues about volunteering, please contact Femina Makkar - femina@ageconcernkingston.org

A plea!

Please let us know if your contact details change or if you have stopped volunteering so that we can keep our records up to date and avoid wastage. Update forms are always available from the Admin Office at 14 Nelson Road, or just let us have a note or email:

jyoti@ageconcernkingston.org

020 8942 8256



Volunteering improves quality of life say our volunteers

Volunteer Satisfaction Survey 2006

Thanks to everyone who took part in our first postal Volunteer Satisfaction Survey. Surveys were sent to all 134 volunteers and we received responses from 36 of you (27%). The responses received represented a broad cross-section of our volunteers, from day centres and lunch clubs to our intergenerational projects.

Positive experience

The largest proportion of volunteers has been with us for between one and five years, but 11% of volunteers have been contributing their services for more than 10 years. 50% of you declared yourselves 'very satisfied' with your volunteering experience, and 47% satisfied. 56% are 'very satisfied' with the staff you work with, 39% 'satisfied'. 92% say that volunteering with ACKuT has been a positive experience and 94% would recommend volunteering to friends.

The majority of those volunteers who responded were over 65, with 36% being over 75: not for you a quiet life of cocoa and slippers by the fireside! Of those people who gave additional comments, the common thread was that volunteering gives you the opportunity to meet people, use your skills and give service to others in a rewarding way. A number of you have two or three volunteer roles, spending up to a fantastic 16 hours per week volunteering; the average number of hours given by each person, each week, is five.

A small number of volunteers do think we could do better, and we are grateful to them for their useful comments, which will help us to develop and improve the volunteering opportunities we have available, and the way we communicate with you. We will also seek at a later date to contact those people who didn't respond to the survey to see what their views are.

Quality of life

Our small sample is consistent with the findings of a major study published online earlier this year in the *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*¹. Researchers from Imperial College London, Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm and City University, London looked at indicators of the quality of life, and found that in England it is above average between the ages of 50 and 84, and in some cases increases compared with earlier years. Lead researcher Dr Gopal Netuveli said, "Although many worry that old age and retirement could be a time of hardship, this study shows that for many their quality of life actually improves as they get older. In particular, social engagement such as volunteering can significantly improve quality of life, even in very old age."

Congratulations to Philip Broadway who has won a £10 Marks and Spencer voucher in the prize draw.

1. Quality of life at older ages: evidence from the English longitudinal study of ageing (wave 1), *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, April 2006. <http://www.imperial.ac.uk/P7607.htm>



Kingston upon Thames

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Our Mission

To be an effective organisation that is recognised as a leader, committed to involving and empowering all older people in Kingston.

We're on the Web!

www.ageconcernkingston.org

Meet the Staff

Lesley Burley: Project Coordinator, Healthy Eating Workshops

I have recently joined ACKuT to coordinate a new Intergenerational Project on Healthy Eating. I am working part-time, for three days a week, presently Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

My working history has revolved around food, and I spent several years working for John Lewis, then for a contract catering company before deciding to return to full time education five years ago. I have now fulfilled a personal ambition and hold a degree in Nutrition. I love food and have a passion for cooking and eating.

I moved to Kingston 10 years ago with my husband Simon, and two baby girls, Emily and Nicole. We now have three children with our son Joe who was born soon after moving here. We all enjoy living in Kingston, and as a family make very good use of Richmond Park.

I am surrounded by a very musical family, though I do not play an instrument myself, my interests include listening to them play, singing, and of course cooking and entertaining. When I have time I enjoy walking and swimming.

I am looking forward very much to getting this new Project underway and I believe it will bring me a great deal of pleasure and satisfaction to work with older and younger members of our community around the wonderful subject of food.



Diary Dates

Friday 8th December

Volunteers' Christmas Party

6.00 for 6.30 pm

at the Raleigh Centre, 14 Nelson Road, New Malden

Wednesday 7th February

Induction / Meet the Managers

for new & existing volunteers

9.30—12.30 at 14 Nelson Road

Thursday 1st March

Tea with the Trustees

for new volunteers

14 Nelson Road, time TBC



Without volunteers Age Concern Kingston's work would be considerably less effective. Volunteers are vital in enabling us to deliver our services.

2006 has been a busy and eventful year and every Christmas in small way of showing our appreciation of your support we hold our annual Christmas party. I look forward to seeing you all there, but just in case you can't make it, I would like, on behalf of our Chair, Wendy Woods and the Board of Trustees, to thank you all for all your hard work and commitment over the last 12 months and to wish you all a **Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.**

I look forward to us all continuing to work together in 2007!

Shane Brennan, Chief Executive

