



An initiative of Business  
in the Community

# Leicestershire Cares Newsletter

WORKING TO CONNECT EMPLOYERS, EMPLOYEES AND COMMUNITIES  
ISSUE 2, SEPTEMBER 2005

[www.leicestershirecares.co.uk](http://www.leicestershirecares.co.uk)

On the 1st March Leicestershire Cares held the first annual celebration event to recognise volunteering achievement. Held at Walkers Stadium with over 100 attendees, it was an opportunity to showcase work achieved within the community. No-one who attended will be able to forget the cooking utensils, bedding and inflatable beds supplied by HSBC to Border House Homeless Hostel to enable families to have something to sleep on and something to cook with when they move to their first tenancy.

Leicestershire Cares is going from strength to strength with new members joining each month. Our impact in the community is therefore reinforced, not only through greater numbers of employees, but through the skills and expertise that individual employees bring. These skills are of huge importance to voluntary organisations and schools alike. This is the Year of the Volunteer, so if you have not yet volunteered, you still have a few months to go! Contact your company Champion to find out more or contact us.

*Monica Kimche, Director*



*Jane Quarmby of **HSBC** shows off their support for Border House at the Leicestershire Cares celebration event*



***BAE Systems** graduate team paint a mural at the Border House Corner Club*



***PKF** spend a day rebuilding drystone walls at Markfield*



*Simon Proffitt's team from **AstraZeneca** create a fabulous picnic area for Glebe House*



*Vimme Rathour entered a **Leicestershire Cares** team in the Alliance & Leicester "It's a Knock Out" competition. The selected charity for winnings was LAMP (Leicester Action for Mental Health) a fabulous £300 was raised through sponsorship*



# Severn Trent go back to School!

In April, Severn Trent Water's Collections Team exchanged their computers for paint brushes, tackling no less than four Team Challenges at Martinshaw Primary School - a children's cloakroom area, a special needs room, PE store/chair storage, and a mural. The projects included glossing doors, painting walls, assembling radiator covers, and painting a countryside theme for the mural.

The teams held a dress down day and raffle to raise £93 towards some of the materials, with remaining materials bought or provided by Severn Trent Water.



Customer Relations Manager Eileen Pole explained,

*"The team worked extremely hard to achieve all that they did in one day. We knew that the project was challenging, but true teamwork shone through with everyone making sure that all we planned to do was completed on time. The feedback from the team has been excellent, and it is great to have this opportunity to add something to the community whilst having fun and building relationships"*

The teachers at Martinshaw Primary School were extremely pleased with the finished result, as several parts of the school had not been decorated for over ten years.

Well done to Team Leaders Jayne Attwal, John Courtnage, Anne Louth and Eve Steggals as well as Eileen Pole who took responsibility for the overall organisation of the day.

## Community Safety Update

**2005 saw the first ex-offenders go into mentored work placements at some of our member companies.**

### SO FAR:

**464** volunteer hours invested in Community Safety over 3 months (April-June).

**100%** of ex-offenders who have successfully completed a placement report that they are more positive about their future as a result of the two weeks spent with the company.

**39** mentors have been trained.

**39** applications for a placement have been received.

**11** ex-offenders have successfully started placements.

**10** placement opportunities kindly offered by participating companies. These are in diverse areas from printing to catering, engineering to administration.

**9** partnerships established with the key agencies in this field who submit applications to Leicestershire Cares for their clients to be considered for a placement.

**1 in 4** ex offenders who apply are selected for placement.

**A HUGE THANK YOU** to AstraZeneca R & D Charnwood, Leicestershire County Council, Office Depot, and Walkers Snack Foods Limited for their continued commitment to the project.

I look forward to working with more companies over the next few months to continue "to break the cycle of a conviction rendering ex-offenders unemployable and unemployment driving them back to crime."

**Kirsty Baylis – Community Safety**

## Skillshare 2005

*"The day allowed me to look at issues from a different perspective and have ideas challenged"*

Six social enterprises were given a unique opportunity to tap into the expertise of business advisors in May. Skillshare 2005, a joint event with Community Action Network (CAN) Leicester and PKF, was aimed at social entrepreneurs who wanted to explore, in-depth, their business issues and develop practical solutions to the challenges they face. It is hoped that Skillshare will become an annual event.



## Collect 4 Christmas 2005 Bulletin

Thank you to all who took part in the review of last year's Collect for Christmas appeal for homeless families. The 2005 campaign will focus on older people and we will be supporting Age Concern Leicester and Leicestershire. More news will follow later this year!



## Local Environmental Challenges

A 30-strong team from **KPMG** recently swapped their suits for overalls to make improvements to the Leicestershire environment through three different initiatives.

The first Team Challenge involved removing Himalayan Balsam, which was suffocating the existing plant life, from the riverside near Aylestone Meadows. The team were able to cover a wide area as well as building a riverside bench out of recycled plastic so that members of the local community can enjoy the peaceful environment.

The second team spent the day in Loughborough repairing drystone walls and erecting boundary fencing at the Outwoods Nature Reserve. With a significant amount of wildlife, including rare species, the wood is currently trying to achieve Special Site of Scientific Interest status.

The third team helped a local primary school to create a better external environment for the children. After a daylong activity, Woodland Grange Primary School in Leicester had their perimeter fence painted, picnic benches re-stained and their wildlife area tidied up.

Richard Wright, senior partner at KPMG in Leicester explained,

*“Volunteers were able to choose an activity that they wanted to do in order to provide a better environment for the local community. The day was a great success and we all benefited. It not only helped to improve conditions for others, but was also a good opportunity for us to work together as a team outside of our usual office environment.”*



## Community Safety Feedback

*“My placement built my self confidence as I was given the opportunity to prove my trustworthiness to those around me”*

*“I demonstrated to my parents that I have a secure and positive future”*

**Quotes from ex-offenders after their two-week placements**

*“Organising and supporting the workplace mentoring has given me a great new management experience and has been very rewarding in seeing mentees complete placements and build confidence in the workplace.”*

**Paul Lomax, Walkers Snack Foods Limited**



*A speaker from **Leicester City Council**, Housing Training, speaks to students at Groby Community College about her job*

## Snippets

Thank you to all who nominated star volunteers from within your business. ‘Runners Up’ include..

**Ian Gibson** from Everards Brewery for his dedication to several education initiatives.

**Kathryn Hart** and **Kate Manley** from Harvey Ingram LLP for their commitment to Right to Read and taking part in Team Challenges.

See overleaf to read more about this edition’s star volunteer... **Eileen Pole** from Severn Trent!



**Grant Thornton** spend a day in the pouring rain at the Outwoods doing drystone walling and fence building



**gaytongraham** and **Leicestershire Cares** staff celebrate the launch of our website:  
[www.leicestershirecares.co.uk](http://www.leicestershirecares.co.uk)

## DON'T FORGET THE NEXT ACTION WEEK IS LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION WEEK 10th – 16th OCTOBER

July saw the largest group of volunteers from **Harvey Ingram** arrive at the Leonard Cheshire site, Sileby to paint walls and doors. (Leonard Cheshire is the UK's largest voluntary sector provider of support to disabled people).

The first wave of volunteers arrived at 8am and confidence that we would finish the project before midnight was very low. However work got underway quickly and remarkable progress was made with additional volunteers arriving amidst the chaos. The squad of emulsioners soon left the small band of glossers behind. The speed only slowed when Neil Clayton decided to stand in the paint tray, something he was reminded of almost continually for the remainder of the day and the moment was recorded for posterity (see below).

By 3pm the walls were done and then everyone had to pitch in and help with the glossing. A few were spared though to start the huge clean up operation going back to where we started, which was easy as they just followed Neil's footprints!

The staff and residents were delighted with what was achieved and are already talking about a project for next year. Thankfully this will not be a painting project as those with aching limbs will probably need some persuading to wield brush and roller again for many months to come.

A huge thank you to everyone who volunteered and assisted in the organisation of the event (including star guest Stephen Woolfe who brought much needed ice creams for everyone!).

*Steven Baylis*



## Education Update

This year has been a huge success in terms of volunteer engagement in the community.

In the last 12 months 8 partnerships have been secured with schools and businesses under the Partner a School (PAS) programme.

13 Partners in Leadership (PIL) relationships have been established, with head teachers or the management team within a school being partnered with a business leader. Although it has been a struggle, 15 students have been mentored through the E-pals programme with BAE Systems as well as 5 law students partnered with solicitors at Harvey Ingram. Hopefully in the coming year we will be able significantly to increase the number of students being offered mentor support via e-mail.

With the financial support of Connexions, a pilot 'Mentoring' initiative was run involving a small number of students from Guthlaxton Community College, who potentially fell in the "NEET" category. These students had a mentored 2 week work placement shadowing their mentor, to try to re-engage them in education. This was a small pilot but a very successful one none the less. One student has now been offered an apprenticeship as a result of the programme and one student has grown in confidence enough to take up a place in electrical engineering at Leicester College.

One of the greatest successes of this year has been Interview Technique Practice. For this I would like to thank everybody that has been involved. Without all of you volunteering your efforts, skills and time we would never have been able to see over 700 students. The more volunteers that support this project, the more students we can help. In 2005-2006 let's see if we can thrash the 701 figure.

**Together we can make a huge difference in the community, keep up the good work!**

**Vimme Rathour – Education & Business**

## Alliance & Leicester Soar into Action



A team from Alliance & Leicester celebrated 'National Volunteers' Week' in June by decorating two classrooms at Soar Valley College.

Overalls replaced usual business suits and armed with stepladders, brushes, rollers and paint, volunteers helped transform dull walls into a fresh and welcoming environment.

Julie Robinson, Vice Principal at Soar Valley College said, "Despite plans to build new facilities at Soar Valley in the future, the students working here now deserve a high quality environment too. We are very grateful to the staff at Alliance & Leicester for volunteering to decorate two rooms that are desperately in need of a fresh coat of paint."

## School Feedback

*"This input is of great value to us all – it helps the school who are on a very tight budget, and also helps the children with their learning of the curriculum. Many thanks!"*

**Head Teacher, Herrick Primary School**

*"Once again a massive thank you from all at Latimer. The school recently came out of 'special measures' and your input was certainly valuable... The children asked me to pass on to you a big 'cheers' for the footie strips. They look fabulous. If you can get me a Centre Forward I'll be really happy!"*

**Head Teacher, Latimer School**

*"It is an absolute pleasure to be writing to you about the partnership with Leicestershire Cares....Activities of this kind send out a very positive and a very strong message into the wider community"*

**Head Teachers, Mayflower Primary School**

## Community Development Update

Leicestershire ProHelp membership has increased to 23 over the last year including an IT consultant – an area previously absent from the expertise available. The group have supported 42 groups (over an 80% increase in projects brokered since 2003-4) providing over £38,000 of pro bono support.

In particular we recently attended the launch of the new APEX building (supported by Spearing Waite with their lease negotiation); attended the opening of the newly renovated Hugglescote Community Centre (supported by Rose & Cooper with surveys, planning, and costings); and have seen the newly developed website for the Ken Chamberlain Trust (supported by Rock Kitchen Harris).

Six partnerships have been created through the **PILCOM** (Partners in Leadership with Community Enterprise) programme with involvement from Leicester Mercury, PKF, Bradgate Bakery, and John Day Marketing Associates.

Finally, our pilot **SkillsFit** Project is progressing well with Bradgate Bakery starting to develop some bespoke personnel training for the Belgrave Playhouse. We are hoping to offer more SkillsFit Project opportunities to voluntary and community groups later this year (6-8hrs of capacity building in personnel, ICT, project planning, or financial planning).

**Katharine Lightbown, Community Development**

# Health Action Week Success!

According to a recent report by the National Centre for Social Research, the percentage of children aged 2 to 10yrs who are overweight rose from 22.7% in 1995 to 27.7% in 2003. Increases in obesity were most significant in older children aged 8 to 10 yrs. (Source: 'Obesity among children under 11', National Centre for Social Research, April 2005)

To tackle the issue, Leicestershire Cares Health Action Week was designed to engage companies in health-related challenges across primary schools in Leicestershire to raise awareness of HEALTH.

Twelve companies released over a 100 volunteers to make a difference. The week saw **Abbey Sports & Leisure** and **Greens Health & Fitness** (to name but a few) running Yoga, Team Combat & Body Balance classes for primary school children.

Steven Baylis' group (**Harvey Ingram**) teamed up with Sarah Staples' team (**Leicester Mercury**) to begin the massive project of creating an allotment for Border House. They managed to pick the best day for the worst weather, but regardless of being covered in mud and soaked through all day they soldiered on.

Paul Lomax of **Walkers Snack Foods** took several teams out to Mellor Community Primary School to paint playground games and helped the children to create and try an assortment of healthy juices and shakes.

Phelim Keaveney's team at **Bradgate Bakery** launched a "design a healthy sandwich" competition for two local schools. The entry forms have just been collected and we're sure there will be some novel and interesting combinations!



*Greens Health & Fitness instructors show children how to do body combat and Tai Chi*



*Meanwhile Abbey Sports & Leisure do body balance & circuit training*



*Leicester Mercury team give Inglehurst Primary School playground a face lift by painting wall games*



*Andy Haley of Office Depot led his team of 14 to paint playground games at Anstey Latimer Primary School*



*"Mine will be shaken not stirred". Volunteers from **Walkers Snack Foods** encourage children to create healthy juices and shakes*

# 1 - 8 June 2005

For those of you who got your leg warmers on, cooking books out and paint brushes to the ready...

**A MASSIVE THANK YOU!!!!**



**Walkers Snack Foods** volunteers paint playground games to promote healthy activity at Mellor Community Primary School



*Mud, mud, glorious mud... Teams from **Leicester Mercury** and **Harvey Ingram** get their hands (really) dirty!*

## Border House given Boost

As part of Health Action Week 2005, a team from Harvey Ingram together with Leicester Mercury helped to prepare an allotment area for Border House Homeless Hostel. Steven Baylis recalls the day's events...

*The task was to clear a quite sizable area of land, leaving it suitable for planting in due course. To create competition two teams started at opposite ends of the plot, with the aim of meeting somewhere in the middle. With tools at the ready everyone set off at a good pace, not deterred by the light rain that conveniently started just after we arrived. After a few minutes it dawned on the less experienced gardeners that this was going to be hard work. The ground became heavier as the day wore on, and the rain more persistent – with everything quickly becoming a mud bath!*

*After a few hours we had a quick lunch, sheltering under some trees, and battled on. By now I feared my popularity as organiser of our team had diminished slightly and with the mud liquefying there was a real risk of me being involved in a freak accident and being lost beneath the mud. Eventually though we finished and with everyone's feet weighing an extra few kilograms we laid down the plastic membrane to prevent our hard work being in vain and weeds being allowed to grow back. We hope to go back in due course to be involved in the planting of the allotment, when hopefully the sun will shine a little more.*

*Thanks to Kate Manley, Adrian Day, Annabel Whittaker, Chris Nuttall, Kathryn Hart, Lisa Humphreys, Louisa Matthews, Mumtaz Desai, Neil Clayton, Sarah Tiernan, Sophie Brown, Sundeep Kalair. Sarah Staples, Babita Wakelin, Cat Turnell and Mark Bush.*

# Volunteer Spotlight

Name: Eileen Pole



**Business: Customer Relations Manager, Severn Trent**

Eileen organised and took part in the large-scale Team Challenge at Martinshaw Primary School as detailed on page 2...

**How did you first get involved with Leicestershire Cares?**

Severn Trent Water recently became members of Leicestershire Cares. I was interested in doing a Team Challenge and contacted Vimme.

**What would you say to a colleague interested in getting involved?**

Go for it! It's lots of hard work but very satisfying and a great way to build a team.

**How do you keep your team/s motivated?**

With enthusiasm and by being positive myself. By supporting them and showing them we can do it together.

**What's been the best way you've recruited volunteers?**

Make the project sound as interesting as possible and be informative. I explained it's a great opportunity for personal development as well.

**What top tips would you pass onto a newly-trained Team Leader?**

Do your homework and have a good understanding of the project. You need to be organised and structured – we had four Project Leaders with long lists of things that needed completing and who was going to do what. It was also helpful to take photos of the project to show to the teams before the day – to prepare them.

**What has been your most memorable experience so far?**

I have several! The look on the Project Leaders' faces at our first visit – when they saw the sheer size of the project! Also standing at the checkout of B&Q with trolleys full of equipment and paint – it took forever! It was a fantastic day in the end – the teams did especially well!



**Do you have your own story about volunteering through Leicestershire Cares?**

**Would you like to nominate a star volunteer from within your business to feature in the next newsletter?**

Then let us know... The deadline for nominations and/or stories is Friday 27th January 2006 – to feature in our March newsletter. We look forward to hearing from you soon!

## THANK YOU!

The Leicestershire Cares staff team would like to extend a huge thank you to all the businesses and individuals who have volunteered their time and expertise in our activities so far this year. Your support is really appreciated by us and the community and voluntary groups we work with, and we hope to see you on another project soon!

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Business in the Community is a unique movement of over 800 member companies, with a further 2000 plus engaged through our programmes and campaigns. We operate through a local network of more than 100 business led partnerships and 60 global partners.

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