



visibility

Winter 2008

Welcome to Winter 2008 - 2009 Newsletter!

In this edition you will find news about Visible Communities, our exciting new project which is bringing information and advice on issues relating to visual impairment to various locations throughout the west of Scotland. There is also information about Go classes and activities for 2009 as well as some important advice on winter fuel payments – really important now that the cold weather is well and truly with us!

We can provide the newsletter and other Visibility mailings to you on an audio CD. These will play in a standard CD player but are not DAISY format. The newsletter is also available in electronic or tape form. If you would like your newsletter in a different format, please contact us and let us know. You can also download it from our website www.visibility.org.uk.

If you would like to receive a copy of this newsletter on a regular basis, please email info@visibility.org.uk or telephone us on 0141 332 4632.

Visibility Opening Times over the Festive Period

Visibility will be closed from mid-day on Wednesday 24th of December and we will re-open at 9am on Monday 5th January 2009.

Our Patient Support Service at Gartnavel is also closed during this time. Visibility's Home Support service will not be available on 25th and 26th December or 1st and 2nd of January, however other than those days it will operate as agreed with individuals.

Should anyone experience any unusual eye problems or feel their eyes have suddenly become worse please remember that there is an Eye Casualty based at Gartnavel Hospital. The department is open 365 days a year from 8.30am – 4.30pm.

Community Information Sessions- knowledge where it counts

Visibility are delighted to announce our recent success in securing five year funding from the Big Lotto to help create our Visible Communities project which will raise awareness of visual impairment throughout the west of Scotland.

During the first year of the project, people from Argyll and Bute and West Dunbartonshire will have the opportunity to attend group information sessions and drop-in days within the two local authority areas. Experienced professionals will provide training on visual impairment awareness and give useful information and advice on local services and support. There will also be displays of some of the aids and equipment available to support independent living.

Some of the sessions will be aimed at local organisations and volunteers and others will be for people who are visually impaired and their family and friends.

Over the next few months sessions will be held in:

- Clydebank during January 2009
- Dumbarton during February 2009
- Balloch and Dunoon during March 2009

Further dates and locations will also be offered and if you would like to be kept updated on the upcoming sessions, please contact the Community Support Team on 0141 332 4632 who will be delighted to keep you posted.

Go! Project News

Go December Drop in Day

The Go drop in day will be held on Monday the 15th December and will feature a performance by the singing class in addition to the usual festive cheer. If you would like to come along, please contact the Go Team on 0141 332 4632 for further details.

Go Classes for the New Year

Go Classes will resume on Monday the 12th January and run for 12 weeks until April 3rd 2009.

Mondays from 12th January

Creative Writing 10am-12pm – Tutor Alison Miller

Yoga Class 2pm-3.30pm – Tutor Margaret Sutherland

Singing Class 11am-12.30pm – Tutor Sandra Haxton

Tuesdays from 13th January

Guitar and Banjo 10.30am-12.30pm – Tutor Billy Stewart

Wednesday from 14th January

Art and Crafts 10.30am-12.30pm – Tutor Luci Ransome

Thursday from 15th January

Keyboard 10am-12am Tutor Emma Sinclair

Fridays from 16th January

Braille Class 10am-12pm – Tutor Margaret Rodgers

Sundays from 17th January

Guitar Class 2pm-3.30pm – Tutor Davy Lees

Please remember to call in and register your interest in any classes you wish to attend, even if you have been before.

Go Active in 2009

In January we will be producing a programme of Go Active Events to cover the first part of the year. Hopefully the new programme will be as exciting, successful and popular as last years so please remember to put your name down early to avoid disappointment!

The Go Walks will continue in 2009 with a walk taking place on the third Saturday of every month. Details regarding the walks will be sent to anyone who has participated in the past. If you have not been before, and would like to come then please contact the Go team for details on 0141 332 4632.

Government's Central Heating Programme

An extra £10 million is set to be invested in the Central Heating Programme this year. The money will allow the programme to help even more of Scotland's fuel poor. From April 2009 it is intended that the government's fuel poverty programmes will be extended to include families on income support with children under five or with disabled children under 16.

In a parliamentary statement on Fuel Poverty of May 2008 prioritisation was announced within the Central Heating Programme to focus on those householders most likely to be fuel poor. From October 27 2008, this prioritisation will be extended to cover the following pensioner households:

- those who have never had a central heating system
- those who have a system which is broken beyond repair and are in receipt of the Guarantee Element of Pension Credit
- those who have a system which is broken beyond repair and are aged 75 or over
- those who have a partial or inefficient system and are in receipt of the Guarantee Element of Pension Credit
- those who have a partial or inefficient system and are aged 80 or over

Further and updated information can be obtained from the Warm Deal Programme - Freephone 0800 316 6009 or from www.scottishgas.co.uk/scotland

Winter fuel payment increases for 2008/2009

The Government will again be making Winter Fuel Payments to most people aged 60 or over for winter 2008/09. A Winter Fuel Payment is an annual payment to help people aged 60 and over with the costs of keeping warm this winter.

If you are aged 60 to 79 and you are entitled to receive a Winter Fuel Payment, this year you will get either £125 or £250, depending on your

circumstances in the qualifying week (15th to 21st September 2008). If you are aged 80 or over and you are entitled to a Winter Fuel Payment - this year you will get either £200 or £400, depending on your circumstances in the qualifying week.

If you got a Winter Fuel Payment last winter, you should have automatically got one this winter as long as your circumstances have not changed. If your circumstances have changed, you must tell The Department of Working Pensions about the change as soon as possible.

If you need to make a claim for a payment for winter 2008/09, you should return your claim form on or before 30 March 2009. If you were getting a State Pension or other social security benefit last year (not including Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit or Child Benefit), but you were not getting one in the week of 15 to 21 September 2008, you will need to make a claim for this winter's payment.

The Winter Fuel Payment Helpline

08459 151515

(0845 601 5613 for textphone users). Lines are open from 8.30am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday, calls charged at local rate.

You can call the Winter Fuel Payment Helpline if you need:

- Further information on Winter Fuel Payments;
- To tell us about a change in your circumstances; or
- To get a claim form for Winter Fuel Payments

Fundraising News

We are always looking for new ways for you to support us and within the last few weeks we have teamed up with some new exciting partners most of whom help you to raise money for us at no cost to yourself.

Making Online Purchases

By doing your online shopping through www.easyfundraising.org.uk you will be raising much needed funds, at no cost to you or to Visibility. All the major retailers are there, Amazon, Marks & Spencer, Boots, Argos, Ebay etc. Visibility receives a donation for each order placed so you can do all your Christmas shopping, and raise much needed funds to help us continue our work, all in the comfort of your own home!

Surfing the Internet

By making www.everyclick.com/visibility your homepage and using it for all your online searches and shopping, you can generate funds for Visibility at no cost and little effort. Everyclick is so easy to use and every time you search the web you will be raising money for our work and it is amazing how the money quickly mounts up. Even if you prefer to use another search engine like Google, if you go there through www.everyclick.com/visibility you will still be raising money for us.

Charity Flowers

Everyone loves to receive flowers, and now you can generate extra good feeling by ordering through Charity Flowers. Whether it is for a birthday, anniversary to say thank you or even sorry. Simply quote "VIS" as the source code on your order, and 15 per cent of the purchase price will be donated to Visibility. You can choose your flowers or chocolates at www.charityflowers.co.uk, or call Charity Flowers Direct on 08705 300600

Charity Flowers are the UK's only flowers-by-post service wholly owned by a charity and where all the profits are donated to charitable causes. All the bouquets are packed in a presentation box together with a cut flower care leaflet and your own personalised message. The flowers are then sent by first class post.

Global Adventures

We are very excited about our new Overseas Challenge Events. We have teamed up with Global Adventures to offer a wide range of sponsored challenge events for you to choose from.



From searching for the lost city of Macchu Picchu in Peru to racing huskies through Lapland, the world is your oyster and, at the same time as getting fit, making friends and seeing new lands, you will be raising much needed funds for Visibility. For more info visit our website www.visibility.org.uk or call the fundraising team on 0141 332 4632.

Corporate Challenge 2008

Visibility again hosted its annual corporate challenge event on Friday 12th September. The day was held at Lomond Shores and entertainment was provided by the fantastic Clann an Drumma, who played to our teams on the 'Maid of the Loch' at lunchtime.

This year we were joined by teams from Greggs the Bakers, City Building, Morris and Spottiswood, in addition to Barclays Wealth, Virgin Media, Polaroid Eyewear, Vision Call Opticians and Dawn Construction, returning teams from last years highly successful challenge. The teams competed for the trophy in a series of action packed challenges many of which used simulation spectacles to increase participant's awareness of visual impairment.



The participants raised sponsorship of £1000 per team which will go towards a Visibility project of their choice. Congratulations to the winning team Barclays Wealth and a heartfelt thank you to those who took part and the people who sponsored them to do so.

To all James Bond or Spooks fans!



If you have always fancied yourself as a spy then we have ways of making that a reality! If you are interested in being part of next years top secret challenge to help celebrate Visibility's 150th birthday register your interest immediately by calling us on 0141 332 4632 or emailing challenge@visibility.org.uk

Trusts

Our income from charitable trusts continues to come in as a result of our programme of appeals to a wide range of trusts across the UK. We are particularly pleased that a number of loyal funders support us every year which, with the huge competition for funds, is a real testament to the quality of our work.

The focus of our appeals to charitable trusts has been to raise funds for New View and GO, two of our key projects which rely on donations in order to continue their work, and we were absolutely delighted that the R S Macdonald Charitable Trust donated £15,000 to our New View project.

We were very disappointed, however, that our application to Children in Need for a family support service was unsuccessful but, never say never, and we have identified another major trust who may recognise the clear need for this vital service and are now in the process of preparing an application to them.

As many charitable trusts rely on their investment income for the funds they distribute, the ongoing downturn in the financial climate will undoubtedly have a significant effect on the income we can expect from this source. As a result we are working very hard to identify other ways for people to support us in order to minimise the effect of the financial crisis. We are hoping that people will help us celebrate our 150 years of service to visually impaired people by making a donation, taking part in an event or perhaps making a small regular standing order gift.

2008 Supporters

In 2008 our fantastic individual supporters included William Tulloch who raised over £1000 trekking through Nepal and our very own Susan Crombie who raised £680 by holding an evening of fantastic entertainment.

Visibility are incredibly grateful to Supported Employment Services in Airdrie who raised £875 by holding a coffee morning, also to Scotstoun Lanes Charity Committee who raised £1,147, Barclays Wealth for £776 from their dress down day and the parishioners of Kings Park Church for again raising over £1000 from their annual coffee morning.

We are very grateful to everyone who has been so generous in their support of our work.

Make a lasting difference to blind and partially sighted people

Visibility was founded in 1859 on the generosity of individuals and companies who gave gifts, large and small, to enable us to transform lives. The need for our services is growing rapidly, along with Scotland's increasingly ageing population, so 150 years later we still depend on the goodwill, kindness and generosity of supporters to continue our work. A small gift can make a big difference. If you are thinking about leaving a gift in your will, have a chat with a solicitor who will make sure that you receive impartial advice and that your will reflects your wishes accurately and legally.

During 2008, people who remembered Visibility in their will included Ms M Ramsay, Mrs G Lomond, Mr D Liddell, Miss A Lamont, Miss B Sinclair, and Mr H Laughton. The gifts they left us in their will is going to be used to help Visibility deliver services for families affected by visual impairment.

Nonsense Noel

1. Good King Wenceslas was the King of which country?
A. Turkey
B. Greenland
C. Czechoslovakia
D. Germany
2. In what year was East 17's "Stay another day" No 1 in the charts?
A. Nineteen canteen
B. 1996
C. 1994
D. 1998
3. Which of these famous people was born on Christmas Day?
A. Shane McGowan
B. Madonna
C. Esther Rantzen
D. Charlie Chaplin
4. What is Santa called in Germany?
A. Kriss Kross
B. Kriss Hompf
C. Fatter Kruss
D. Kriss Kringle
5. Which band had three consecutive Christmas No 1 hits?
A. Westlife
B. Band Aid
C. Spice Girls
D. U2
6. Which one of Santa's reindeers was the father of Rudolph?
A. Blitzen
B. Donner
C. Dancer
D. Prancer
7. In order to make geese happier, fatter and tastier for Christmas, farmers in Cheshire have begun to:
A. Dress them in woolly hats and scarves
B. Feed them chips
C. Play the Grease soundtrack on a loop
D. All of the above
8. What do children in Sweden leave out for Santa?
A. Vodka
B. Abba's Greatest Hits
C. Rice Pudding
D. Schnapps

Answers 1.C 2.D 3.A 4.D 5.C 6.B 7.A 8.C

A Seasonal Poem – by Alan Graham, Visibility Writers Group

“STUCK FOR CHRISTMAS”

Now Santa and all of his team
there, Went out on a cold,
Christmas Eve, For they had
a task, for all children, The
presents there, they had to
leave.

Well they went to each house,
and each chimney, And Old
Santa did gladly slide down, Till
they came to a house in a city,
And Old Santa, STUCK THERE
he did frown!

So he called and, he rattled
the chimney, And he shouted
OH PLEASE LET ME OUT!
For I have a sack, FULL OF
PRESENTS, And I'm STUCK
here, for I am so stout!

Well, the family living there
heard him, And they went
and they got an old sweep,
Who stuck a big hose up the
chimney, And “Old Santa”, was
there, fast asleep!

But Old Santa, it wasn't the
end for, He STUCK in that big
sucking tube, And suddenly
when he did wake there, The
sound that you heard, was, just
GLUBE,

But I'll tell you children of all
ages, They put Santa right on
that day, And so the children
got all their presents, And
happiness came, let me say;

But builders please learn by
this warning; If you want glad
children to reign Please, make
all the chimneys, A BIT WIDER!
And, this should not happen
AGAIN!

White Chocolate Christmas Snowballs

These little treats are ideal for the Christmas season. They are easy to make and will keep well in the fridge for a few days.

Makes 10

200g/7oz white chocolate

25g/1oz/2 tbsp butter diced

90g/3 ½ oz desiccated coconut

90g/3 ½ oz Madeira cake

Break the chocolate into pieces and put in a heatproof bowl with the butter. Rest the bowl over a pan of gently simmering water and stir frequently until melted. Remove the bowl from the heat and set aside for a few minutes.

Meanwhile, put 50g/2oz of the coconut on a plate and set aside. Crumble the cake and add to the melted chocolate with the remaining coconut. Mix well to form a chunky paste.

Take spoonfuls of the mixture and roll into balls, and immediately roll them in the reserved coconut. Place the balls on greaseproof (waxed) paper and leave to set.

Serve in paper cake cases.

Tip: You will need to shape the mixture into balls as soon as you have mixed in the coconut and cake; the mixture sets very quickly and you won't be able to shape it once it hardens.



For more details on any aspect of Visibility please contact 0141 332 4632 or write to Visibility, 2 Queens Crescent, Glasgow G4 9BW.

Visibility is the trading name of GWSSB (formerly Glasgow and West of Scotland Society for the Blind). GWSSB is a company, registered in Scotland limited by guarantee with its registered office at 2 Queens Crescent, Glasgow, G4 9BW. Registration Number: SC116522 Scottish Charity Number: SCO 09738