



## Winter Survival Packs Distributed During 'Worst Winter in Decades'

# Staff News...

Local Solutions' annual employee awards took place on the last day before the Christmas break in front of a packed hall within the headquarters at Mount Vernon Green.

Staff from all departments and sites across the organisation including Scotland Road, MAP Wirral and Homecare Manchester were present on the day.

Speeches were given by Chief Executive, Steve Hawkins and Chairman, Robert Owen who highlighted key events for Local Solutions throughout 2009 and conveyed their appreciation of all the hard work of its employees.

Awards were presented to:

**Homecare Manchester (left) - Equality of Opportunity**

**The Carers Project (right) - Team of the Year**

**Dave Cook of Merseysport - Outstanding Service Delivery**  
(who was unable to attend the ceremony)



A group of staff from Local Solutions recently attended a glamorous event at the Echo Arena as a result of their dedication to learning new skills and gaining qualifications in the workplace.

Cleaning operatives from the organisation were at the 'allstars' event which was held to celebrate people's achievement in Learning & Development. The event is partly aimed at getting organisations across Merseyside to sign the Skills Pledge (which Local Solutions did last year) in order to commit to the development and upskill of their workforces.

The Corporate Services Cleaning Team won regional recognition for their commitment to Learning & Development. Jimmy Humphrays, Laura Hankin, Jeanette Shields, Kelly Welsh, Irene Hankin, Tina Buchanan and Andrea Hughes are pictured above, left to right, on the evening.

## Work Preparation Programme Success Story

Local Solutions' Work Preparation Programme aims to assist clients with disabilities in Merseyside and Cheshire to undertake work placements, with additional support, in a variety of areas. The ultimate objective is to enable them to move into (or back into) the work environment.

Placements are voluntary, with expenses paid, and can last up to six weeks. They can be organised across a variety of occupational areas and are designed to meet the individual needs of clients. Hours can be part or full time, as required, or can vary through the placement as the client builds up confidence. Below is a case study profile of Michael, who was supported by the programme.

Michael had spent five years suffering with depression - which resulted in him being limited in his potential to work as he was uncomfortable in social circumstances. Michael's situation was heightened as he had been out of work during that period. Jane, our Work Preparation Advisor, encouraged Michael to take a different career path from his previous role as a Customer Service Representative. He was subsequently placed at a boarding kennels/cattery in Wilmslow and is currently taking his NVQs. In Michael's own words, "I find working with animals to be very calming. I no longer feel as anxious therefore my quality of life has improved and I think I am getting much better."

Michael's employers have described him as an asset to their company. For further information please call Local Solutions headquarters on 0151 709 0990 and ask to speak to a member of the Work Preparation Programme.

# A Warm Welcome from Local Solutions...

Richard Caulfield (pictured right) Chief Executive of Voluntary Sector North West, visited Local Solutions on Monday 8 February. Richard met with senior managers to hear about the work of Local Solutions and to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing the Third Sector within the coming years. Richard also spoke about the 'Listen, Value, Invest' campaign aimed at highlighting the benefits and real achievements that the sector charities and social enterprises can make in transforming people's lives.



Local Solutions welcomed a party of representatives from Heartland Health in Missouri, USA.

The visitors were on an exchange tour with senior NHS Executives as part of a study programme considering best practice in promoting community health. The Heartland Health team were visiting a range of North West NHS and Third Sector organisations.

As part of Local Solutions' contribution, the Heartland Health team visited projects at our Scotland Road site, including domestic violence services, homeless services, the Intense Mentor Programme and also learnt about our work with unpaid carers. The Heartland Health team were impressed with the work of Local Solutions, its ability to connect with the local community and the positive feedback from young people using our youth homelessness services.

A few days after the visit, a Local Solutions Senior Manager attended a one day conference in Manchester with the Heartland Health team and representatives across the North West to consider how health services can be improved and lessons can be learnt from the exchange visits.

At the conference, the lead delegate from Heartland Health gave a special mention to the Homeground Project and the young people with whom he had met. To demonstrate their appreciation, the Heartland representatives made a donation towards the work of the hostel.



Local Solutions welcomed a visit by Polly Moseley (pictured far right), Senior Consultant with local Primary Care Trusts, in December. Polly met with staff from our Domestic Violence and Bullybusters projects and with staff, householders and young people at Merseyside Accommodation Project. The visit completed with a conversation with unpaid carers and staff in the Liverpool Carers Centre.



Local Solutions was delighted to 'welkom' 30 students who were on a fact-finding visit from the historic city of Antwerp in February.

The undergraduates, who are all soon to become social workers, had made a request to Local

Solutions for a tour of its services in order to gain an insight into how social care in England compares with Belgium.

The group began their visit at Mount Vernon Green for an overview of the organisation and its work in supporting people in the community; this was followed with a tour of the Scotland Road site where they learnt about work being undertaken which supports vulnerable and at risk groups.

The tour concluded at

Merseysport, in Queens Dock, which provides watersports activities for the whole community. After a brief tour of the facilities, one of the groups leaders explained the name behind the historic city of Antwerp (which literally means thrown hands) from the legend of a giant whose hands were thrown into the sea. Following which the group presented Local Solutions with a few boxes of famous Belgian chocolates in the shape of hands as a symbol of friendship for their hospitality.



## Additional Barriers for Change (ABC Project)

The ABC Project, which is managed by Local Solutions, has now been up and running for five months. The project, funded by Supporting People, was established to work with individuals who are victims of domestic abuse and who also have additional barriers to accessing services.

Barriers may include drug, alcohol misuse, mental health issues, learning difficulties, language and cultural factors and disability. The service users are amongst the most vulnerable and marginalised individuals in society and are often isolated.

Referrals come from Children's Integrated Services, Probation Services, Health, Victim Support, Community Mental Health and the Domestic Violence multi-agency forum - MARAC

and other voluntary Domestic Violence Services.

The ABC project is a 'client led' outreach service supporting domestic violence victims/survivors of either gender; the project offers advice, support and advocacy to individuals by taking support services out into the community and often into the client's home. The project is underpinned by the principles of empowering individuals to take control of their situation, make informed choices, lead independent lives, reach their full potential and change their lives to live free from violence, abuse or the fear of it.

For further information on the service, please contact the team on 0151 482 2484. *Below is a case study of an ABC Project service user.*

*Andrea (name has been changed for confidentiality purposes) is aged 43 and a mother of three children. She is educated to degree level and was in a trained profession. Following a divorce Andrea entered into a series of abusive relationships and began using alcohol and methadone as a means to cope with her life. Sadly, as a result her three children were taken into care and subsequently adopted. She was in her last relationship for 7 years, during which time her health deteriorated predominantly due to her alcohol misuse.*

*Andrea was referred to the ABC Project due to her complex needs and inability to engage with services. As a repeat victim of DV she was classified as a high risk, following a severe assault by her now ex-partner during in which she suffered physical injuries. At the point of referral she was alcohol dependent, using a high dosage of methadone, living in a homeless hostel and had been issued with an eviction notice.*

*Andrea was given a range of support interventions from the ABC Project which included her being referred to a range of specialist agencies. The ABC Project has been able to support Andrea in attending various appointments and also attended the housing assessment interviews to help her to secure appropriate housing.*

*Due to the ABC intervention Andrea is currently no longer using alcohol as a means to cope with her life and is working towards becoming methadone free. Following support with a planned move she now lives in her own home and receives continuous help from the ABC Project to maintain her new tenancy. Andrea says she is beginning to return to the woman she used to be - she is focusing on maintaining her achievements and developing her creative self, she is currently learning to use a computer, has joined her local library and has written a short story.*

*Perhaps the most important aspect of the support Andrea receives from the ABC is placing her at the centre of changing her life. The ABC provided a place where she was listened to and her experiences of DV were validated. The project also provided her with information on which to make effective decisions, challenged her about ineffective decisions, were able to accompany her to appointments when her self confidence and self esteem was too low for her to attend on her own and then supported her in the way which she felt was appropriate for her.*

## Trust Worker Meets With MAP Beneficiaries

Sheila Cowan, Resettlement Worker for Merseyside Accommodation Project (MAP), welcomed Karen Melton from the Frank Buttle Trust on a recent visit to meet with its young beneficiaries.

Founded in 1937 the Frank Buttle Trust is the largest UK charity providing grant aid solely to individual children and young people in desperate need. Through their Child Support/Student Support Grants, the Trust has played a vital role in offering financial assistance to help young people remain in full time further/higher education and subsequently enhance their confidence and independence.

Sheila took Karen (pictured centre) to meet with several MAP young people and householders. One such young person was Christy who receives financial support from the Trust whilst studying for a BA Hons degree in Theatre & Performance Technology at Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts.

MAP would like to thank the Frank Buttle Trust for helping several of its young people have a better start in life and in particular Karen, for taking the time to meet with so many people at the project.



## Sixth Successful Winter Survival Campaign

Local Solutions' sixth Winter Survival Campaign was a huge success thanks to kind donations from a range of benefactors.

The campaign has been extremely successful at supporting some of the most vulnerable people in the community including older people receiving domiciliary care and unpaid carers looking after a relative or friend due to an illness or disability. Other recipients were service users of our Keep Safe & Warm service which provides home insulation measures to vulnerable Liverpool residents and Shopmobility based in Liverpool One. This year over 60 service users received winter packs which included practical goods such as a thermostat, flask, blanket, hot water bottle, food and drink.

Mr and Mrs Griffiths (pictured centre) commented: "What a lovely surprise! You are too good to us! This will come in very handy and will be of great use - thank you so much."

We look forward to another successful campaign in 2010 and will be looking to a range of businesses and trusts to help us in our endeavour to help more people in the community.



## Party Time for MAP!

The Merseyside Accommodation Project (MAP) held its annual party on Friday, 28<sup>th</sup> January 2010.

Young people, householders, friends and staff all gathered to enjoy an evening of entertainment, dancing and karaoke at the Sandon function suites in Anfield.

An impressive buffet was provided by the Northern Conference Centre and a raffle was held to help raise funds for the project. Prizes were claimed by Local Solutions staff, MAP residents and householders. They included a tour of Liverpool Football Club, a signed Everton football and a family ticket for the Liverpool Empire.

Generous donations and prizes were received from local businesses in order to make the event the success that it was and our sincere thanks go to (Costco, David's Cakes, The Marriott Hotel, Greggs the Bakers, Vauxhall Motors, Benson Signs and Vicinity as well as those prize givers mentioned above).

MAP is looking to recruit householders with a spare room from all areas of Merseyside. An allowance of £140 per week is paid once a young person is placed. If interested, please call 0151 330 2017.



**Theatre Visit...** Knowsley MAP took a group of six young people to the Dukes Theatre in Lancaster to see a performance of 'Time for the Good Looking Boy' by Box Clever Theatre, which looks at the struggles of a teenage boy and his relationships with friends and family. The trip was organised by an ex MAP young person called Mel who is completing her MA at Lancaster University and also works at the theatre. After the show the group were given a tour of the theatre and invited to take part in Box Clever Theatres' research for their next production in 2010.

## An Interview With... Sarah Foster

*This issue we meet Sarah Foster who is 22 and works as a Nursery Assistant at The University of Liverpool Children's Centre - she has been with Local Solutions for almost four years.*

### Describe your typical working day.

On an early shift I arrive at 7.30am to prepare the baby room (where I work) for the infants' arrival at 8am. Along with colleagues, I perform a cot check, room check and outdoor check to make sure everything is safe and in working order. When parents arrive it's important for us both to exchange any relevant information about their child for the day ahead.

Around 10.15am we give the children a morning snack and/or bottle. Following this we then move on to group activities. I, like my colleagues, am the assigned key carer of two children and it's during these activities that I observe and make notes in their files for parents, the room leader and Jean (the centre manager) to read to see how the child is progressing.

From 11.15am I begin to set up for lunch by cleaning the children and high chairs. Lunch then takes us up to around 12pm when we begin to settle

everyone down for a nap. Each child varies in terms of how long they sleep for so the ones who wake earlier are read to as we like to make this 'quiet time' until they are all awake again by 1.30pm.

Between 1.30pm and 2pm I help prepare for more group or individual activities, this could be a trip to the two cathedrals where we may have a picnic in the grounds or a walk to a nearby park. Just before Christmas we took the children on a 'penguin hunt' to search for nearby statues.

We give bottles to those who need them between 2pm and 3pm - we have a nursing chair available for mums who want to breastfeed their child. From 3.30pm onwards we have 'free play' up until all of the children have been collected by parents. Staff continue to observe during this time. At 3.45pm I set off home. Oh, I forgot to mention all the nappies that I change throughout the day too!

### What would you consider to be essential attributes for your job?

Patience, sensitivity, understanding, calmness and being happy helps.

### Where would you like to be in five years time?

I've always been interested in becoming a nanny as it's still doing what I



love which is working with children but it's also a job that you can travel with. In five years time I'd like to be doing that or at least closer to achieving it. I've got a friend who works in Germany as a nanny and she loves it so I think I'd go there or to France but I need to learn a language first.

### How do you like to spend your free time?

Through the week I simply go home and help mum to cook the family meal, then I just chill out by watching TV, reading or surfing the internet. I then have a bath before going to bed. I sound really boring! Of a weekend I get together with friends and I also get to see my nan who comes over to our house.

### What do you find most rewarding about your job?

Watching a child learn and progress each day is rewarding and also when parents say I'm doing a good job...a simple 'thank you' means a lot.

Gill Digney, Manager of Local Solutions' Keep Safe & Warm Project, received the letter of thanks outlined below from one of the team's satisfied customers.

*On 16<sup>th</sup> February, two young men arrived at our home to carry out insulation improvements and my wife and I feel that we should let you know how pleasant it was to have these young men in our home.*

*They were extremely polite and considerate and carried out their task of insulating our loft without any fuss, mess or untidiness and completed the job most efficiently.*

*So many elderly people today are worried when people are in their homes, but these young men, from the moment they knocked at the door and produced their identity, would be more than welcome. Thank you.*

*Yours sincerely,*

*Mr. Redmond.*



## Spotlight on...



The Future Jobs Fund, which is a national programme to help young unemployed people back into work, has commenced delivering placements within Local Solutions and partner organisations.

At present over 100 participants have gained employment through Local Solutions - who are one of only five contractors chosen by Liverpool City Council to provide the government-funded scheme. Services in the organisation currently benefiting from new staff include Homecare, Shopmobility, Horticulture and central service provisions while many participants have been placed with external work placement hosts across the city. The posts are for six months, pay minimum wage (age specific) and those who participate become Local Solutions employees for that period.

Local Solutions is delighted to be taking part in this initiative to provide opportunities for young people to enhance their employability. Stephen Leftley, Marketing Co-ordinator for Future Jobs Fund comments, "The Future Jobs Fund programme has been a great success to date by enabling Local Solutions to add extra capacity to our local community by giving our unemployed clients an opportunity to gain valuable paid work experience and enhance their skills. The calibre of clients on the programme has been outstanding. We have been able to advertise over 300 placement opportunities to Liverpool based social enterprises/community interest groups and social care providers thus enabling them to provide an additional service in their community."

Ariel Trust is an education charity working with young people to use radio and multimedia to engage disadvantaged communities to learn and achieve. They currently have two new people working for them from Local Solutions. Assistant Director, Helen Johnson, said, "Ariel are seeing real benefits from our two Future Jobs Fund posts. Having a Graphic Designer on site is letting us experiment with different ways of using illustrations in our resources for schools. This is working really well for our Heritage Lottery project. Having a Marketing Assistant is also a great asset. The young lady is planning our stall for the NUT conference - a great opportunity for us to raise our profile with teachers."

For further information on the programme and opportunities that are available, contact the team on 0151 705 2459. Please call too if you are a social enterprise/community interest group or social care provider and think you may benefit from the scheme. Two new Future Jobs Fund recruits give their experience of the programme below.

*Marie Gillard from Huyton is currently employed as a Call Handling Receptionist for Local Solutions. Marie had been unemployed for approximately ten years following a traumatic incident when the garage she was working in was held up by armed robbers. Following the event, Marie decided to never work in retail again and went on to gain many qualifications in I.T. hoping to secure an office job. Due to lack of experience in the field combined with being a lone parent, Marie struggled to find a suitable job and became a volunteer for the Citizens Advice Bureau in order to gain more skills. Marie comments, "Being unemployed for such a long time left me feeling unhappy. So when the job centre informed me of this vacancy I immediately applied for it and was so pleased to get it. My advice for anyone looking for work is to give Future Jobs Fund a try - it's a six month contract so you never know what will come of it. I have already learned new skills and been on courses that I know will serve me well for the future and look good on my CV. Local Solutions is a great place to work with ideal hours to suit my family-based responsibilities."*



*Alan Hemmings is 24 and from Bootle. He is working as a Media Project Assistant at the Liverpool Film Academy. Following his graduation from university, Alan was out of work for six months. As a result he volunteered at various organisations to boost his chances of gaining paid employment and to enhance his CV. He comments, "My days here at the Academy differ so much - I am constantly learning more about the TV and film industry. The variation each day brings is exciting. Already I have gained editing skills and learnt about what goes on behind the scenes such as script editing and production. My aim now is to continue to work in the media and particularly to have a 'hands on' role. To people seeking employment I would say be patient and keep looking for opportunities. These chances won't come to find you - you need to make it happen!"*



# Local Solutions

Engaging, Enabling, Enhancing

Local Solutions is a unique not for profit social enterprise that provides services for people across the age spectrum; from young children through childhood and youth to adulthood and old age.

The diversity of our services ensures we can reach individuals, communities and organisations to deliver services that improve the quality of people's lives.

**Young people at risk**  
**Children and families**  
**Vulnerable People**  
**Unpaid Carers**  
**People on low incomes**  
**Communities**  
**People with disabilities**  
**Older people**



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