

Volunteer Centre Western Isles



**Christmas
Edition**

Newsletter

Shoe Box Appeal

Normally they get thrown out - that is if we bother to bring them home in the first place. Who needs packaging cluttering up their home?

Last year members of Blythswood visited a slum city in the middle of Hyderabad where cardboard is viewed differently. In an area of extreme poverty every resource takes on a new significance. In this part of the world, packaging can form a major component of shelter and habitation. 2010 marks the 20th anniversary of the first Blythswood aid lorry to Romania.

Donations were transferred from a 17 tonne truck to a horse drawn sledge to reach snow-bound communities in the depth of a Romanian winter. In 2009 volunteers filled 128,000 shoe boxes which were delivered to countries in Eastern Europe, India and Pakistan.

The capacity of a shoe box is small. The contents are therefore restricted, but those who deliver them often comment on the pure pleasure the recipient expresses. For some it is in the gift of something they have no money to buy. For others it is in the act of being remembered with kindness amidst the harsh circumstance of their life.

Since its first aid trip, Blythswood has grown from a highland based charity into an international organization supporting social care projects across Europe, Africa and India. Originally donations were simply distributed, but now they are also used to raise funds to support projects that tackle specific needs. When the Rev. Jackie Ross and Donald MacVicar set out in January 1990, they could have had little inkling of how far their enterprise would go.

Their compassion is still inspiring people today. In recent weeks, volunteers from all over the highlands and islands of Scotland have shared in their vision and made a conscious effort to help people whose poverty we can barely imagine. When the magnitude of the problem is so overwhelming, we are tempted to think 'I can't possibly make a difference'. Remember the shoe box, trivial and usually discarded in one hemisphere, but transported into a medium of succor in another. We should never allow the magnitude of the problem to diminish a contribution towards its defeat.

Thank you and well done all those who believe and act upon that belief.



Volunteer Centre Drives Forward Life Experiences.



This is one of the most exciting and rewarding projects I have worked on this year. The Volunteer Centre Stornoway has been working with Macleod Driver Trainer to offer a driving experience to those who may not otherwise have that opportunity. Scott Macleod is a local driving instructor who understands the benefit of community support. Volunteering his time and expertise, Scott was happy to undertake whatever project I could dream up!

I contacted George Whyte and John Maclean at the Hills Project; I explained we were looking to target some willing participants who would benefit from this experience, they said they had some perfect candidates.

David Godfrey (19) and David Montgomery (18) undertook a 6 week driving experience every Friday based at Stornoway Airport. They showed excellent progression throughout the program, as their confidence grew, so did their speed!

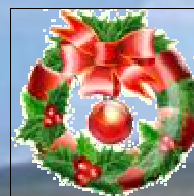
On the final week I had the pleasure of being a passenger as they sat a specially designed exam that would test them on all they had learned. I can honestly say I sat with a smile on my face throughout both tests. Both David's had an excellent understanding on the safety and preparation required before starting the vehicle. Their driving was safe and controlled, they responded calmly and confidently to all of Scott's suggestions. They aced their tests and were delighted with the certificates awarded. David Godfrey summed up his experience by saying "It's given me the confidence to work toward my Driver's License in the future. "

John Morrison from the Hills Project was equally delighted for the guys saying "I'm very proud of the boys, they were fantastic. This was an excellent opportunity for them that they wouldn't otherwise have got; it will give them encouragement toward attempting their test in the future. We appreciate what both Roy at the Volunteer Centre and Scott Macleod has contributed to make this project happen".

Scott's commitment to this project as a volunteer has been exceptional. He has a gift for explaining what others may perceive as difficult in an informal and relaxed way. "I really enjoyed working with the guys and was delighted to give them this opportunity. It made me really happy to see how much they were getting out of it".

This has been an excellent project; it may not be too long before the two David's are sharing a road near you!

Roy Macphail
Volunteer Development Officer





200 Hour Certificate Presentation.

Congratulations to Joshua Bentley and Lisa Crosbie for completing their 200 Hour Millennium volunteer Award. They are both valued volunteers at The Hebridean Chocolate Factory, accumulating way in excess of the 200 Hours required for the Award.

MV Award in Uist

Congratulations to Colm MacQueen on receiving his 200 hour M.V award. Colm initially contacted the Volunteer Centre via e-mail in the hope to find a volunteering placement which would help him develop his Gaidhlig. The Volunteer Centre was then able to find a suitable placement for Colm where he could enhance his Gaidhlig. As a result, the VC was able to place Colm with Cothrom.



Colm was able to assist with a vast array of tasks, from development of the Gaidhlig website, helping to teach Gaidhlig, to assisting in a number of local one off events, such as the Mini Gaidhlig Highland Games, and the Daliburgh 10k. Since Colm's time volunteering at Cothrom, and through a number of support visits, I would say his Gaidhlig has progressed tremendously, and I found that on my visits to Cothrom, he was most definitely the walking dwelly of the organisation!!

"I've had such a great time living in Uist and I have learnt a lot about the Gaidhlig language and culture as a result of my placement, and I would have never had this opportunity if I hadn't volunteered. I have also achieved a fantastic award in the process which not only means that I have been recognised for my volunteering efforts, it will also benefit my CV. I would love to come back and do it all over again!" Colm's next adventure will take him across the water, where he will be moving to Spain for another cultural experience to work on his Spanish. Math an airish a Cholm!



IMPORTANT EMPLOYMENT LAW CHANGES TAKING EFFECT FROM 1st OCTOBER

The Equality Act 2010 - New rules aimed at banning discrimination by employers, covering areas such as recruitment, age, disability and pay, come into force.



MADD MOD



Every year tens of thousands of people get together to make a difference in their communities for Make a Difference Day, the UK's biggest day of volunteering. This year Roy Macphail of VCWI teamed up with Erica Clark and Sharon Reid of Community Education to organize some Intergenerational Community Volunteering.

With the help of Lindsay Maciver, a Nicolson Institute Gaelic Teacher who works closely with the Nicolson Mod participants, we recruited 14 talented individuals to perform in three local care facilities in Stornoway on Saturday 30th October.

Both service users and staff at Alzheimer Scotland, Dun Eisdan and Dun Berisay were thoroughly entertained by a variety of beautiful performances. Roy Macphail from the Volunteer Centre said 'Each song was supported by an abundance of foot tapping and smiles, before finishing in thankful applause; it really was an excellent day'. Afterward the performers were invited to socialise with the service users and enjoy some refreshments.

Erica Clark from Community Education said 'those I spoke to loved watching the Mod on the TV, so they really appreciated the opportunity to see these talented individuals perform live'.



Our thanks must go to Jonathan Fairgrieve (Bayble Primary School), Alison Macinnes, Katy Graham, Iain Macdonald, Graeme MacLennan, Hayley Macaskill, Daisy Nash, Louisa Barron, Emily Connor, Elizabeth Anderson, Mischa Macpherson, Anna Mackenzie, Hannah Knight and Kathleen Macdonald for their performances.

“Precautionary Principle” sees PVG Scheme postponed

The introduction of the PVG Scheme has been postponed until February 2011 to ensure the system which supports it is as robust as it can be before it goes live.

Children's Minister, Adam Ingram, announced the postponement on 3 November 2010 following advice from the PVG Scheme Programme Board. The scheme had been scheduled to go live on 30 November 2010. More information is available at

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/children-families/pvglegislation/News>

PVG Scheme Help Service: 0870 609 6006

PVG Scheme Email: pvg.enquiries@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

www.infoscotland.com/pvgscheme





Make a Difference Day In Uist



Every year, thousands of volunteers and organisations take part in CSV Make a Difference Day, which provides the perfect opportunity to make a difference where you live by arranging projects and events.

This year, the Volunteer Centre arranged a community renovation project to take place, and provide a local community with something new and exciting. In

Lochboisdale, one building in particular was in serious need of a face lift, and one which has often been seen as an eyesore in the local community. This was therefore the perfect opportunity to do something about it! In partnership with the South Uist Youth Development Group's junior youth club, I arranged to visit the club and share my thoughts of MADD and the building in need of a make over, which the children were really excited to hear about and eager to volunteer their services in making a difference in the community. MacAulays Askernish (Ltd) were happy to assist, and kindly donated paint and brushes to start this project. Macaulays Askernish (Ltd) also donated coloured paint, so that the young volunteers could add their personal touch to the building.

A total of 18 children attend this project, and have painted the building white, and will have the opportunity to add a bit of colour to the building in the next few weeks. This also sparked a lot of local interest, and the community were very pleased, not just to see the building being painted, but to see the children being actively involved in community projects. Parents also provided some positive feedback:



"It's great that they are able to get involved with these activities. It gives them a sense of identity and ownership of the building rather than it collecting rubbish"

Funding secured for new Volunteer Management Project

The Volunteer Centre Western Isles is pleased to have secured £7,000 funding from THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT AND THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY LEADER INNSE GALL 2007 - 2013 PROGRAMME towards the development of its new Volunteer Management Programme. Through the programme the Volunteer Centre Western Isles hopes to develop a range of new services relating to the management of Volunteers. The programme is also funded by Sight Action and the Volunteer Centre Western Isles and will be piloted for the first year with Sight Action. Sight Action is about to open a Sensory Resource Centre for people affected by deafness or blindness in Stornoway and hope to develop services throughout the Western Isles in the future. The Volunteer Centre Western Isles will begin recruiting volunteers on behalf of Sight Action to assist with the running of the new Sensory Resource Centre in the New Year. "Sight Action approached us for help with getting themselves ready to use volunteers and asked if we would consider managing their volunteers for them." Explains Terri Davies Volunteer Centre Manager "The VC currently offers free but limited services to organisations, the service of fully managing and supervising volunteers on behalf of another organisation is completely new." The Volunteer Management Programme is a range of services/products relating to the management of volunteers that can be purchased by local organisations and will run as a pilot for the first year.



CO-CHEANGAL INNSE GALL SET UP



New Third Sector Partnership

A new partnership of Third Sector intermediaries in the Western Isles has been signed and has been approved by the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership.

The five Partners, Voluntary Action Barra and Vatersay, Harris Voluntary Service, Volunteering Hebrides, Volunteer Centre Western Isles and Outer Hebrides Social Economy Partnership have come together as Co-cheangal Innse Gall (Linking the Outer Hebrides) to support and develop the Third Sector in the Outer Hebrides.

The initiative was taken as a response to changes in the way that Scottish Government will fund organisations post April 2011. At present the three Councils for Voluntary Service (Barra, Uist and Lewis, and Harris), the Volunteer Centre and the Social Economy Partnership are individually funded by Scottish Government. From April 2011 a single pot of funding will come to each Local Authority area to be distributed among the intermediary organisations.

The Partnership will now work together strategically to deliver the four main objectives of the agreement throughout the Outer Hebrides, ie

- Develop volunteering
- Develop Social Enterprise
- Support and develop a strong third sector
- Build the third sector relationship with community planning.

The individual partners will retain their independence and will continue to deliver the services they currently provide, but will be able to do so more efficiently, by avoiding duplication and being able to call on each other's areas of expertise.

The Chair and secretariat of the Partnership will rotate on a yearly basis. The first Chair is the Volunteer Centre, Western Isles and the first secretary is Harris Voluntary Service. Speaking on behalf of the Partnership, Kirsty Macdonald, Volunteer Centre (Chair) said, "We are all delighted to have reached this significant milestone and look forward to working together for the good of the Outer Hebrides in the years ahead. I would also like to thank the Community Planning Partnership for their assistance in getting us to this point." Speaking on behalf of the Community Planning Partnership, Chairman Councillor Angus Campbell said "We are all very conscious of the contribution that the voluntary sector makes to the lives of people in the Outer Hebrides and this is likely to increase in the difficult times ahead. The Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership look forward to working with Co-Cheangal Innse Gall."



HARRIS WOMEN'S DAY 2010

Women from Harris and Lewis took part in a Women's Day in the Scaladale Centre Recently where they were able to experience a range of different activities. One participant commented "Felt a bit shy at first as I didn't know many people but everyone was very friendly. I hope there will be a repeat next year."



Activities included dance, reflexology, cookery demonstrations, archery and making Harris Tweed poppies (the group raised £86 towards the poppy appeal). The overall consensus of opinion put the archery as the best activity of the day.



Community Education and The Volunteer Centre Western Isles would like to thank the following for donating gifts/ vouchers and information leaflets towards the gift bags presented to all the women who attended. The Harris Hotel, Borgh Pottery, Kim Thomson, Boots, Callandish Candles, Body and Sole, Superdrug, Beautilicious, An Lanntair, Waste Aware, A&M Therapies, WeeW, The Cooperative, Tesco, Volunteer Centre, Health Promotion, Alcohol Awareness, Spors Nis.

Invitation to VOLNET meeting

Tuesday 1st February 2011 12.30-2pm

The Volunteer Centre Western Isles are hosting an opportunity for volunteer organisations to get together to exchange information and have a good chat. There will be a general update on the work of the Volunteer Centre. If you have any news or information you wish to share please bring it along.

Please let us know if you wish to join us so we can provide the correct number of sandwiches. 01851 700366 admin@volunteeringwesternisles.co.uk



New Funding Round 'Connecting Generations' Micro Grants.



The Scottish Centre for Intergenerational Practice (Generations Working Together) provides funding to stimulate projects that demonstrate good practice and innovation in intergenerational activities in Scotland. The Spring 2010 Micro Grant funding round had over 150 applications, of which 53 projects were funded. The Autumn 2010 micro grant is now open for proposals. There will be a limited number of grants of £250 to £750 through our one-off Micro Grants Programme. Please download the application pack for details of how to apply from our web site at: <http://www.scotcip.org.uk/funding.html>

You can receive regular updates from the Scottish Centre for Intergenerational Practice by joining the Scottish Intergenerational Network. Joining the Network is free, and you will receive the regular Newsletter, information on funding, meetings, new publications and updates on research and examples of best practice. To join, simply email or write with details of your name, organisation and address.

Scottish Centre for Intergenerational Practice
c/o Centre for Lifelong Learning, University of Strathclyde
40 George Street, Glasgow G1 1QE Tel: 0141 548 2492
Email: scipadmin@strath.ac.uk

Western Isles Award for Volunteering Excellence WAVE U16

Jack Nelson is a remarkable young man; at the age of 13 he took it upon himself to contact the Volunteer Centre to ask if he could book an appointment to discuss volunteer opportunities! During the interview I was struck by his maturity and desire to help people. He felt that Alzheimer Scotland would be an ideal place for him.

Katie Macpherson, Service Manager at Alzheimer Scotland Lewis and Harris Branch, allowed Jack to begin a volunteer placement with them stating: 'On Jack's first day he walked in, took off his jacket and started doing the dishes! Since then he has been a brilliant volunteer, his company is enjoyed by both our service users, volunteers and staff'.

Since March 2010 he has been attending the Solas Day Centre on Saturdays and during the holidays. He has built up an excellent relationship with the service users and become a dependable volunteer. Jack has accumulated over 200 volunteer hours with Alzheimer Scotland, an incredible feat in such a short time. On Saturday 4th December I was delighted to visit the Day Centre and present Jack with his WAVE Awards for 25, 50 and 100 hours.

Jack was delighted to receive the Awards, when asked if he would encourage other young people to volunteer he said: 'I like to be able to help instead of being selfish; I think others would enjoy this and get some good experience'.

