

Opt-in

Options
Support | Empower | Enable
Living life to the full!

Options for Supported Living Newsletter | Winter 2016/2017

Supporting people with
disabilities to live their
lives to the full!

MASQUERADE PARTY!
Get the date in your diary

A FESTIVE ROUND-UP

**WHY DO WE HAVE A
CHARITY OF THE YEAR?**

NEW WEBSITE!

Find out more
on page 2

Welcome, and happy New Year!

Richard's Reflections

I'm hoping to spend some time with every one of our staff teams as part of their team meetings in 2017. My first was today and it was a real encouragement. I want to hear from teams what is working well and not so well in Options and their suggestions for improving things. I also want to have the opportunity to say thank you for the great work they do, day in day out, week in week out, right through Christmas and the New Year.

The team I met support two men who Options have supported for over 20 years, and the team had over 56 years of experience between them. Sometimes providing that support can be really difficult but they stick in there and make it work.

They are a great and varied bunch. Their meeting was full of banter and leg pulling, and I was pleased to hear they have no significant gripes about their work. Our staff are the core, the heart, of what we do. In their words they do it because it is their vocation, and the difference these 6 people have made to the lives of the two men is immeasurable.

It is really important for me at the start of a new year to say thank you to all our great staff for the wonderful support they provide and for the wonderful work they do - for the lives changed because of who they are.

Richard



Brand new website!

If you haven't heard about our new website, where have you been? It's now live and bursting with fresh updates including news, blogs, stories, photos and useful information. So, why not check it out now at www.optionsforsupportedliving.org and share it with your friends and family.

We wanted our new website to reflect our culture – the uniqueness and personality of Options, and achieve greater accessibility for our wide ranging audience. We also wanted our new website to capture the different types of support we provide, reflect the full lives that people are already leading, and be a platform for people to engage with.

We hope there is something for everyone. You can find links to our social media channels too, like Facebook and Twitter. We will be constantly updating our content, but we need everyone's help!



We're on the lookout for different people to blog, share news and write features about different aspects of Options. So if you've got a knack for writing, or have a great idea you'd like to share, please let our Marketing and Culture Assistant Liz know at lmartin@optionsforsupportedliving.org to get involved.

We'd also love to hear your feedback about our new website, so please don't hesitate to get in touch! Again, you can email Liz or call our Reception on 0151 236 0855 to let us know what you think.

Visit our new website at
www.optionsforsupportedliving.org

Q&A with Jennie, Team Leader

Jennie has worked for Options for over 6 years and is currently Team Leader for Eammon and Les who both live in Sefton. She has also become the Team Leader for the ISSWs (inter-service support workers) recently. We caught up with Jennie with our quick question round-up to see what makes her tick.



1. What's the best thing about being ISSW Team Leader?

Having the opportunity to see the great support the ISSW team bring, and hearing about this from other Team Leaders and different teams, impacting on so many people's lives.

2. Tell us about the best outcome you have supported someone to achieve?

Eammon getting better and being able to come home out of hospital.

3. What's been your highlight since joining Options?

When George was supported to stay living in his own house.

4. What is number one on your bucket list?

To go to New York!

5. What are you excited about this year?

The new arrival of our grandchild.

6. If you could have a chat over a cup of tea with someone from history, who would it be?

Marilyn Monroe!

7. If you could change one thing about the world what would it be?

To make it less judgmental and make peace.

8. What's the most recent thing that made you smile?

Our daughter running towards me for a hug as I walked through the door... even though she is 18!

9. What piece of advice would you give to someone who was starting out in support work?

To be yourself, but to always put yourself in others shoes.

Remembering Tommy

Tommy, who we supported for over 5 years, sadly passed away in October last year. Jill, Tommy's Team Leader, reflected on the time in which he was supported by Options and the great person that he was.

"Tommy loved to be out and about, going for a walk or a drive. He also loved Wednesdays when he would have a guitar lesson with Paul, singing the songs he loved. He had a lovely voice, and if you asked him, he would sing for you. Distant Drums by Jim Reeves was a particular favourite and his voice would warm the coldest heart when he sang it.

'Can I have a cup of tea please? Two sugars...and a biscuit, two biscuits, chocolate biscuits please, thank you' it's safe to say a cup of tea was his absolute favourite! He also enjoyed going to work and lived for his pay day – "I used to make seed boxes you know." Every Friday he would come home with his wage packet, run upstairs and put it straight in his money tin.

Tommy was a gentlemen in every sense of the word. But most of all, Tommy loved living where he did, and everyone who does and did live there. You were a pleasure to know and support and will definitely be missed by all your friends at Options."



What we've been up to...

With so much happening across Options, we've brought you a snapshot of some of the things we've been doing...

Staff and people we support from Sefton got together in December for a big Christmas meal! Here's Eammon, Marie, Les and Mary.



Dave went to Manchester over Christmas



Cheese and Wine Evening

At Options we're artists, photographers, musicians, gardeners and so much more, so we held a celebration evening to showcase people's talents. We had live music from Matt who sang and played guitar, and Chris DJ'ed for us. Tessa, Gaby, Craig, Tom, Ricky and Chris performed a selection of songs from their Sing and Sign group which features Makaton sign. We've never held an event like this before, so it was great to see the office bustling, people showcasing their talent, and everyone enjoying the delicious cheese and wine also!



Some of the people we support who live in Birkenhead threw a Halloween party together with all the works



Karen enjoyed dressing up as a witch for Halloween



Elaine and Margi went to the Childwall Fiveways Pub to celebrate Tim's 40th Birthday



Liverpool Links Halloween Party

Liverpool Links, who we work in partnership with, threw a Halloween party at its weekly coffee morning, and lots of people we support went along to join in. They went all out with their fancy dress costumes to compete for the title of Best Dressed, with Irene scooping the winning title dressed as a Goblin! There were lots of different things happening including pumpkin carving and games. Lots of genuine friendships have developed among people we support as a result of going along to the regular coffee mornings, and people have been making plans to socialize together during the rest of the week.



Green Screen Project

Staff and people we support have dedicated their time and energy to a gardening development project at Rake Lane Cemetery, Wirral.

They have transformed the area which now features a green screen. It looks a lot more loved and cared for now and can be better used as a space for local people. People we support and staff have got involved in a range of different tasks including raking, planting and cleaning.

Those who dedicated their time to the project have been thanked for their work by the Secretary of the Friends of Rake Lane Cemetery, Kevin Webb.

“ Thank you and your organisation for the part you played in the enhancement of the cremated remains area in the cemetery. It's a big improvement and I am sure will be much appreciated by those who have loved ones interred that area. ”

- Kevin Webb

Voices R Us

Voices R Us is just one of the ways people we support can give their important feedback about how things are going with their support. All feedback, good and bad, is sent to Richard and our Trustees to follow up.

A group of people we support who live in Wirral have took to organising and hosting the Voices R Us sessions themselves in their own home. The group had a friendly, informal meeting and gave their feedback over a cup of tea, choosing topics of discussion and making notes.

They brought along photos of themselves to create a storyboard and get to know each other even better.



Here's Ste, Brian, Jimmy and Sue getting stuck in along with people from Mencap.



Our Charity of the Year

Angela abseiled down the Anglican Cathedral to raise money!



Why if we're a Charity, do we have a Charity of the Year?

I've had the unique experience of being both a recipient of Options Charity of the Year fund-raising (as a Trustee of The Candice Colley Foundation) and recently actively co-ordinating the latest fund-raising for Sahir House. When I first heard about Options being a charity but also raising money for other charities, I was a bit confused (in the days before I joined Options as an employee). However, my first experience of Options was to go along to a bag-packing event at Tesco in Bidston. There I met some people we support bag packing and raising money.

Since then, I've seen people we support take on challenges (Wirral Coastal Walk and the Santa Dash), run stalls at events (selling their produce including homemade jam and cakes) and donate money (saving coppers in a jar or buying raffle tickets). This has really brought home to me how much it means to people to be able to 'give back' to their community and people in need. We sometimes forget that all of us have a built in need to connect and feel part of something bigger than ourselves. It feels especially important to have our Charity of the Year as an avenue to do this in the world as it is

at the moment, and I am glad that our Trustees support such an aim. So far in the past 4 years we have raised over £14,000 for our different charities. We are due to change our charity at the end of March and will soon be looking for nominations for a new Charity of the Year. If you're interested in nominating a charity or doing some fund-raising then please get in touch with me in the office.

Angela

Kate and Marie both helped to staff our pop-up charity shops. Here's Kate sorting donations in December. This latest venture raised an incredible £781 for Sahir House.



Options 1940's Tea Dance

We put on our dancing shoes and stepped back in time to the 1940's at our first ever tea dance. Taking advantage of the wide sprung dancefloor, the event was held at the Florrie in Liverpool. People we support and staff enjoyed live music from local jazz band The Blue Magnolias.

It was brilliant to learn some new steps and do partner work for dances including the Charleston and Lindy Hop instructed by professional dance teachers at Mersey Swing, a local dance Charity. You can't have a tea dance without afternoon tea, so we enjoyed a selection of sandwiches, cakes and the tea was flowing – dancing is thirsty work! Our first ever tea dance was a relaxed, fun afternoon to meet up and try something new.



Here's Michael who got stuck in with learning the new steps with his dance partner, Helen, from Mersey Swing.

Christmas Party!

We all got together at St. Joseph's Centre in Birkenhead to round off the year and enjoy some festive fun. The room was bustling with lots of people including staff, people we support, volunteers, families and friends of Options. We enjoyed live music from band Monty Duo, lots of dancing, a delicious buffet, fantastic raffle prizes, and this year we were treated to a photo booth. As you can imagine, this provided hours of fun and we have the evidence to prove it (see below!) What was fantastic about the evening was the mixture of people who came along and enjoyed a good party together - that's really important to us at Options.



Children's Christmas Party!

It wouldn't be Christmas without a children's Christmas party! So we treated children and grandchildren of staff to a Christmas party - an Options tradition. Held at Our Lady's Parish Centre in Birkenhead, it was a really magical afternoon complete with a children's entertainer, soft play, and our very own grotto! It was lovely to see so many families enjoying themselves, and each child received a present from Father Christmas.

A massive thank you to those members of staff who helped out including Alan and Emma. We worked with Huyton Air Cadets with several of their members volunteering on the day. Emma, Personnel Assistant at Options and Civilian Instructor at the Squadron reflected on the day "We had a great afternoon, and what a brilliant way for our Squadron to help out our local community. Thanks for having us!".



Santa Dash

A group of people we support and staff donned their red and blue Santa suits and headed to Liverpool city centre to take part in the yearly Liverpool Santa Dash. Braving the weather on a cold winter's December morning, they completed the 5km course to raise money for our charity of the year, Sahir House. Well done to all our Santas who got involved and helped out a great claus!



Here's Sue, John, Barbara, Mike, Nikki and Tony ready to set off for the race

Our Christmas Advent Calendar

We debuted our first ever advent calendar and it went down a treat! Starting on the 1st December right up until Christmas Day, we opened a door each day to reveal one lucky member of staff who was the winner of an extra-special Christmas gift from everyone at Options. All staff were entered into the advent calendar and we had a whole host of prizes including cinema vouchers, luxury hampers, a Fitbit and a glamping experience trip! It's something we've never done before, so it was a nice way to get into the spirit of Christmas, and recognise our fantastic staff. Here's a selection of some of our lucky winners.



A different person each day opened a door, here's Sam doing her bit!



John was the winner of the digital camera



Here's Ann collecting her prize, she won Afternoon Tea vouchers for two people



Helen was the lucky winner of the FitBit



Esther won a deluxe Thorntons chocolate Christmas hamper



Adele won a luxury Christmas hamper



Paul won Sunday lunch for two people at 30 James Street Hotel

.....
" It made mine and my family's Christmas extra special. It was a lovely surprise, thank you! "
.....

Dates for your Diary

Valentine's Masquerade Party

We'll be getting together to celebrate the most romantic time of the year, date or no date! It's on Wednesday 15th February, 7.30pm til late, at The Silvestrian Club, Silvester Street, L5 8SE, Liverpool. Dress code: black tie, plus don't forget your mask!

Graffiti Art Project Sessions - open to anyone!

We will be running sessions again with local company Zap Graffiti, where people can explore graffiti as an art form, learning new techniques and creating pieces *. Just pop along to the sessions which will be held on 17th February, 24th February, 3rd March and 10th March, 1 - 3pm at 9 Oldham Place, Liverpool, L1 2SU in the city centre. If you would like more information, please contact Sue Hutchinson in the office on 0151 236 0855.

* The sessions are open to people we support and anyone from other organisations who want to get involved - so spread the word!