

S.I.S

SELF INJURY SUPPORT
IN NORTH CUMBRIA

Registered Charity No: 1106750

SIS News

Welcome to SIS News

Welcome to the Summer issue of SIS News! In this edition we're pleased to tell you what an amazing success the "Walk for Dave" and other associated fundraising activities have been. We are extremely grateful to Maria, Phil, and Ollie Tuck and their extended family and friends for their support. The money raised (amazingly over £15K so far - [see page 3!](#)) will go a long way in achieving our aims of spreading awareness about self-harm and associated issues (particularly in schools) and in providing support to those who self-harm in North Cumbria.

In this issue I talk about my personal experiences of visiting Maytree, a truly amazing charity in London which helps those in suicidal despair.

We're very pleased to welcome Carla Searle to the board of trustees. As ever we're still looking for volunteers, so please get in touch if you're interested in joining our board!

Mary Hillery (Chair)

Walk for Dave!



On Sunday 2nd May at least 128 friends and family of Dave Tuck (aged from 2-80) took part in a sponsored walk from **Askham (near Penrith) to Arthur's Pike, in memory and celebration of Dave's life** which his mother Maria told the story of in the previous issue of "SIS News".

The weather was kind, dry, although a bit chilly at the top of the hill but with some fantastic views! Representing SIS were Steve, Ruth and Mary, and counsellors David, Helene and Marita and family members.

For many of the walkers there then followed a much needed pint of beer at the Queens Head in Askham, and in the early evening a superb

Issue 8

July-Sept 2010

Inside this
Issue:

[Walk for Dave](#) [1-2](#)

[Notice Board](#) [3](#)

[Conferences that SIS has recently attended](#) [4-5](#)

[New Trustee](#) [5](#)

[Maytree - a sanctuary for the suicidal](#) [6-7](#)

[Training Update](#) [8](#)

Contact Us:

Self-Injury Support
in North Cumbria
Ruth Lax
(Service Coordinator)
2 Lowthians Lane,
Carlisle,
Cumbria CA3 8JR
Tel:01228
525705/515500
www.sis-cumbria.co.uk
ruth@sis-cumbria.co.uk

With thanks to our funders.

  LOTTERY FUNDED
 Lloyds TSB | Foundation for England and Wales



barbeque at Hay Close, our thanks for wonderful hospitality go to Richard and Alison Field.

A special mention to Sonia and Olivia who raised over £1,500 and received matched funding from Barclays which was awesome! Thanks to you both, your sponsors and to Barclays.

In addition, several other fundraising activities took place including Jim Winter completing 16 lengths of Penrith Swimming Pool on Sunday 25th April, and a Darts Night on May 1st at the Druids Arms in Penrith, both wonderful efforts, again thank you.

Another special mention and thanks to Lesley Humphries and Jacquie Dixon who, although they were unable to make the main walk, each did their own version on the day. Lesley did a cliff walk from Roker in Sunderland to Marsden Rocks in South Shields and Jacquie did a field walk, complete with dogs near Newmarket.

Eric and Liz Allonby will be doing their C2C Bike Ride in July on behalf of a Walk for Dave, we thank them for all their wonderful efforts and wish them well for a good journey. A huge thank you also to Clare Winter for organising the **"Concert for Dave" on 11th September** ([see Noticeboard](#)).



The assembled walkers!

As a direct result of media coverage of the "Walk for Dave" SIS has been contacted by people struggling with self-harm who are now receiving much-needed counselling.

On June 9th Ruth and Steve had a meeting with Cheryl Wood from the Cumbrian Youth Alliance, who is the Project Manager for a major schools mental health initiative called JOY (Journey of Youth) to promote emotional wellbeing, which is being launched in September.



Steve, Ruth & David at the top!

The CYA are an umbrella organisation for all youth related 3rd sector organisations in Cumbria, and they have strong links with every Cumbrian secondary school, who are very keen to accept any educational input from the CYA. Cheryl feels that SIS can make a vital contribution to this initiative, which will involve 2 hour presentations to all 12-13 year old pupils in Cumbria. The main thrust of these presentations will be to develop emotional resilience, raise awareness of bullying issues, how to cope with self harm and mental health problems, and to ensure that the pupils know that there is support available from organisations such as SIS.

This is a long term project, minimum five year term, which SIS believes is an ideal opportunity for us to promote and maximise all of the intended outcomes of the 'Walk for Dave' fundraising.

Further updates on the 'Walk for Dave' and associated events in the next issue of SIS News!

Steve

Notice Board



Concert for Dave!

We are pleased to announce the 'Concert for Dave', a performance by the Northumbrian Water Ellington Colliery Brass Band, which will be held at Carlisle Cathedral on September 11th. Please contact Steve for further information about this concert and how to book tickets. All money raised will contribute towards the "Walk for Dave" fundraising efforts.



Ellington Colliery Band



Tudor Trust Funding

SIS are pleased to announce our continued support from the Tudor Trust. SIS are extremely grateful to the Tudor Trust for their support over the past six years, including times of extreme financial difficulty for SIS.



5000 visitors to SIS website!

Since re-launching our website (www.sis-cumbria.co.uk) in March 2009 we've received over 5000 unique visitors, quite an achievement we hope you'll agree!

Walk for Dave Money Raised

Breakdown of money raised so far:

Everyclick Donations -	£7231.00
Everyclick Give as You Live -	£541.90
Cash / Cheque / BACS Donations -	£3828.70
Barclays Matched Funding to date -	£1500.00
Gift Aid -	<u>£2768.73</u>
 A Grand Total to date of	 <u>£15870.33</u>

Remember you can still donate by visiting www.everyclick.com/selfinjurysupportinnorthcumbria/info



Think Family Conference

On 20th May Ruth attended on behalf of SIS the first Think Family Conference at Rheged, Penrith. This was an opportunity to explore the Department of Children, Schools and Families Think Family agenda, for Cumbria Supporting Children and Families Services to support staff in integrated working with the Whole Family, Children, Young People and Adults, Parenting and Relationships and to develop local practice and share initiatives in Cumbria.

We were welcomed by Ged Campion - **Strategic Manager Child & Family Support, Children's Services Cumbria**. Moira Swann - **Corporate Director, Children's Services, Cumbria County Council** gave presentation about Think Family in Cumbria - the need for a coherent agenda to be **driven within Children's Trust Board, developing systems to meet needs and improve outcomes** for families in Cumbria.

Martin Narey - Chief Executive of Barnardos gave a presentation about Think Family and the challenges for the 3rd sector - he focused on Think Family and Family Intervention Projects (FIPS) and gave an overview of the care system, how it has evolved and changed to present day. Highlighting the common theme in these scenario as disadvantage.

Professor John Ashton CBE, Director of Public Health and County Medical Officer, Cumbria gave presentation on Think Family and the health dimension. Talked about change in dynamics of families and viewing the big challenges facing us today as opportunities to do things differently.

Ruth

1st Annual Leadership Conference

On 27th May Ruth attended the 1st annual Leadership Conference at Castle Green in Kendal **hosted by Cumbria Children's Trust. Entitled Leading Change in Cumbria the focus was 'Improving Outcomes for all Children, Young People and Families'**.

Keynote presentations were made by:

Dr Maggie Atkinson, Children's Commissioner for England, who advocated motivating and empowering your team to listen to children. She introduced children from several Cumbrian schools who were invited to enlighten all as to their views on what they felt was important to them. She also highlighted the problem of the poor mental health of young offenders.

Professor Dame Patricia Collarbone, founding Director of the London Leadership Centre at the Institute of Education, University of London. The Professor talked about determined leadership, understanding how to make things happen and most interestingly how to transform talking shops into powerhouses.

In the afternoon keynote speakers, Professor John Ashton, Director of Public Health, NHS **Cumbria and Children's Trust Board members formed a panel for a debate section of the**

conference chaired by Moira Swan and Ruth tabled a question: 'Given that psychological fitness is as important to life as physical fitness, to what extent did panel think children's and young people's emotional wellbeing is given enough focus, whatever the setting.'

All the panellists agreed this should be a significant priority, however did not offer an opinion on the current situation.

Young people from The Lakes school gave a presentation about their participation in the 'The Rock Challenge' project and introduced a video of their performance.

Ruth

'Can you hear my story?' Conference

On 17th June Ruth and Mary attended "Can you hear my story?", a conference at the University of Cumbria run by the Faculty of Health, Medical Sciences and Social Care, and attended primarily by nursing students.

In the morning there was an excellent (and entertaining) keynote speech from Peter Bullimore about his experiences of psychosis. Ruth then attended Peter's workshop while Mary went to the Personality Disorder workshop, hearing the experiences of two ladies caring for their partners with personality disorders.



Following lunch where SIS had a stand, distributing our publications, there was a keynote speech by Sue Baker, director of the "Time to Change" programme which was very interesting. To find out more about this excellent campaign (you might well have seen the adverts in the media already) and to pledge your support, visit www.time-to-change.org.uk

In the afternoon workshops Ruth heard Heather Foster speak about her experiences of recovering from psychosis, and Mary enjoyed attending the Carlisle Eden Mind workshop about Stigma and Mental Health.

Mary

New Trustee!



We are pleased to announce that Carla Searle is the latest addition to the SIS board of trustees. Carla moved to Cumbria just over a year ago and works as a Youth Volunteer Advisor with the involved team based in Carlisle. In her spare time she enjoys walking, cycling, knitting and travelling the country going to gigs. She also volunteers on the bar at the West Walls Theatre in Carlisle and as a Conservation Holiday Leader with the BTCV.

Maytree - a sanctuary for the suicidal



It's not a secret that 2010 hasn't been the best year of my life so far (that's an understatement!), and it's not a secret that I have a history of mental health problems including self-harm (hence why I volunteer for SIS), so it's unsurprising really that my recent life events have had a negative impact on my mental health.

I first became aware of Maytree last year when watching a DVD about self-harm created by the organisation 'Harmless' (www.harmless.org.uk), however at the time I never even considered that it would be a place that I would visit myself, especially not in the near future. Back in 2009 you see suicide was the last thing on my mind.

Having remembered Maytree from the Harmless DVD it was Ruth who first suggested that I think about going and after convincing me that it might not be such a bad idea (Ruth tells me that my initial reaction was an adamant "NO!") and got in contact with them on my behalf. Having reassured me that the man she spoke to was very nice, I took the plunge the next day and called them myself, and thus began my relationship with Maytree which albeit brief has in many ways changed my life.

I have written a detailed account of my experiences of Maytree and published it online on review writing sites entitled "Marymoose goes on an epic journey" (Marymoose is my online name since I have a thing for moose - just don't ask!), and although I still don't feel that my words can really do it justice, I've had a good attempt. So if you have time to spare and want to find out more you can read it here - www.ciao.co.uk/http://www.maytree.org.uk/Review/5913785

In the meantime what I write here is a (very) condensed version. But I hope that by publicising my experiences in as many ways as possible that I can draw attention to what is a truly amazing (and life-saving) place in the hope that readers will remember the name and pass it onto those they come into contact with who might benefit from it. Maytree are bound to know it's me who's responsible when they start to receive numerous enquiries from those up in Cumbria!

I should point out that Maytree is in London. It is also currently the only place of its kind in the UK. But don't let location put you off, Maytree welcomes guests from all over the UK. In the scheme of things London is only a train or car-ride away, and if it is a case of life or death, well I don't see that distance should really be a factor to consider. That said, I'm from Essex myself and pretty accustomed to London, so perhaps it was easier for me than it might be for others, especially arriving there on my own. However, I know that I'd be happy to accompany any one of my friends or family members to Maytree's door no matter what distance, if it could potentially save their life.

General information about Maytree and what it's all about can be found at their website - www.maytree.org.uk To give a brief overview, Maytree is a house in London (Finsbury Park) where those who are suicidal can visit for a stay of up to 4 nights (it is encouraged to stay for the full time, although guests can leave whenever they choose). Maytree is a charity, and visiting doesn't cost anything. Due to the nature of suicidal crises visits can be arranged pretty quickly. A guest will have an informal 'assessment' beforehand (either in person at Maytree, or over the phone if coming from a

distance) to assess if Maytree is the right place for them. It is not going to be suitable for everyone, for instance those with drug/alcohol problems, as there is a strict no drugs/alcohol (aside from prescription drugs) policy at Maytree,

Maytree has up to 4 guests at any one time (there was myself and two other ladies during my stay) over the age of 18, coming from all walks of life and with very different life experiences, but with one thing in common - suicidal feelings.

Due to the nature of Maytree guests can only ever visit once and after leaving, aside from a 'goodbye' letter and a follow-up phonecall, there is no ongoing contact. This might be too hard for some people to handle. Even before I got to Maytree I was talking to them on the phone about what would happen when I left, and what support I have in place back at home.

During my time at Maytree I met so many interesting and lovely people, both staff and volunteers - probably about 30-40 people. There is a LOT of coming and going at Maytree. There are always **two volunteers on 'duty' even at night, so there is ALWAYS someone** to talk to, and there is a constant stream of hot drinks being made. It was so reassuring just to know that people cared, just because they are caring people, that really touched me.



Me in Maytree's garden

Most of my time at Maytree was spent talking, both to the volunteers (I found that the steady stream in and out of volunteers meant I could go through the same story again and again without **thinking I'd be boring anyone!**) and in the 'counselling' sessions with the directors. But also to the other two guests - **the one thing I hadn't expected before going to Maytree was the relationships** built up with the others. At some times nothing needed to be said, there was a sort of unspoken understanding. The most heart warming experience for me was watching how one of my fellow guests grew during the three days we spent together, and how discovering a talent for painting quite literally changed her life. When I asked her if she was going to continue painting when she left she answered **"I think it might have saved me"**.

My friends have noticed a change in me since my stay at Maytree. The most obvious change is that I **am no longer considering suicide (I'm not so naïve as to think that I will never have suicidal thoughts** again, but I would hope I am now better equipped to deal with them). But more than that I have a greater self-awareness and understanding of where I am coming from, and am more clear of what issues I need to explore further in therapy (and just in life in general).

A month has now passed since Maytree. I'm not pretending that my emotional struggles are over, I'm not pretending that I am no longer self-harming (because I am). However, I feel that it was a turning point in my life, and although only 4 days, it was a life changing experience. I will be eternally grateful to all at Maytree for letting me have the experience and for sharing it with me, and although very sad **to say 'goodbye' I will always have the memories with me. And rest assured I'm going to go on and on** about it to anyone who will listen in the hope that it might help someone else somewhere down the line!

Mary

Training Update!

As ever, let us remind you of the dates for training scheduled for 2010 (for up-to-date information about spaces left visit www.sis-cumbria.co.uk). Training days cost just £80 (including 0% rate VAT) and include comprehensive training materials, refreshments and lunch. Courses run from 10am-4pm (refreshments from 9:45am). Discounts are available for individuals (not from organisations), and also for group bookings.

Thursday 15th July - Moss Bay House, Workington
Tuesday 28th September - Warwick Mill Business Centre, Carlisle
Tuesday 19th October - The Beacon, Whitehaven
Thursday 25th November - CREA, Penrith

We have a wide variety of people attending our training days, including those working within the NHS (particularly in the mental health services), in schools (particularly school nurses and teaching staff), charity workers and those who have family members who self-harm, or personal experience.

We are also available to deliver in-house training sessions to groups both large and small, for days and **shorter sessions**. **Please contact Steve on 01228 515500 if you're interested in arranging training, or** if you wish to book a place on one of the dates above.

Here's just some of the excellent feedback we've received from our days so far in 2010:

I felt the course was sensitive and comprehensively dealt with SH issues and was very pleased with it in its entirety.

They covered every aspect of self harm and answered all the questions put to them.

I genuinely have a much better understanding of self harm and how my responses could affect the situation.

I found it all very interesting and very informative. I enjoyed it when there was group participation and the case studies, I enjoyed the three speakers and thought that Mary was very brave. I really enjoyed today, it was a very interesting day and I enjoyed sharing thoughts and feelings with other people.

I've found the whole day very useful. I have had experience of self harm where close friends have cut themselves - I tried my best to help and empathise but really had no conception of why they would want to do that to themselves. Today has given me an insight as to why - on a professional level, as a teacher and a foster carer, I would now feel more able to cope if I was faced with a child who was self harming - I would also know where to access further help and support if necessary.

I feel that I am full of admiration for the work SIS does but more specifically the input given by Mary, I think she is very courageous to share her personal experiences and how she is/was feeling at times of self harm.