



THE DISABILITY FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

The Disability Foundation is a Registered Charity Number 1076761

ISSUE NO. 7, SPRING 2004

IN THIS ISSUE...

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

APPEALS Campaigns, appeals and how you can help TDF

BODY, MIND & SOUL One of our thera- pists tells her story about living with an invisible disability

COMMUNITY Accessible holiday accommodation

BENEFITS & ADVICE 'Access to Work' & good websites for benefits informa- tion

NEWS ROUND UP



TDF clients invited to Dial a Ride Consultation

In a previous issue of the TDF Newsletter we called for letters and feedback on Dial a Ride and the problems you might have had with the service. Since then we have been contacted by Transport for London (TFL) who is in the process of reviewing their door to door services for people with disabilities – i.e. Dial a Ride and Taxi Card.

In July 2000 the Mayor took over the responsibility for the funding of Dial a Ride and ordered a review of how the service was organised. A growing number of users were expressing their dissatisfaction and frustration with the service. The main findings of the review were:

- Dissatisfaction with the booking system. Users could often not get through on the phone and, in some parts of London, passengers not only had to spend a long time trying to get through, but once their request has been logged, also had to wait by the telephone for confirmation of the trip.

- Restriction on travel. Under the regional system, passengers could only travel within the boundaries of their region. This meant that if you live close to a border between regions you could effectively only

travel in one direction.

- High levels of unmet demand. It is estimated that only a third of Londoners who are eligible to use Dial a Ride are actually registered with the service. Dial a Ride has been particularly unsuccessful in attracting younger people and people from ethnic minorities.

As a response to the review, TFL began to run the service in April 2002. A healthy amount of money was allocated to improve the service and introduce new facilities. Some of the changes that have been made are:

- A fleet of smaller vehicles (Mercedes V MPV) has been modified to include easy access seating for ambulant passengers and one wheelchair position will be introduced after evaluation by Dial a Ride staff and users.
(continued on p. 6)



chairman's letter

This is my first letter of 2004 (well, in this Newsletter, anyway!). I don't know about you, but it takes ages to remember to change the last digit - well into February I am still writing 2003 on my cheques....well, I write and then scribble out!!! My husband's answer is not to write cheques...and stop spending!!!!.

First things first - I would like to wish you all a HEALTHY happy 2004!!! I hope you all had a good Christmas, Chanukah or Divali...and managed to have some rest between shopping, eating and washing up.

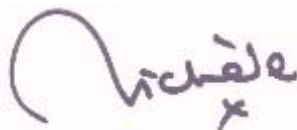
I think that this is the time to seriously decide that we either have to resist the sweet temptation of chocolate and cakes OR I, personally, will have to have my mouth surgically sewn up. My clothes are all creaking at the seams - Christmas killed me and the way the months run so quickly into each other, it will be swim-suit time soon!!!

We had such a busy end of year that we decided to have our Staff Christmas Party in January, as we thought it would give us all something to look forward to. So we booked a very large table at San Marco Restaurant in Hatch End and I can tell you, it was a great laugh. The food there is delicious too and the set meal is not expensive either- we really recommend it!

It has been another hectic fundraising time, as you will see from the Fundraising page and I am working on some more ways to bring money in to the charity. Will let you know more in the next issue..

Let's hope that the Spring will be bright and warm - and we look forward to welcoming you all here again soon. There is nothing like a good massage, Reiki or other treatment to lift the spirits and improve the circulation. We await your smiles and stories.....

With my love



Nichole
x

appeals

Generous Company Giving

In December we were enormously fortunate when two companies chose The Disability Foundation to be the charity supported by raffles and auctions at events at the end of the year.

POLESTAR held raffles for the benefit of TDF at two events in November and December and the company generously rounded up the amounts raised, to £2,000! TDF is most thankful.

COMMERZBANK held a raffle and an auction at their End of Year Party. They raised an unbelievable amount of money and we are delighted and extremely grateful to them.

Both **POLESTAR** and **COMMERZBANK** are patrons of The Disability Foundation and we are both proud and pleased that they have chosen to support the important work we do here

Fabulous Theatre Night

In November we took over the whole of The New End Theatre in Hampstead for a fundraising evening. The play was called "Take a Chance on Me" which was both hilarious and also soul-searching with sorrowful resilience and serious social criticism. The subject of "love the second time around" was navigated by ex-husbands and wives, unhappily marrieds, singles and widows, with the six finally brought together at a North London Speed Dating event to plot the course of their lives in just three

minutes. The cast was first class with Helen Lederer, Alan Francis, Candida Gubbins, Georgina Hale, Joe McGann, Patrick Pearson, Eric Richard and Gwyneth Strong. We had delicious Danish and Doughnuts in the interval - those of you who know us at The Disability Foundation, know that we are never without food!!!!

We raised good money whilst really enjoying the event. The phonecalls I received afterwards all said that this was one of the best plays they had ever seen!!!

Going to the Movies

In January we took the whole cinema at Baker Street (100 seats which we had to fill!!!) and saw "The Girl with the Pearl Earring". This was a best seller written by Tracey Chevalier and starred the gorgeous Colin Firth and beautiful Scarlett Johansson. The story is about the mystery surrounding one of the best-loved paintings in the world. It tells the story of a young Dutch girl who becomes maid in the

house of the painter Johannes Vermeer and how she has to contend with the growing attentions of Vermeer; how she becomes part of her master's work and how their growing intimacy spreads disruption and jealousy within the ordered household and even - as the scandal seeps out - ripples in the world beyond.

Another successful event and enjoyable too!!

Giving through your SA return.

From April 2004 it is possible to nominate The Disability Foundation to receive your tax repayments as a donation.

From April 2004 TDF's name and a code number will be listed on the Inland Revenue website. The code is:

YAP98QG

Please remember that this is only for tax returns issued in April 2004 or later.

This new scheme does not replace the existing Gift Aid Scheme, but will just give you another way of supporting TDF.

For the Inland Revenue website:

www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk

body, mind and soul

Invisible Disability

By Emma-Jane Sassoon

I have been working at TDF as a massage therapist for 2 years. As a therapist myself, most people automatically assume that I am healthy and fit. I look like a regular 30-something and of course as I do such an active job, one would think I would be the least likely to suffer from a disability.

How wrong they are. I suffer, like many, many of our clients here at The Disability Foundation, from what we class as an 'Invisible Disability'. I suffer from chronic back pain caused by degeneration of the vertebral discs in the lumbar and sacrum. This basically amounts to constant dull pain in the lower back accompanied by referred leg pain and often shoulder and neck pain too. The pain is worsened and can be provoked into an immobilizing attack by lifting, pushing or pulling, carrying heavy bags and exercising.

Luckily, standing up and moving around regularly helps to keep my back from stiffening up and therefore, massaging suits me very well as a job, as long as I pace myself. I'm sure many of you who read this will have experienced similar problems and have had to adjust your lives and adapt to such a point that you do very little in order to avoid pain. But having my condition recognized as a disability has been seemingly impossible, as I don't walk with a stick or use a wheelchair.

Many of my clients who suffer from Invisible Disabilities have also, like

me, encountered problems with recognition of the severity of their problem by their doctors. Back pain is often treated in a superficial way by masking the symptoms with anti-inflammatories and painkillers and not investigating the cause. Even the most caring, ambitious NHS health professional will admit that their abilities to handle back pain are limited. Like myself, many patients are offered drugs or major surgery as the only two options. As I am still mobile and functioning, I do not qualify for the benefits of a Disabled Badge or help with finances or extra treatments, even though I live with a gnawing, debilitating pain day in and day out. I'm somewhere in the grey area between 'Able and Disabled' and basically become invisible.

This is where The Disability Foundation comes into the picture. At TDF it was the first place where I felt that people working there recognized that I have an invisible disability that affects my life by limiting my ability to be physically active, participate in normal social activities like playing tennis, going 10 pin bowling, or going to the gym or dancing. TDF's kind and compassionate attitude also comforted me in the misery that being in constant pain causes. It has also allowed me, as a therapist, to help and enable others suffering from invisible disabilities, to stand up and be counted, to have their disabilities validated and recognized, and treated.

The Disability Foundation has a staggered price list according to the

Good points of information for back pain sufferers

BackCare

National charity promoting prevention of back pain and support to back pain sufferers.

Local branches.

16 Elmtree Road,
Teddington,

Middlesex, TW11 8ST

Tel: 020 8977 5474

Fax: 020 8943 5318

Web:

www.backcare.org.uk

Back2

Shop with ergonomic furniture and back care solutions.

28 Wigmore Street
London W1U 2RN.

Tel: 020 7935 0351

Fax: 020 7935 5293

Freephone: 0800 587
9000

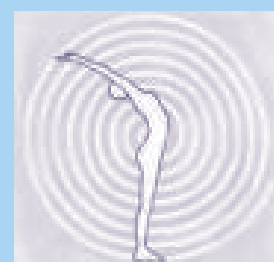
Web:

www.back2.co.uk

BBCi Health - The Back Pain Guide

Good web page with lots of information on treatments, medical terms and links

www.bbc.co.uk/health/backchat/



body, mind and soul

REIKI COURSE AT TDF

Our wonderful Reiki therapist, Rebecca Lowrie, is now offering a Reiki Level II course on the premises of TDF.

Reiki is an ancient hands-on healing method that can be used on yourself, friends, family and even animals. Reiki is pure healing energy. It is very powerful yet gentle. As well as dealing with specific issues and ailments, Reiki is useful as a preventative measure against illness, stress and fatigue.

If you feel that you have come to a time in your life where you are ready to heal and love yourself, and you have been through Reiki Level I, Reiki Level II may be for you.

Please contact TDF for more information or call Rebecca directly on
020 8959 8589



clients' physical condition. As well as other more visibly disabled clients, those, like myself, who suffer from a hidden problem that disables them, also qualify for the reduced disabled rates for therapeutic treatments. This can be very helpful as chronic back pain or other hidden disorders, can inhibit the client's ability to earn money.

Joining the team at TDF two years ago changed my life. Not only did I find a wonderful, satisfying job in massaging other people's pain away, but I also discovered a fantastic clinic where I could have my

invisible ailments soothed in the most caring way by my colleagues, who give me 100% validation after years of feeling frustrated and misunderstood by those around me.

If you suffer from an invisible disability, I hope you will take advantage of the excellent service offered by TDF. This is not limited to back pain sufferers. There are many other hidden disorders that do not get recognized for their devastating effect on the lives of their sufferers, such as arthritis, bowel disease and depression among others. Good Luck!

Discoveries of the Unexpected

Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) is a school of psychotherapy with rapid and positive response in some 95% of cases. Our hypnotherapist, *Clive Greidinger*, who here relates the anecdote on how it was discovered, practises it:

"Some 20 years ago a certain lady in sunny California was labouring under a severe water phobia. Doctor Callahan, a highly trained and experienced psychotherapist, was treating her for this but progress was painfully slow. Little by little he persuaded her to sit closer to the side of a swimming pool, albeit with her back to it, but the process was frustrating. His goal was to affect a cure.

Then one day, as he was working with her, she suddenly remarked that she had a pain in her stomach. With a flash of inspiration Dr. Callahan recalled that an acupunc-

ture meridian runs from the stomach to a point under the eye and he told her to tap under the eye. She did so and a transformation occurred. She cried out that it had gone, jumped out of her chair and ran towards the pool. In panic he ran after her but she stopped by the poolside, turned to him and remarked that she was quite safe, she knew she could not swim, but the phobia had gone; in fact it had gone and did not return.

Over the past year, clients of The Disability Foundation have experienced this (EFT) together with Hypnotherapy if that is appropriate. They have walked free of phobias, depression, anxiety, addictions, migraine and a whole host of problems. And the beauty of the process is that, whereas medication may be used to control such problems, EFT restores control to the client."

community

Dial a Ride consultations (*continued from the frontpage*)

● A new same-day booking system has been introduced where booking for travel on the same day can be made from 8am to 11am. The hours for making bookings for the next day has been extended from 9am to 4pm. It will still be possible to make advance bookings by telephone, letter or fax as far in advance as you like, and booking will be confirmed no later than 7 days prior to travel.

● New eligibility criteria will be introduced to bring Dial a Ride in line with Taxi Card. From now on, all new applicants for Dial a Ride must have a permanent or long term disability or health problem and be unable or virtually unable to use public transport.

TFL is, as part of the reviews for better door-to-door services, carrying out consultations that aim to include all those who are entitled to the services and to improve the services to such a degree that

those who have excluded themselves will return. This involves inviting people to focus groups and to take part in one to one interviews, and TFL is looking for participants in the London Borough of Harrow, both current users, people who have given up using the service, and people that have never accessed the service.

TFL is particularly interested in six definite groups of people: Children and their carers, asylum seekers, ethnic minorities, women, gay, lesbian and bi-sexual and the elderly.

If you would like to make your input count and help decide the future shape of Dial a Ride and Taxi Card you can contact James Meagan at TFL (Equality and Inclusion) on telephone: 0207 941 4801.

Accessible Holiday Accommodation in the UK

The national charity RADAR has set up a website that makes finding an accessible holiday home in the UK a mere doddle

www.radarsearch.org

You can search on special requirements, such as 'special diets' or 'guide dogs allowed', 'facilities', 'type of accommodation', and 'location.'

Each place has been rated with a system of 'RADAR dots', where one dot is the lowest rating with limited accessibility but a welcoming attitude towards disabled guests, and five dots signal the highest rating with full day and night care and fully accessible premises

Accessible Holiday Home in Spain

- Complete with ramps in a community with swimming pools
- Large lounge/dining room, modern kitchen and two en-suite bathrooms (one with wheelchair facilities)
- Situated in a quiet friendly residential area ½ hour drive from Alicante Airport and just 8 minutes to one of the best ramped beaches in Spain.

Prices start from £300/week

To book or for more information:

Tel/Fax: 0208 904 9656

Mobile: 07968 495 646

Email: rnk_prmr@hotmail.com



benefits & advice

Online benefits advice

If you have access to the Internet and are looking for information on benefits and tax credits there are a couple of sites that provide a good range of factsheets and/or FAQ's (frequently asked questions).

www.adviceguide.org.uk

is the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux's website.

www.disabilityalliance.org

has good checklists of the benefits that apply in different situations.

www.multikulti.org.uk

provides good overviews in several languages (Benghali, Chinese, Somali, Spanish, French etc.) on subjects such as benefits, housing, debt, and immigration.

www.dwp.gov.uk is the website for Department for Work and Pensions.

Access to Work

This scheme aims to enhance the opportunities of disabled people in finding and keeping a job, by meeting some or all of the additional costs of employing a disabled person. It is administered through the Placing Assessment and Counselling Teams (PACT) – part of the Employment Service.

The scheme provides assistance with things like: adaptations to buildings, the cost of interpreters/communicators, one off items, special equipment and travel costs.

In some cases the employer is expected to contribute to the cost of any assistance.

The scheme is available to both the unemployed and employees, but priority will be given to the unemployed where there are budget constraints.

To qualify, a person must be disabled according to the scheme's criteria, and because of their disability, need:

*support at a job interview with prospective or existing employer
OR

*support to start, keep or progress in his/her job

*to be resident in GB

*not be receiving Incapacity Benefit or Severe Disability Allowance or will stop claiming if starting work.

A person will be eligible for help if s/he is doing or seeking paid employment. This may be full-time or part-time, casual or temporary but must normally be for eight hours a week or more. Assistance is not available for voluntary work.

If a person is doing 'therapeutic' work, assistance will be available where there is a likelihood of that person earning a wage from the job and coming off benefit within a short period (usually 3-6 months).

To apply for assistance through Access to Work, a person needs to contact the Disability Employment Adviser (DEA) at the local Jobcentre Plus office or the local PACT directly.

Once a person has made an application for assistance, the DEA may visit the client at work to determine what equipment or adaptations are suitable. Usually the employer has ownership of and responsibility for the maintenance and repair of any equipment provided by the scheme.

A person has a right of appeal against a decision in respect of their application for Access to Work and an employer can appeal against decisions about cost sharing.

For more information, contact your local Jobcentre Plus, or your local Citizens Advice Bureau.



news round up

New Therapists

TDF would like to welcome two new therapists to the centre:

MARTINE BENLOLO provides remedial and therapeutic massage.

ARLENE GREENHOUSE practises counselling psychother-

apy and at a later date TDF hope to offer short workshops and lectures to the general public on topics such as: anger and anger management; self esteem; taking control of your life; resentment & guilt; loss & grieving. - Watch this space for further information.

New Volunteer Wanted

We are at the moment looking for a new volunteer to provide additional help for a visually impaired therapist on Friday afternoons. The therapist will need assistance with:

Help completing client records; help setting up and clearing the therapy room; help getting around the centre.

Also, when not assisting the therapist, the volunteer should be willing to help out with various tasks in the centre.

Please contact **Ruth** for further details.



Another Fabulous Theatre Night

On Tuesday 30th March we have again taken The New End Theatre in Hampstead for a production of Alice Virginia starring Susannah York - a vickedly funny take on the frailties of a mother-daughter relationship. Tickets are £25 including refreshments and you can contact Michele or Ruth for further information.

Having difficulties walking?

If you have difficulties walking TDF has both a zimmerframe and a wheelchair available on site for clients who would like help getting from the reception area to the treatment rooms and back.

You can either call the centre in advance and let us know, or talk to your therapists on the day. Unfortunately, due to health and safety, we can't offer to help clients from the car park to the centre.

TFD wishes to thank the contributors in this issue:

**Michele Freedman
Clive Greidinger
Neil Parker
Emma-Jane Sassoon**

Layout, editing and all other articles by Anne Dvinge

Contributions for the next Newsletter are welcome. The deadline for the next issue will be March 8th. Please contact Anne Dvinge ahead of this date if you wish to contribute.

Disclaimer:

Articles and comments from members and readers reflect the opinion of the individual contributor, not The Disability Foundation

**The Disability Foundation
RNOH, Brockley Hill
Stanmore, Middlesex
HA7 4LP**

Tel: 020 8954 7373

Fax: 020 8954 7414

Minicom: 020 8954 7413

www.tdf.org.uk
info@tdf.org.uk