This year … you could meet us for fun!

Sing out loud, sing out strong!

Coming along to the Carefree Chorus has made a real difference in some lives. Community singing has proven beneficial effects – such as slowing heart rate, reducing stress, improving breathing, increased social contact and confidence - and of course toning up facial muscles (have you ever seen an opera singer with wrinkly cheeks?!) The Carefree Chorus are very informal and fun to be with. Carer Moira Simpson recently to the Big Lottery Magazine “It really lifts me and during our two hour practice sessions, it’s the only time I completely forget what’s going on in my life. It gives me such a feeling when I sing and I would say it’s the best thing I have ever done for myself.”

The Carefree Chorus meet every Thursday morning at 11am in the Pathhead EU Congregational Church in Kirkcaldy. So come along and give it a go – you’ll be very welcome!

Monthly Carers Lunch Meetings

On the last Friday of each month there is a Carers meeting in Fife Carers Centre between 12 noon and 2pm. Carers are welcome along to join us for a sandwich and chat as well as hearing from a speaker and getting to join in with a fun Quiz!

The topics for the speakers coming up soon are:

- January – Self – Directed support Advocacy
- February – Fife Volunteer Social Group
- March – Respitality
- April – The work of Dementia Champions.

Welcome to Andy!

Fife Carers Centre welcomes Andy Egerton as a Carer Support worker. Andy has taken on the Levenmouth and North East Fife area whilst Mhairi Lochhead is Acting Manager of Fife Carers Centre.

Andy comes to us with a wealth of knowledge and experience. Andy isn’t a native Fifer and so has been having an interesting time enjoying finding his way around the coastal villages and farmlands of rural North East Fife!

Andy’s personal interests include staying fit and active with cycling and running playing a major part. The rest of us are hoping some of that will rub off on us!

New Year Resolutions anyone?

Regardless of whether you are the kind of person who makes resolutions or not there’s something about New Year that always feels like a time when you should enjoy some new beginnings, clear out some old clutter and do something lovely for yourself!

So even if you’re not someone who makes resolutions (or makes them and struggles to keep them) take a look at the ideas we have included in this issue and see if any of them appeal – you never know what exciting new things you might enjoy until you give it a go!

Looking forward this year to…

- working with Nordoff Robbins to explore ways of bringing the therapeutic benefits of music to carers.
- starting our new Transitions workshops in March.
- developing a Polish carers support group in Kirkcaldy.
- expanding the range of workshops we have to support dementia carers.
- working with other organisations in Fife to increase the ways we offer support to carers in Fife.
- having some fun in Carers Week!

In this issue:

- Fire Safety for carers
- Reducing Fuel Bills and staying warmer
- Respitality
- Open University for carers
- Learn about Aromatherapy and Reflexology
- Child to Adult Transitions workshop
- Dementia care workshops
- Little Eva’s shop
- Cupar Round Table supporting carers
- Self directed support advocacy
- Becoming a Citizen Advocate
- Fife Carers Contact Details
- Join the Carefree Chorus
- Monthly Lunch Meetings
- Meet Andy
Scottish Fire and Rescue Service help you keep safe at home

How to stay warmer this winter and save money!

Millions of people in the UK quality for free help with their heating and home energy efficiency – are you one of them? This year Scottish Hydro is working with Fife Council to help carers as well as others in Fife to replace broken or inefficient heating systems.

There’s no catch. With their help, your home could be warmer this winter and could be cheaper to heat. The service is free for anyone who qualifies. You don’t even have to be a Scottish Hydro customer!

So what help is available for free?

As long as you and your home meet the criteria, you can get help with:

- upgrading your boiler to an energy-efficient A-rated model
- insulating your loft or cavity walls.
- Replacing an old gas combi boiler with an A-rated, high-efficiency condensing boiler and improving your heating controls will significantly cut your home’s carbon dioxide emissions – and could save you as much as £300 a year.
- Free cavity wall and loft insulation will help make your home warmer, healthier and more comfortable – and bring down your bills by up to a further £310 per year.

How do I know if I’m eligible?

Many carers will be eligible for this and you can check whether you’re eligible online where you’ll find a list of the qualifying criteria and an online enquiry form. If you don’t get online or you’re not sure if you qualify, you can call 0800 975 8316. If you’re not eligible for this service you will find that there are other ways that you can be helped to reduce your heating costs over winter.

Fife Council to help

To arrange for a visit Phone 08000 731999 and ask for a Fire Safety Officer in your area to visit.

Remember: You should always let the Fire and Rescue Service know that you have oxygen cylinders in your house, as they are a major hazard in the case of fire.

This information was taken from the Scottish Hydro website

This year ... you could stay safe and warm.

Self-Directed Support Advocacy

A citizen advocate and their advocacy partner will discuss the way ahead

There are three Citizen Advocacy organisations:

- Dunfermline Advocacy (covering the West Fife area), Equal Voice (Central Fife) and IncludeMe! (North-East Fife) which provide support for Citizen Advocacy partnerships across Fife.

Citizen advocacy matches local people with vulnerable adults in their communities to provide support and friendship, and giving each individual the opportunity to have their voice heard.

Short-term advocates work with their partners to ensure their needs and views are represented, whether by attending meetings, helping complete paperwork or talking to members of a social care team.

A new Fife-wide advocacy project aims to match short-term advocates with people who are going through the new Self-Directed Support (SDS) assessment process. SDS includes a number of options for receiving care, and it’s up to the person how much responsibility they want to take for things like handling their own budget. Their short-term advocacy partner would be there to support them through the process, in ways which might include:

- Helping fill out forms
- Attending meetings with service providers
- Ensuring their partners opinions and views are being considered

For many vulnerable people and their families, changing the way in which they receive their care can be daunting. Having a citizen advocate there to help support them through the process can make it a much easier experience.

Citizen advocates are unpaid and are completely independent from service providers. Their loyalty is to their advocacy partner and will always ensure that their voice is heard, and that their views and opinions are taken into consideration.

If you feel that you, or someone you know may benefit from this service, please contact Fiona or Tom on: 01383 624382

Alternatively, if you would like to find out more about becoming a citizen advocate in order to help vulnerable people in Fife you can e-mail: enquiries@dunfermlineadvocacy.org or call 01383 624382

Becoming a Citizen Advocate

Citizen Advocates develop a voluntary long-term partnership with a person who has difficulty being listened to or has difficulty speaking up for themselves. You don’t have to be an expert in any particular field to be a successful citizen advocate. Most citizen advocacy organisations are looking for are members of the community who have everyday skills such as listening, finding information, negotiating, speaking up for themselves and who can use these skills to speak up for another person and follow their agenda. It’s an opportunity for anyone who cares about the rights of other people and who is willing to spare a few hours of their time regularly. People who have a citizen advocate benefit by having someone in their life who is there voluntarily, who will ensure their voice is heard, who will stand up and speak up for them if required and who will assist in providing opportunities for full participation in their community and their life.

If you would like to know more about becoming a citizen advocate you can contact Equal Voice, Dunfermline Advocacy or IncludeMe for more information.
Granny Jan and Eva do the business!

Eva’s Shop opened its doors at St Michaels Drive, Cupar on Saturday 28th September at 11am. This was a charity garage sale with a difference: a collaboration between a Granny & granddaughter whose love of playing ‘shops’ developed into the real thing to support two charities, Support in Mind Scotland, for Granny Jan (Martin) and DogsTrust for six year old Eva.

Before the shop could become the real thing Granny needed to do some work to the garage (according to Eva, a lot of work!) Granny worked hard to make the garage more comfortable and versatile so that after the shop it would become both a play and workroom!

On the day, Eva and Jan welcomed Cupar folk, friends and family to browse a garage stocked from floor to ceiling with a variety of friends and family to browse a garage stocked from floor to ceiling with a variety of items for sale as well as a Kitchen Café selling soup and filled rolls. Eva’s staff included her dad, Angus, and Uncle James along with Granny’s friends, Susan and Jean who worked very hard in the kitchen and selling home baking. Eva proved to be an excellent ‘meeter and greeter’ and when opening time loomed placed herself strategically at Granny’s front gate, next to the advertising board and balloons, scanning the horizon for potential customers. She didn’t have to wait long! The good folk of Cupar didn’t disappoint despite there being several other fundraising activities eager for their support.

The day was a huge success helped by the wonderful sunny weather and good spirited folk eager to pick up bargains and afterwards relax in Granny’s garden. On the day, over £50 was raised – Granny and Eva thank everyone who donated and supported them, and would encourage anyone to open an ‘Eva’s Shop’ for charity. It’s hard work, but it can also be a lot of fun!

Cupar Round Table celebrate their BIG 50

As part of the Cupar Round Table 50th year celebrations this year’s Chairmans Ball aimed to raise money to benefit carers in the Cupar area. They had a very successful evening and with help from Thornton’s Solicitors band “The Full Tin Tin Tin” they raised £2500 for 50 unpaid family carers living in the Cupar area to share. This is in recognition and support of the work that these carers do. Cupar Round Table members hope is that family carers will have found £50 useful to spend on something that will help ease their caring role such as buying a piece of equipment or being of benefit to them as an individual – such as a relaxation therapy or exercise classes or it could be used to give carers a break from caring – such as buying two or three of hours of alternative care from a care provider. The carers who benefitted from the gift included a range of ages from young carers from 9 years old to carers over pension age. Young carers from Cupar will be taking a break from caring and enjoying an outing together and older carers have been choosing individual ways to enjoy the gift ranging from taking time out from caring and rediscovering hobbies such as gardening to reading or going to the gym. Other carers chose to buy specialist equipment that will help them in their caring role and some chose to experience relaxation therapies for the first time. All of the carers who benefitted were immensely grateful for the gift from Cupar Round Table and many of those received their gift just before Christmas making it extra special.

The Round Table organisation is a club for men aged 18-45 who enjoy combining making friends, having fun, getting involved with their local community, learning new skills and building trusted contacts. Cupar Round Table no 800 has been raising money in the Cupar area for many years now. They’re a social club with a conscience and raise and distribute around £10,000 a year to local causes.

If you would like to find a Round Table in your area take a look at the website www.roundtable.co.uk for more information.

This year… you could take a break!

RESPITALITY

(continued from page 1)

We know that unpaid carers are the largest group of care providers and as such, the largest component of the Scottish care ‘workforce’. Their contribution is estimated to be worth £11 billion. Caring can have an enormous effect on the quality of life of people with caring responsibilities, many of whom are elderly with their own support needs.

Most carers will of course continue to care for their loved ones even when this has a bad effect on their own health and well-being. It’s more important than ever that society provides the additional help needed to ensure their efforts are recognised and supported, and to prevent carers becoming the cared for.

We also know that access to short breaks from caring is one of the most frequently requested forms of support and we know that a good refreshing break can be enormously beneficial to carers and the people they care for.

About Respitality

Respitality is an idea that originated in America and brings together hospitality services, such as hotels and guest houses, with community service agencies to provide short breaks for family care givers. Respitality began in the 1980’s – led by the United Cerebral Palsy Association (UCPA) - and quickly became established in many states.

The programme is supported by hotels donating overnight breaks and services to allow carers, often accompanied by a friend or other family member, to have a night or two away from their everyday caring responsibilities. In America the programme is now coordinated by voluntary sector organisations.

Drawing on the American model, Shared Care Scotland, working in partnership with Fife Carers Centre, has now begun work on establishing a Respitality programme here in Fife. The hope is that this initial pilot will become the launch-pad for Scotland-wide network of Respitality programmes, benefiting large numbers of carers.

Our first Respitality break took place in September courtesy of Debbie MacCallum the owner of Fife Cottages. Thanks to Debbie’s efforts a further four establishments have now come forward to offer breaks and we hope to attract others over the coming months.

Fife has some lovely places to see any time of year.

Are you interested in taking up a Respitality break? Well here’s what you need to do:

1. Register your interest with Fife Carers Centre – we’ll take some details from you, just call us or go to our website to register (www.fifecarerscentre.org)
2. You’ll be responsible for making alternative care arrangements so that you know you can take a break when one becomes available to you – it might be useful to sound friends and family out in advance to see if they can take over for a few days at short notice!
3. You’ll need to make your own travel arrangements to get to the venue.

If you find that making arrangements for alternative care or transport is difficult please talk to Fife Carers Centre to see if we can suggest any options. We hope to have some reasonable notice of available breaks but it’s anticipated that some great Respitality breaks may be made available at fairly short notice so carers who are able to put plans into action fairly swiftly to take up an offer may be at an advantage.

Fife Carers Centre will keep a register of carers who are available for short breaks and we will start by offering the notified short breaks to those who register first, it’s ok to turn a break down if it isn’t suitable for any reason but once you have taken up a break you will then move to the bottom of the offer list. The list will just rotate through those who are registered in this way. The frequency with which you are offered a break depends on how many are made available and how many carers are registered.

Don’t delay – register today!

Register your interest with Fife Carers Centre – just call us or go to our website to register www.fifecarerscentre.org

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This year… you could learn something new or get fresh ideas about ways to deal with life!

Get clever with your learning!

Did you know that the Open University offer flexible study opportunities for carers?

The Open University recognise the challenges, pressures and difficulties carers can face and they understand that flexibility will be important to you. The Open University in Scotland offers flexible part-time distance learning so that you can study from home and fit your learning around your caring and other commitments.

• There are no entry requirements for most undergraduate courses at The Open University
• There are courses to suit all levels and interests, from short access courses to postgraduate study.
• Financial support is available – check out your eligibility if your personal income is £25,000 or less a year.
• Additional support is available for students with disabilities.
• Check out Openlearn on the Open University website to sample free learning materials from a wide range of courses or to access Foundations of self-directed support in Scotland, a new interactive online course suitable for a wide range of people including carers.
• The Reflection Toolkit is a free 5 hour unit designed to help the process of reflection for learners from diverse backgrounds and is a suitable resource for carers of any age.
• They also offer a range of non-credit bearing courses for personal and professional development such as Improving end of life care and Dementia Care.

To learn more contact the Open University in Scotland on 0131 225 3851 or at www.openuniversity.co.uk/scottishcarers

Take a chance to learn how to chill out, relax and have some fun with our free to attend workshop for carers.

Following the success of the highly enjoyable Chillax workshop sessions we ran at the Carers Centre last year we have decided to run some more and take in a bit more of Fife! The sessions will be led this time by Therapist Linda Dalgarno from Dunfermline. In session one we’ll be looking at aspects of Aromatherapy and how it can help and session two will consider aspects of Reflexology, how it works and how it may benefit you. Each session will have a maximum of 10 people at it and you can go along to one or both of the sessions.

The sessions will run from 10am to 1pm on the following dates:

Session One will run in Dunfermline on 20th February and in Lundin Links on the 21st of February

Session Two will run in Dunfermline on 27th February and in Lundin Links on the 28th February.

Many carers benefit enormously from different types of therapeutic treatments and they often tell us how much they enjoy understanding a bit more about it and being able to spread the word!

To book your place please call Fife Carers Centre on 01592 642999 or send an email to Lesley.Childs@fifecarers.co.uk. If you need help with alternative care or transport to allow you to come please let us know and we’ll see if we can help you with it.

Come and join us for a session - we’d love to have you along!

This year … you could join us in learning more about life as a carer

Building a Child to Adult Transition Plan

Free session for Carers

Carers of children with additional support needs face a difficult time when their child moves from child to adulthood. There are a lot of questions to be asked and the purpose of the session is to help these parent carers to prepare for their child’s transition to adulthood and will cover topics such as:

• What is meant by Transition?
• Understanding the Transition process.
• Choices available to young people.
• Making decisions on behalf of an adult with incapacity.
• Benefits and Finance.
• Self-Directed Support.
• Long term planning for the future.

The sessions are planned for:

• Wednesday 5th March 2014 from 10.30am – 1.30pm in Kirkcaldy.
• Wednesday 16th April 2014 from 10.30am – 1.30pm in Dunfermline.
• Wednesday 11th June 2014 from 6.30pm – 9.30pm in Glenrothes.

All of these information sessions are free for carers to attend and if you need help with transport to enable you to come along then please get in touch as early as possible as we will probably be able to help if we get enough notice.

To book your place please call 01592 642999

These are initial sessions and it is likely that we will build on feedback from those who attend to plan further sessions

Getting guidance on the way forward can help prevent big headaches!

This year… you could learn something new or get fresh ideas about ways to deal with life!