

## **MENTORING NEWS**

### **Winter 2011**

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#### **CHRISTMAS IS COMING...**

The end of another term and Christmas is almost here. Our office will be closed from Friday, 23rd December, and will be open from Tuesday, 3rd January 2012.

We hope you all have a fabulous Christmas and a great New Year, and we would like to thank you very much for your contribution to our project this year.

Sadly, for many young people, particularly in these tough economic times, Christmas can be more of a challenge than a celebration.

Many families are feeling the effect of funding cuts and increased prices.

If you are aware that your mentee is in particular difficulty, for example not being able to afford a winter coat, please let us know, as we may be able to link them up with charities, such as the Wimbledon Guild who have some emergency funding for this kind of predicament.

Of course, in certain schools and districts, it is not considered "cool" to wear a winter coat. But many young people are embarrassed by the fact that their family cannot afford the school uniform, so pretend they don't like coats.

With unemployment predicted to continue to rise, financial pressures on families are likely to increase the stress felt by young people.

While, of course, we cannot change a family's financial fortunes, we can help ensure that young people have access to all the support that is available.



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## **Donors to the rescue**

As most are all too aware, our charity's own financial situation is far from secure and we are continuing to look for new sources of income.

Thanks so much to our mentors Sue Rathmell, Teresa Mustapha and Dana Acharya who joined members of staff on the My Voice London team in our fun run in September, which raised an amazing £1,176.

We'd also like to thank our volunteer mentor, Joanne Cull, who organised a pub quiz which raised a fantastic £243, which will go towards mentor training.

We are delighted that our borough's born-again (and so successful) football team AFC Wimbledon has adopted us as one of their charities. Last month, the My Voice London team was out on the terraces with collecting buckets. They are a generous bunch and the day raised a marvellous £685.

The fight for funding continues and if you would like to help with our efforts, or have employers or friends who might be able to support us, please get in touch with our new Development Manager, Tara

Sherjan at [tara@myvoicelondon.org.uk](mailto:tara@myvoicelondon.org.uk).

She will be happy to hear from you.

## **Network evening**

Thanks to everyone who attended our Christmas network evening. It was great to see so many of you.

We will continue to have two network evenings a term and we hope that all mentors can attend at least one of them.

It's a good chance to catch-up with other mentors and share good practice, as well as have some additional training. Next term our network evenings are on:

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> February

Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> March

Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> May

Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> July

So please put the dates in your diary and we hope to see you then.



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## **Overweight children**

A recent report has shown that one in five children leaving primary schools in London is obese - and the problem seems to be increasing.

London schoolchildren are apparently more overweight than anywhere else in the UK, with 19% of primary school children classified as obese, despite all the publicity about healthy eating and exercise.

The statistics come from the National Child Measurement Programme which assessed the weight of more than a million primary school children.

Many young people have erratic eating habits, sometimes due to family circumstances, sometimes as a result of stress. They are often unaware that simple changes in habit (such as eating more regularly and drinking enough fluid) can have huge effects on their bodies as well as their mood and attitude to life.

If you would like more advice on this topic, please contact a member of the mentoring team. We have a lot of information and worksheets on healthy eating.

## **Girls at risk**

Shocking new research from the children's charity NSPCC, shows that a staggering 25% of girls aged 13-17 suffer violence from their partners and that one-third have also been victims of sexual abuse.

Home Secretary Theresa May says victimization of girls under 18 is now so extensive that she is considering changing the law so that such conduct will come under the category of domestic violence.

Such changes could mean that teenage girls who are bullied or pressured into sex by abusive boyfriends will be given greater legal protection.

Studies of gangs have found that girl members are often pressured into sex. The proposed changes would compel the police to take the abuse more seriously and stop it being remaining hidden in crime statistics.



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## **New Year**

While many people are cynical about resolutions and we must admit some of our own do not last beyond January, a new year and the start of a new term is a good time to start afresh.

You can look back over last term and see what worked and what didn't for your mentee, and set some new goals. You can even help them get excited about the chance to do something differently. The New Year can be an "excuse" to start something new. If you need any help or ideas about this, please contact a member of the mentoring team.

Meanwhile, thank you so much for all your hard work. It is much appreciated by all of us, and by the mentees who benefit greatly from your efforts.

We also appreciate the patience of those who are still waiting to be matched with a mentee. We have a number of new referrals and we will be in touch when we have suitable matches for you. We hope you won't be waiting much longer.

If you know anyone else who would also be interested in mentoring, please let us know or you can direct them to our

website where they can download an application form and send this to us once completed.

Finally, from all of us here at **My Voice London**, have a wonderful Christmas and happy New Year. 😊