COOL NEWS
NEWS for Young Carers in Sutton

January - March 2017

Christmas Meal at Nandos
Manor Park Games session
'YC Chill n Learn' Media Special
Jewellery making Workshop
'Create Arts' animation Workshops
Christmas Party
'KidsTime' Christmas Session

Free personal training sessions for Young Adult carers ages 16+ - Limited availability
We are working with a qualified personal trainer to offer you free one-to-one training sessions in your home, community or at the Centre! Limited availability. Call for more details.

NEW WEBSITE LAUNCH! Please visit our new website at www.suttoncarerscentre.org to:
• Tell us what you think and see some great pictures of you.
• Check out our survey to tell us how our services are doing
• See our December 2016 Annual Review where you can find lots of YC news, wonderful pictures and of course learn about all that we accomplished in the past year. You can also find it on http://bit.ly/2hH8igO

STOP PRESS!!
Christmas Party
In September our Chief Executive, Rachael MacLeod, and YC Beth were speakers at the national Carers Trust Young Carers Conference which explored the impact of caring on Young Carer’s mental health and well-being. The conference was held in Manchester and Beth was able to share her story as a Young Carer in order to raise awareness and in order to highlight the importance of seeking support when facing challenging situations. Of course before leaving one of our great cities, Beth and Rachael had to hit the shops. We also interviewed Beth in order to capture her experience and this can be read on the next page. Next time it might be you we are interviewing!

The school half-term holidays in October began with three animation workshops from ‘Create Arts’. The young people who attended worked on their drawing skills and learned about animation techniques. Their work was then collated on an animation DVD. In that week, we also had a Halloween URBIE session at the Riverside Centre with cupcake decorating and Halloween crafts.

In December, we kicked off celebrations by a visit to Nandos and a Forum. We asked those who attended about our services and gathered their ideas on our new mindfulness sessions, which are due to commence in March 2017. Our holiday activities continued with a ‘Create Arts’ jewellery making workshop where YCs showcased their creativity and crafting skills. Lastly, our Christmas party took place on the 22nd December. We had music provided by a DJ, a great magic show, had lots of yummy treats and of course you had lots of fun with other YCs. I hope you enjoyed the party as much as we did. As always, we have lots more activities and events coming up for you this Spring so YCs take a look at our booking form! Remember, if you are registered with the Young Carers Service, you can access activities and breaks, so check out our booking form!

A big thank you to Sutton Met Police, ‘St John Baptist Church’ and ‘Sutton Salvation Army’ for donating presents, which were loved by our Young Carers. To the ‘Linus Project’ for donating lots of beautiful stockings that were given away at our Christmas Party. To Asda Sutton, Co-op Carshalton and Sainsbury’s Sutton, North Cheam & Wallington for contributing to our Christmas party. Lastly, thank you to the ‘Riverside Centre’ and all others who contributed to a wonderful end to our year.
**Background information:** Bethany Smith is 14, a student and a Young Carer for her mum. This year Beth was a speaker at the national Carers Trust Young Carers Conference, which explored the impact of caring on Young Carers’ mental health and well-being. After the conference, we interviewed Beth:

**What was the conference like?**
The professionals at the conference wanted to know what it was like for Young Carers and how it affects them mentally. That’s when I got to speak out about my point of view. I felt like they really listened and I felt really appreciated.

**What did you choose to talk about?**
I spoke about the challenges of school and caring. My mum, who has Multiple Sclerosis, relapsed early on in the year when I was picking options for GCSE’s in school. I found it really difficult to balance school and caring. In the end it was more pressure at school and more pressure in home until eventually I just stopped functioning in school all together and chose my mum over everything. That sent me into a bit of a spiral and constant emotional state of not caring at school any more. In the end, I went to Learning Support and although it wasn’t the right place for me, the teacher contacted CAMHS. I was able to talk to them and get the support I needed.

**What were the highlights?**
- At the end of the conference when everyone gave me a round of applause, I got loads of ‘thank yous’. Speaking to a worker afterwards who had been through similar things to me. He said how inspirational I was to say what I had said in front of a massive room of 50 plus people – I felt so special!
- It was emotional and opened up a side of caring in me that I hadn’t recognised before.
- Ring doughnuts with jam in the middle! How is that even possible?!

**What did you learn?**
I learnt things about myself. In the planning, I looked deeper into what happened (my caring role and the situation following Mum’s relapse) and I realised things that I hadn’t before. It made a lot more sense and now looking back, I can see why certain things happened. Looking over it and talking it through with Rachael helped it to make sense.

**What would you say to Young Carers about taking part in this kind of opportunity?**
If you have something to say, do it! Come forward and do it! It’s not only made me a better Carer but also a better person because now I know if things get like that again, I can stop it before it happens. Every Carer’s experience is different, everyone has a different story and everyone has different needs and a different perspective. The more experiences are heard the more awareness, understanding and power there is to change it.
New Year, New Plans? What is your New Year’s resolution? Do you feel pressured to make a New Year resolution? Resolutions should be achievable goals that make us feel good when we manage them, not sad and ashamed when we find them challenging. One thing that’s worth committing to this year is yourself – your wellbeing, your happiness, and your general mental health. Here are a few resolutions that should help you along the way.

1) **Schedule in some quality alone time.** Spend some time alone doing something that makes you genuinely happy and relaxed – whatever that may be.

2) **Each day, write down something good that happened.** It can be something tiny, like writing about the excellent doughnut you had at lunchtime or writing about a school reward. Putting a positive slant on your day will help you feel more positive overall.

3) **Find a hobby you love.** It doesn’t matter what it is. If it makes you feel happy, relaxed, fulfilled and it is safe, it’s worth doing.

4) **Get enough sleep!** This will help with your concentration at school & overall mood. Make sure to avoid sugary food and drink before going to bed!

5) **Stop the comparisons.** Make a conscious effort to stop comparing yourself to others. You’re doing your thing, they’re doing theirs.

6) **Try to do something physical at least once a week.** It does not have to be strenuous exercise! But something you enjoy like football, riding a bike, or even shopping.

7) **Try something new.** Don’t get too stuck in routines.

8) **Always focus on the positive aspects of YOU!** Try not to focus on the negatives.

9) **Get help if you need it.** Sometimes no matter how well we manage difficult situations, we just need some extra support. It may be just talking to family or friends but it is important to ask for some help if you need it.

A ‘hi’ from Wale!

Hi everyone, my name is Wale and I am a Student Social Worker on placement at SCC. I enjoy spending time with young people, sharing life experiences, camping, playing football and listening to good music. This is my first time working with Young Carers so I am enjoying my time here getting to know everyone and learning lots.