

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

Issue 10 Spring 2005

PARENTING FUND AWARD

REU was awarded the largest major grant from the Parenting Fund in the latest round of funding announced towards the end of 2004. The project that is being funded has two strands to it. Firstly to continue, and expand upon, the support provided nationally to facilitators. This will involve the development of new training courses for facilitators and the establishment of peer support groups. Secondly, to build the capacity and infrastructure of the voluntary and community sector to deliver parent programmes in the North West.

The national strand to the work is underway with continued support being provided to facilitators via telephone calls, email communication, face to face meetings, group supervisions and monitoring visits. In addition training courses are already being developed, and announcements will be made in the spring as to where and when they will take place. Peer support groups are being planned for four regions: London and the South East; the Northwest, the Midlands and South Yorkshire. These will provide a forum for facilitators to get together to share information and gain support around delivering SFSC programmes. These will meet four times per year.

The work in the North West is being rolled out by Amina Lone, our new Regional Parent Programme Officer. Below she introduces the project and outlines what she has been doing since coming into post. You can also read Amina's profile on page 4.

In autumn 2004, REU secured funding from the Parenting Fund to further support the positive work that was already taking place in other parts of the country. Namely to build the capacity and infrastructure of the voluntary and community sector to provide services to black and minority ethnic parents and families in the North West. What this means in real terms, is the opportunity for voluntary organisations who are already supporting black and minority ethnic families, or those agencies who would like to expand their work in this direction, to access free facilitation training in the SFSC parent programme; support and supervision whilst delivering the programme; and the possibility of limited financial support. In turn, REU would expect two staff or volunteers to be available to attend the facilitator training and then for the facilitators to deliver the programme to parents within a specified time.

In late November, I was appointed as the Regional Parent Programme Officer and I enthusiastically embarked on the task of informing organisations throughout the North West of this great opportunity. At the same time I started arranging the first facilitator training to be held in Manchester at the end of January 2005. My first point of call was to contact the voluntary action councils in Manchester and Stockport, and by a stroke of luck



Stockport CVS were holding a funding information day specifically aimed at black and minority ethnic voluntary organisations. My contact there was extremely helpful and invited me along to network. Even though I was only able to attend for half of the day, I made a number of key contacts who worked throughout Greater Manchester and who were an important first step in distributing information.

With the support of the funding officer from Stockport CVS, a senior community development worker from Stockport Council, and a worker from Employment Services who supports refugee and asylum seekers, I sent out letters to black and minority ethnic organisations throughout Manchester and Stockport. I also organised information sessions in Manchester and Stockport, where interested agencies could come along, meet me, find out more about the project and meet with other SFSC facilitators who had already trained and run the programme. I also followed up my other contacts and met with workers from Bury and Oldham CVS, colleagues from Wigan, Liverpool and various agencies in Manchester, who all were very helpful and supportive of the work, giving me more contacts to chase up and sending out the information to black and minority ethnic organisations in their areas. I travelled quite a bit and my AtoZ became my trusted companion!

Whilst this was going on, REU were also trying to find a suitable office to house myself and other colleagues based in the North from which we could fully develop our work. A number of possibilities came up and from this, I came across Tung Sing Housing Association who had a large training room which we hired to deliver the facilitator training from. This was a relief as time was of the essence and finding a venue which could accommodate us for five full days was a priority.

There was a lot of interest in the work and by the end of January, in time for the first facilitators training, 19 workers were registered from 8 different organisations. The agencies' work spanned Manchester, Stockport and Bolton

and represented Asian, African-Caribbean, Chinese, African, Palestinian, and the Jewish communities. It was important to have a diverse group as possible as we want to maximise the project's aims and make sure we are reaching out to all communities.

The facilitator training went well with only a few hiccups and a group of committed but exhausted trainees. Two facilitators even managed to produce their flyer and bought it in for us all to see which was a great boost to the rest of the group. It was rewarding for me to see the impact the SFSC programme still has.

The programmes will be delivered over the next few months with a couple due to start before the Easter holidays. As Parent Programme Officer, I will be spending a significant amount of time supporting these programmes to run, and advising facilitators on planning and delivery.

So to the next phase of the project. The next facilitator training is being held in Liverpool in April. So a priority is now to get the information out to organisations in Merseyside and the surrounding areas. I am liaising with workers from Toxteth Educational Trust and Liverpool BEM Network and together we will cover the relevant geographical areas. I am also continuing to contact organisations wider afield in Lancashire, Cumbria and throughout the North West region, through regional black and minority ethnic networks as well as existing contacts.

Generally the feedback and support, I have received for this project has been really positive and I would like to say THANK YOU to all the workers and organisations that have helped and continue to help me in this work. I am also very pleased to report that we now have an office in Manchester too!

To find out more about this project, contact: Amina Lone. Tel: 0161 839 9799, Mobile: 07799 008522, Email: aminalone@hotmail.com. Address: Gaddum House, 6 Gt Jackson Street, Manchester.

More Parenting Fund success: SFSC work in South West expands further

In addition to the new project outlined above, the Parenting Fund also awarded a grant to REU in partnership with Single Parent Action Network (SPAN) and Full Circle. This large grant is to support the rolling out of SFSC in the South West by building on the work funded last year by the Parenting Fund. In addition to work with black and minority ethnic communities, SPAN will also target rural communities who have not yet had the opportunities to access the facilitator training. The role of Full Circle will be to focus on a specific geographical area in Bristol, St Pauls, and to develop the capacity of the community to provide parenting support. This latter element should provide a model of good practice in terms of community development and parenting.

This project will see two trainings take place in the South West, the first of which has just completed in Bristol and had participants coming from Gloucestershire and Wiltshire as well as from in and around Bristol. The next training will take place in Plymouth and will target Devon, Cornwall, and Dorset.

The project employs two full time members of staff. Annie Oliver, based at SPAN is the co-ordinator for the project and Marcia Thompson, based at Full Circle is the Parent Link Worker, and provides direct support to facilitators within St Pauls. REU's role is to provide support to the whole project, overseeing the training and supervision of facilitators.

Further information is available from REU, or alternatively from Annie Oliver at SPAN on 0117 951 4231.

A new and innovative service for families in Croydon

Bernadette Rhoden, Manager of the Family Nurturing Centre, introduces a new facility to meet the needs of black and minority ethnic families in Croydon. This project has been delivering Strengthening Families Strengthening Communities Programmes as a central plank of their parenting work.

Finally, Croydon Families are able to benefit from a new Family Centre recently opened in the North West of the borough. The Family Nurturing Centre which opened in July 2004 forms an integral part of Croydon Peoples Housing Association's Community Development Programme.

The Centre is conveniently located on the London Road. A glass fronted ground floor project with a calming homely design. There are staff offices leading from the reception area, a generic training room where much of the parenting activities take place, a state of the art I.C.T room and a second training room which can also be used as a crèche. The hub of the Centre is the large fitted kitchen with its round table which is also used for training and meetings – just like home.

"a multi-faceted programme of family support"

The idea for this project was conceived nearly four years ago but progress was hampered through lack of funding and the availability of suitable premises. The Family Nurturing Centre is a multi-faceted programme of family support that aims to strengthen and support local families who experience social, economic and health disadvantage. The centre has a specific focus on addressing the needs of Black and Minority Ethnic families and children living in North West Croydon. The Centre acts as a focal point for parents/carers and extended family members with children from birth to 19 years of age. We facilitate the development of additional services by acting as an entry point for other projects and services.

The project aims to develop a preventive service for families, ensuring they have access to good quality support by identifying difficulties at an early stage and providing an appropriate service that meets the needs of a cross section of BME families and communities. We provide access to a range of activities on all aspects of caring, educating and bringing up children.

Through Sure Start and SRB funding our Focus on Fathers Project was developed to support BME fathers to improve their relationship with their children and other significant adults in their children's lives. Although still supported by Family Nurturing, this group has formed itself into a company limited by guarantee and is now managed by a board of seven Croydon based fathers. They have a membership of 60 fathers for whom they organise bi monthly workshops on topics such as love, respect, trust discipline, education and communication to name a few.

Our Employment & Training Programme which came to

an end in December 2004 was funded by ESF and enabled over 50 BME Mothers to get a taste of entering the labour market. Our five week courses supported women in key areas of personal development including self evaluation, goal setting, and money and time management. In our Job Search these mothers underwent mock interviews, completed application forms, prepared their CV, and learnt to market themselves effectively and to critic Job Ads. They further learnt or brushed up on their ICT skills and were supported in finding a work placement whereby Family Nurturing contributed towards the cost of their childcare and provided them with a training allowance.

Much of our current funding is provided by Croydon Children's Fund which enables us to deliver the REU's

Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities programme to parents with children aged 8 to 12 years. We ran our September Programme with Parents and their children. This joint programme is called PATCH (Parents And Their Children in Harmony) The PATCH Principles aim to maintain a harmonious balance between the influences that parents and families have over their pre adolescent children and that of their peers or cliques. Through the SFSC Programme we offer strategies for combating negative peer pressure, and empower children to improve communication with their parents, to trust and rely on them and to believe in their own ability 'to do the right thing'.

The project is a cross cutting development that aims to work in partnership with voluntary, community and statutory agencies and organisations. The Centre hosts Croydon BME Forum which is the umbrella body for all of Croydon's BME Voluntary and community sector organisations. The Forum plays a co-ordinating role in respect of the engagement of the BME people in policy and development and decision making, as well as providing opportunities for the sustainable development of the BME Voluntary and Community Sector.

In 2005, Family Nurturing aim to secure new funding to further develop the projects infrastructure, programme development and delivery. For information or a visit to The Centre, please contact:

Bernadette Rhoden, Family Nurturing Project Manager. 020 8239 7298, brhoden@cpha.org.uk, The Family Nurturing Project, Ground Floor Palmcroy House, 387 London Road, Croydon CR0 3PB.

Conference Notice: Date change

Please note that the 2005 SFSC Conference scheduled for the 11th July will now take place on Friday 24th June 2005 in Central London. In addition to speakers (line-up to be announced), this conference will feature a range of workshops highlighting innovative practice in parenting and family support, a large exhibition, and an expert seminar with Marilyn Steele. Fliers and booking forms will be sent out in due course. In the mean time please put the date in your diary, and if you have any questions relating to the event, including booking exhibition space or including inserts in the delegate pack, please contact one of the SFSC team.

About the REU

The REU (formerly the Race Equality Unit) is the leading national agency working to develop appropriate social care services to Britain's black and minority ethnic communities. The REU does this through training; consultancy; research; publications; workshops and conferences. The REU has published reports and good practice guides on subjects such as user involvement, child protection, social work and social work education, and ethnic record keeping and monitoring.

SFSC Team profile

Leandra Box is the SFSC Programme Manager. She joined the REU in 1996 as part of the research team to carry out a study of the use of family centres by black communities. She has worked and written extensively around black and minority ethnic families, including adapting the Strengthening Programme for use in the UK. More recently she has been supporting the development and delivery of a Strengthening Families Young People's Programme.

Janette Bryan is the SFSC Parent Programme Officer and has been delivering this programme to parents since 2000. In addition to running parent groups, Janette supports facilitators and agencies in the delivery of SFSC, organises regular facilitators training and oversees the registration of programmes and the collection of evaluation data.

Amina Lone is the Regional Parent Programme Officer based in the North West. She has been a SFSC facilitator for a number of years and has also delivered training for SFSC facilitators. In addition to running parent groups, Amina supports and monitors facilitators and agencies in the delivery of SFSC, focusing on expanding the programme's use in the North West region.

Monitoring and evaluating the programme

In order to receive certification as an official *Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities* Parent Programme Facilitator, you must implement the curriculum, and administer the programme evaluation. Facilitators must continue to submit this information for each programme that they run. (See below).

		Data Required
Pre-course	Course registered with REU at least 3 weeks before start date	Course registration form
Session 1-3	Initial Support visit by the REU	(a) Parent Registration Form to be completed by Facilitator (b) Pre-Parent Questionnaire
Session 6-8	Mid Programme Observation Visit of group in action (Mandatory for first course run)	Observation checklist (REU)
Session 10-12	End of Programme Support Visit	(a) Parent Post Questionnaire (b) Facilitators Class Summary
Post Course	Certificate Ceremony	Participants and facilitators Certificates (REU)