

# strengthening families

Issue 15 Winter 2006

The newsletter of *Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities*

Afiya Rufaro, Manager of Brent Youth Offending Service, talks about the success of the *Strengthening Families* Programmes that they are delivering and why her team deserved the SFSC annual award they received at the National Conference this summer.



Staff from the Youth Offending Team worked extremely hard this year to engage with hard to reach parents who have traditionally rejected any form of parenting support or guidance. The team went out of their way to offer the programme to the parents including home visits to parents to engage them. The parents, who have participated on the two courses run in the first part of this year, are thrilled to have been part of the process and have nothing but extreme praise for the team.

As their manager (who has been trained on the SFSC Programme) I attended some of the sessions to gain an oversight, as first time facilitators they were unsure initially of the issues that might be raised. The preparation of the classes was excellent, the materials were delivered with care and attention, parent s need were met to enable them to participate:

such as when a support worker was brought in to buddy a parent with issues with reading and writing to give her confidence in the group work tasks.

All the facilitators were creative in the way the parents were engaged and encouraged to support each other week on week, this included arrangements for transport to the classes and child care.

The groups had a very challenging mix of abilities and backgrounds with some personal issues that included domestic violence and sexual abuse. These were dealt with very sensitively and support was offered throughout the sessions and the days between with signposting and referral to the relevant agencies.

The format was used and at times built upon if the issues raised by the group were felt to need extra

The team were truly brilliant and deserved to win one of the SFSC annual awards



support, community speakers were secured that were relevant to the parents' needs and to the issues within Brent: a drugs and substance abuse worker from the PCT, Operation Trident Representative (to discuss gun crime), and a relationships counsellor to look at personal relationships.

The facilitation used all formats, PowerPoint, flip chart, use of videos, food and music to address the different learning styles of the group and their individual needs. Cards were sent to the parents to keep them motivated and their children were also spoken to about the outline of the course to enable communication within the family.

The team were truly brilliant and deserved to win one of the SFSC annual awards because the parenting classes were organised outside of, and in excess of, their work commitments and led to them regularly spending their evenings and occasional weekends preparing the delivery of the course. The workers fought to be able to deliver the course, even though due to organisational and budget pressures they were not able to have any reduction in their work allocation and none of the four members of staff were then able to take annual leave for the three months of the course.

Apart from the fact that we now have parents who have heard about the course crying out for us to run one so they can join in, the facilitators brought the learning back into the wider team. Their excellent training has now led to the senior management team within Social Care approaching us to co-ordinate the facilitators and train more staff so that more people within Brent can have access to this course: a major strategic shift of having a multi-agency (education/ social care/YOT/Teenage pregnancy) parenting support team. So from 4 facilitators we have a huge potential shift in thinking, because of their commitment to the course of offering support borough wide; truly amazing!

# A great experience

Judy Harrison and I began our *Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities* Course in January 2006 after having a very positive response from the parents we were working with, on the introduction day that we had previously facilitated.

The sessions were arranged for Thursday evenings, January to April. An end of programme dinner was arranged to conclude the programme, where certificates for the completion of the programme were handed out.

As it was the first time both Judy and I were to facilitate the programme, we were understandably nervous, although this was helped by us previously holding an open/introduction day. We were also very conscious of the fact that neither of us were parents, but once we reached the third or fourth session this anxiety passed and we were able to deliver a clear and concise programme which we enjoyed facilitating and participating in.

Refreshments for the group were provided every week without exception, this consisted of fruit, sandwiches and other snacks, tea, coffee and soft drinks, available within the kitchen for any parent or guest speaker that had attended the group that evening.

One of the hardest jobs when facilitating the programme was the preparation required for each session. It was extremely time consuming. We did not have the use of a projector; and as a result we

Andre Howell, Facilitator at Brent YOS, gives his perspective on delivering an SFSC programme

were forced to write the programmes for each session, on a flip chart board for the parents to follow. However, this turned out to be a very useful way to plan and deliver each programme, and identify which facilitator would cover each section within each session.

By the fourth or fifth session, the group really began to bond. The banter and support between the members of the group was evident in parents informing Judy and myself, of other parents running late, as well as parents meeting up with each other to make their way to the group. The group exchanged contact details during the programme and promised to keep in contact with each other.

During the programme, we organised various speakers to address the group, based on the participants' needs. This included an Educational Support Worker who was invited in to discuss educational progress within schools as well as academic levels. The parents showed great interest in this session asking questions and taking notes, and making individual appointments with the support worker, who made himself available to attend appointments at schools supporting parents to discuss issues raised within the school. All parents found this speaker very helpful, giving them confidence and knowledge when attending meetings at the school regarding their children. Other guest speakers included a representative of Trident, the

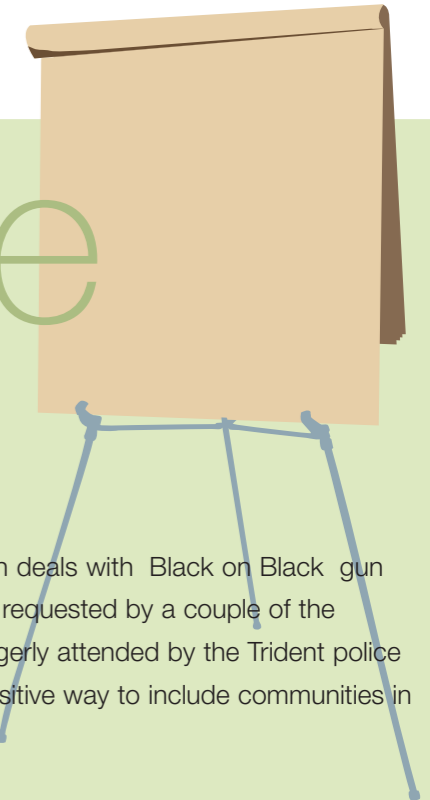
police unit which deals with Black on Black gun crime. This was requested by a couple of the parents, and eagerly attended by the Trident police officers, as a positive way to include communities in their work.

One of the hardest sessions to deliver was the session where we share our influences and memories, which involved parents and facilitators bringing in items such as photos or personal items that each saw as a representation of their character or an influence in their lives or simply something they held dear. It took a lot of persuading for some individuals to bring an item of this kind, which was a surprise to myself considering the positive response

## The programme does require *a lot* of commitment

when we facilitators undertook the same exercise in our training for the course. A lot of encouragement was given to those individuals that found this section of the programme difficult, by which time, the group had already established strong bonds towards each other and were very supportive in encouraging all members to feel at ease when sharing with the group.

All in all it was a great experience both in facilitating and participating in. The programme does require a lot of commitment from both parents and facilitators, but with the appropriate support and encouragement from all participating, this should be a very worthwhile, productive and enjoyable experience.



## A parent speaks...

*My name is David Newton and I am married with three stepchildren, two girls and one boy. My stepson George has ADHD and ODD (Oppositional Defiance Disorder) and has been a challenge from day one. I had never heard of ADHD, so I had no understanding of what I had let myself in for. I thought it was his mother's fault and that he was challenging because his mum had spoilt him, but as time went on I soon realised that he had a problem.*

*Prior to his diagnosis we went to get help with his behaviour difficulties and found that the professionals we approached thought it was our fault and they sent us to a parenting programme. We started the Webster Stratton Parenting Course mid 2003. This course did not work for us as it was really aimed at smaller children and certainly not children with special needs. George never reacted the way the books said he would, so while we were following the programme the response we got was not in keeping with it.*

*We began accessing CAMHS, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services when George was 8 years old. Some considerable time later (August 2004) when George was 13 he was finally diagnosed with ADHD. Because we had been unaware that he had this condition we had battled with him constantly, and this had led to him also having ODD.*

*We were then sent on some taster sessions for another parenting course, Strengthening Families Strengthening Communities, to which I had to be dragged kicking and screaming to but my wife thought would be of some help, even if only a bit of support while we were going there. We already knew one of the facilitators, having been to her support group for children with behavioural problems.*

*After these tasters we signed up for the full parenting course, as I liked the way the course came across and I felt that I could relate to it. I was able to relate to each chapter; it came over as a very community orientated. The facilitators were great and down to earth and never made us feel like bad parents.*

*We were taught that there was another way that we could teach our son to behave. We realised that in order for our sons' behaviour to change we had to change the way we reacted to him and his behaviour. The programme really worked for us and we went every week and did all the homework that was set.*

*In fact I was so enthusiastic about the difference that it had made to our lives that I asked whether I could become a facilitator. In November 2005 I completed my weeks training and I am now a facilitator on a group with two of the facilitators that supported me.*

*Following on from the Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities Programme my wife and I decided to become more involved with a local support group. This group offers support and education about effective parenting strategies, none of us are mental health professionals, we are simply parents who have made the commitment to grow and change by helping each other. This group has now evolved and has a management committee, which we both sit on, and a web site, a library and is applying to the 'funds for all' lottery grant to set up a social skills group for the children of the parents we support. The group is called HELPP – Help Education and Learning for Parents by Parents, [www.helpp.me.uk](http://www.helpp.me.uk).*

*So as you can see it does not have to stop at the parenting programme, and it has spilt over into our community.*

# Bits and Pieces



## Video diaries film

The Video Diaries project has come to a close. Six families from across the country were trained in the use of film equipment and kept video diaries as they attended a SFSC Programme. The parents kept weekly diaries recording their journey through the programme and also filmed themselves interacting with their children, carrying out daily tasks, attending groups and celebrating their completion of the programme. The participants talked about the challenges they faced as parents, their preconceptions of what a parenting programme would be like and their views on what they had gained. The parents took a lead in this work, deciding what they recorded and what was used in the final film.

The video diary film is now being duplicated and will be available from December. Further information is available from Bendu Walker on 020 76196220.

## Facilitator training price rise

Advance notice that it will be necessary to raise the cost of the five day facilitator training from April 1st 2007. New prices will be announced in the new year.

# Annual SFSC Conference

This summer saw the annual conference take place. With well over 300 delegates, 14 exhibitors and a range of speakers, the event was a great success. Thank you to everyone who attended and participated so enthusiastically despite the tropical temperatures (the result of the hottest day of the year combining with a breakdown in air conditioning)!

There were a number of highlights to the day, however the evaluation responses mark out the video diaries film, launched at the beginning of the event, as particularly memorable. Further details of this project are elsewhere in this newsletter.

Speakers on the day included John Amaechi, the ex NBA basketball player and Trefor Lloyd of Working with Men. Our patron Lord Herman Ouseley presided over the annual award ceremony where facilitators and parents who had been actively involved with SFSC over the year were recognised and celebrated. Winners of the facilitator awards included: The Brent Youth Offending Service, The Open Doors Project and Mink Kardes Day Nursery., Beverley West of Bradford FSU, Sara Blakemore and Shirin Ullah of Coram Family, Dr Mohammed Bari of Tower Hamlets SLS and Suwad Genem George of Devon REC. The parent awards went to: Winifred Campbell, Comfort Obikoya, Alan Briggs, Shirley Anderson, Nazmin Begum, and Amina Atcha.

In addition, this year's event included a performance by comedian, writer and TV personality, Gina Yashere.

Next year's event will take place on July 10th and further details will follow in the Newsletter and on the website: [www.raceequalityfoundation.org.uk](http://www.raceequalityfoundation.org.uk)

## A parent perspective...

Viveen Dyer completed the *Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities* course running at the Imani Project in Wandsworth in January 2006. She is the mother of eight children. Here she talks about her experience on this course.

*I began this journey not knowing what to expect, thinking will I have to lie or pretend to be a good parent, not knowing that I was learning about myself.*

*At the beginning of the book we received: the parent manual it said that you are about to go on a journey. I believe I have been on a journey, a journey to build up blocks of success, success for me in how to manage myself and to begin to learn new ways and skills in teaching my children to think positively for themselves.*

*Using the 'first, then' method had a huge impact on my children. Each child responded well to it. By communicating and giving clear instructions it made every day life that little bit better.*

*So for me it has highlighted the way I talk to my children about myself and the past and made me want to be a better parent. As for my children, I can only hope that they will all learn from me, to begin to grow up in peace, to respect each other and pass it on to those around them.*

*So learning new skills, solving problems, gaining knowledge and understanding, making time to play and time to laugh, time for quiet time, time to be known, time out, time for time, the course did it all for me! Thank You!*

# Training News

Developing confident, competent and capable facilitators

Several training courses and support meetings are planned over the next six months which will help SFSC facilitators to explore the programme and develop their skills further. Below is a list of what is happening over the next few months:

## Peer Support Group meetings

### North West (Manchester)

24th November 2006

12pm - 4pm

Contact Amina Lone on 0161 839 9799

### London and South East (London)

1st December 2006

12pm — 4pm

Contact Janette Bryan on 0207 619 6220

### South west region

8th December 2006

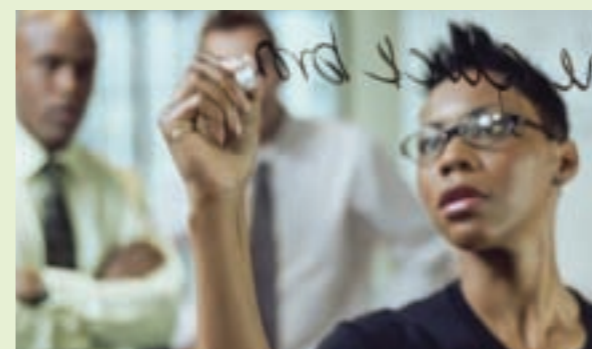
1pm — 3pm

Contact Annie Oliver on 0117 9514231

### West Yorkshire

8th December 2006

Contact Beverley West on 0113 243 0202



## START: A Young People's Programme

This is a three day facilitator training course for SFSC facilitators who wish to deliver the START programme for young people. This programme is based on the principles of the SFSC parent programme, and is structured to be run as a stand alone programme or alongside a programme with parents. It aims to reduce risk taking behaviour and raise self esteem. Further information is available from Amina Lone 0161 839 9799

**Manchester**

March 21-23, 2007

## Delivering SFSC

A one day course aimed at facilitators who have just completed training or are about to start their first SFSC programme and want to think through some of the issues associated with this.

### Follow Up Training

**Birmingham** Dec 11th 2006

**East Midlands** Feb 8th 2007

**Manchester** March 13th 2007

**Birmingham** June 6th 2007

**Manchester** June 11th 2007

**East Midlands** July 17th 2007

This is a training course that agencies commission. Please contact Leandra for further information. 0207 619 6226

## Working with black and minority ethnic fathers

This is a new course open to SFSC facilitators and others interested in working with BME fathers. It is currently under development and will be delivered in the Spring in Birmingham. Further information is available from Cassius and Vanessa Francis on 0121 452 1977.

## SFSC five day facilitator training

This is the facilitator training course run over five days, delivered by Marilyn Steele. Training dates are as follows:

2006

**Hertfordshire** October 30- Nov 3

**London (central)** November 13-17

**Birmingham** November 20-24

**Cornwall** November 27-Dec 1

2007

**Croydon** January 8 - 12

**East Midlands (Leicester)** January 15-19

**York** January 22-26

**Manchester** February 19-23

**Dublin** February 26-March 2

**London (central)** March 19-23

**London (Tower Hamlets)** March 26-30

**London (central)** April 16-20

**East Midlands (Leicester)** April 23-27

**Birmingham** May 14-18

**Northwest** May 21-25

**East Midlands (Nottingham)** June 25-29

**London (central)** July 2-6

**London (central)** September 17-21

**London (central)** November 12-16



## About the Race Equality Foundation

The Race Equality Foundation (formerly the REU) is the leading national agency working to develop appropriate social care services to Britain's black and minority ethnic communities. The Foundation does this through training, consultancy, research, publications, workshops and conferences. The Foundation 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.

## Support, supervision 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).

## SFSC Team Profile

**Leandra Box** is the SFSC Programme Manager. She joined the Race Equality Foundation 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.

**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.

**Cassius and Vanessa Francis** are the Parent Programme Officers for the SFSC programme in Birmingham. Cassius recruits supports, advises and monitors facilitators who are trained in delivering the SFSC programme. Vanessa's focus is on the most effective strategies for extending the reach of the SFSC in Birmingham. They will be developing training sessions aimed at organisations that are seeking to improve the quality of their engagement with black and minority ethnic fathers.

**Norean Yasin** is the Parent Programme Officer for the SFSC Programme in the East Midlands covering Nottingham, Derby and Leicester. Norean is based in the Nottingham Black Partnership Office. She will oversee training, delivery and provide support for the SFSC Parent Programme.

		Data Required
Pre-course	Course registered with Race Equality Foundation	at least 3 weeks before start date
Session 1-3	Initial support visit or phone call by the Race Equality Foundation	(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 (Race Equality Foundation)
Session 10-12	End of programme support visit or phone call	(a) Parent Post Questionnaire (b) Facilitators Class Summary
Post Course	Certificate Ceremony	Participants and facilitator Certificates (Race Equality Foundation)