



# The Magazine of Grampian Opportunities

Grampian **Opportunities**  
Finding the way forward



Issue eleven



Recognising achievements – pictured above participants gain certificates for taking part in Epilepsy Awareness training, Confidence to GO course or Mentor training.

## Change and Achievements

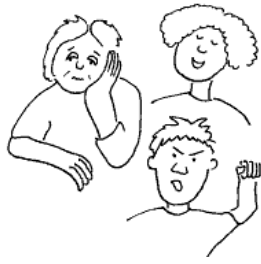
What a year for the Grampian Opportunities (GO) and the Newsletter team, 2010 has seen lots of changes, from the expansion in volunteer numbers - to sadly the closure of the Aberdeen Office. GO has hosted and been invited to lots of events and provided a number of training courses. Our most recent event was the achievement day which was a great success. Congratulations to everyone gaining certificates. Thanks to Susanna and Grace for delivering the Confidence to GO training. Thanks also to the mentoring coordinators for all their hard work for New Explorations mentoring service, and to the mentoring volunteers for helping deliver this years training. Hopefully in 2011 we will be seeing GO's newsletter team visiting other volunteer involving organisations and raising awareness of opportunities for learning, volunteering and moving into employment. Finally may the media team and GO wish you very a

*Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year*

see you all in 2011 all the best.

Edwina Smith





## GO for it...Life Skills Programme

### "Confidence to GO".

Building on previous partnership working with Grampian Opportunities, we were asked if we would deliver a 'Life Skills' course for people with disabilities. This was to be a pilot project involving 10 students, a co-tutor and myself.

This course, "Confidence to GO" offered people the opportunity to explore different ways of developing their confidence as well as their experience and the opportunity to participate in training, in a friendly and supportive environment. It enabled the students to share their experiences with other people, build their confidence and get in touch with who they are and what they want. With the support of the tutors and others in the group, they were able to improve their ability to communicate assertively and explore ways in which they could build on the skills they already have. There were three main strands; "I'm OK" self esteem, "Dealing with Niceness" and "Time to Decide" being assertive.

This course was part funded by The Big Lottery Fund, and the Central Aberdeenshire Health Improvement Fund. Calvin Little, Public Health Coordinator attended the final day of the course and handed out certificates to participants. Students now have the opportunity to be matched to a mentor to help them decide what they want to do next.  
Grace Marshall, WEA tutor



### Employment Opportunities at GO

RNIB have kindly offered me an opportunity to be in employment at Grampian Opportunities through Future Jobs Funding. This is a great opportunity for me to get back into work. I already know the people there and what the organisation does. The best thing is that

I have a computer and the right magnifier software; this is the best thing as I don't need to worry about how I am going to be able to do my work.

There is other equipment that will help me in my work but they will come in time.

Emma Rennie

# "OpeningUp"

Staff and volunteers from Grampian Opportunities attended the **Opening Up** social inclusion event held in November. Over 70 people attended the event where representatives of local groups and agencies together with partners from across Aberdeenshire used different art media to express what "community" meant to them. The event followed a two day workshop where artists worked with the groups to portray and capture barriers faced in the local community. The artists will continue to work with the groups throughout the coming months to produce a dvd of their on-going artwork which will form part of a presentation to be shown to local committees and associations highlighting both positive and negative experiences of living in Garioch. For more information contact:

Jill Sowden, Community Planning Officer on 01467 628338



Bill, Maurice and Greg, three GO volunteers participating at the Opening Up event



## Inverurie Community Training Kitchen

Grampian Opportunities has registered an interest in plans drawn up for a community training kitchen to be based in the Wyness Hall in Inverurie. We also need to clearly identify how the kitchen project will be supported and managed. The Inverurie Health Improvement Group plan to form a Kitchen Support Group which would meet three to four times a year as necessary.

If you wish to discuss the Kitchen please contact:

Jill Sowden, Community Planning Officer [jill.sowden@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:jill.sowden@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)  
or Calvin Little, Public Health Coordinator on 01467 672729



## Mentor Training

During October and November 2010 I attended a three-part Mentoring Course run by the New Explorations Mentoring Service. The course was very interesting with about 11 other potential mentors. The staff and volunteers with New Explorations provided the tutorials with great enthusiasm. There were lots of practical exercises and on Day 2 we were given scenarios which allowed us to do some 'out of the box' thinking. This proved quite challenging but thankfully I did not make many serious mistakes. The course also involved discussions regarding confidentiality and impartiality amongst many other subjects.

On behalf of the other trainee mentors I would like to thank the staff and volunteers of New Explorations Mentoring Service for running this course and I look forward to starting mentoring for real.

Allan Spence

To find out about the New Exploration Mentoring Service come and speak to: Tricia McLean or Katrina Wilson, Mentoring Coordinators

Tel: 01467 629675 or Email: [go.mentor@grampianopportunities.org.uk](mailto:go.mentor@grampianopportunities.org.uk)

## Equally Enterprising

I was asked to have a look at the application for funding for us to get 3 days consultancy on how to do business plans. I noticed that the application

closing date was that day but I went ahead and completed most of it with help from a fellow volunteer. While we were working on a self assessment of the organisation, one of our board members contacted the organisation ODS, and he was able to get us another week to hand in the application. Happily we were one of the 10 organisations in Scotland to be successful. We have had 1 session and that went really well as everyone that attended the training got involved in the workshops. We will be having another 2 workshops to support our learning and in 2011 we will work with the Board to agree a business plan for GO.

Emma Rennie



*Strengthening organisations that focus on equalities*



## New Year, GO Green?

Do you want to be involved in skilling up to reduce energy costs for yourself, GO and the wider community?

Building on from our Sus-it Plus workshop, we have been looking at training to support us progress our sustainability action plan. Forward Scotland advised us to start by looking at our carbon footprint and we have identified Ann Davidson of REAP as the ideal person to help us do this.

The opportunity to be involved is open to current and new volunteers, and Anne believes that the skills learnt could support volunteers mentor others. Come along to an Energy Awareness and Carbon Footprinting workshop with Ann Davidson from REAP on Tuesday 25th January to see how to save money and carbon at the same time. This fun 2-hour workshop will look at where individuals and the organisation spend most energy, what's practical to change and how GO and its volunteers can work with others to make a difference in your local community.

It will include a carbon footprint game, look at GO's carbon footprint, explore practical ideas for reducing energy use and costs, consider partners who can help and share information about getting help with energy saving measures.

If you would like to attend this workshop or volunteer to help develop an action plan for GO Green, contact Linda or Denise on 01467 629675

Email: [go.volunteer@grampianopportunities.org.uk](mailto:go.volunteer@grampianopportunities.org.uk)

REAP is a voluntary organisation working with social enterprise, environmental / energy efficiency work and community work based in Keith with 12 years' experience.

REAP: Tel: 01542 888070 Email: [info@reapscotland.org.uk](mailto:info@reapscotland.org.uk) [www.reapscotland.org.uk](http://www.reapscotland.org.uk)

### **Inspire: Partnership through Life Limited**

Kelly-Marie Clark is the new Liaison and Employment Co-ordinator with the Training for Employment initiative Café Academy.

Kelly is based at Inspire offices at the Beach Boulevard, Aberdeen

Tel: 01224 289018 Email: [kelly-marie.clark@inspiremail.org.uk](mailto:kelly-marie.clark@inspiremail.org.uk)

### **Self Directed Support in Scotland**

The new government publication on their 10 year strategy for Self-directed Support in Scotland is now available:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/11/05120810/0>



## Shaping the future: Short Breaks Research Volunteering Opportunity

Earlier this year the MS Society agreed a new approach to short breaks and respite. The society found that people wanted more individualised services, more choice and control and holiday-style breaks. They identified that the biggest barrier to accessing respite care is the cost of services, followed by lack of information about what's available and a lack of appropriate services to meet the social and care needs of an individual.

"Alternative short breaks" is an area that Grampian Opportunities plan to research, and a small grant has now been secured from the Scottish Community Foundation to start this work.

The research activity will give volunteers the opportunity to work as part of a team and develop a range of skills, including the opportunity to be trained on how to provide a signposting service.

This work fits with the "Inspiring Breaks" project being delivered by Shared Care Scotland, who will be holding workshops on the subject in 2011.

If you would like to be involved in our research project or be kept up to date on the Shared Care Scotland Workshops then please get in touch.

Contact: Denise Cromar [go.volunteer@grampianopportunities.org.uk](mailto:go.volunteer@grampianopportunities.org.uk)

**Grampian Society for the Blind  
becomes  
North East Sensory Services**



Grampian Society for the Blind (GSB) is a well established local charity which has been providing support for the Blind and Visually Impaired community for many years. However, for more than a year now, GSB has also been providing services in Moray for people who are Deaf or who have a Hearing Impairment. Since August this model has now been replicated in Aberdeen.

At their AGM in November the Society announced a new name and logo. The organisation will change its name to North East Sensory Services (N.E.S.S). The name North East Sensory Services and strapline 'achieving independence for blind and deaf people' Chief Executive, Graham Findlay said "Our strapline says it all as we are committed to supporting our service users to be as independent as they can be."



## Community Network Telephone Befriending and Volunteering Opportunity

Grampian Opportunities recently attended an event in Aberdeen held by The Community Networks, which provide a telephone conferencing service to a variety of organisations. Community Networks links people by telephone, enabling individuals to build new or enhance established relationships with others through Telephone Support Groups or Befriending Groups.

Looking at alternative ways of keeping in touch can reduce the feelings of isolation and loneliness that people can face, and Grampian Opportunities already uses a variety of ways to communicate with volunteers and people accessing our services. This includes telephone calls, e-mails, texting from mobile phones, live chat to name a few.

There is now an opportunity to take part in training being offered by the Community Network, to learn how to become a telephone group facilitator within Grampian Opportunities. Katrina, will be one training participant, as part of her role within the mentoring service. We would also like to offer an opportunity to a volunteer who would be interested in developing the skill to support telephone support groups within Grampian Opportunities.

The 'Telephone Group Facilitators Training' is delivered over the telephone, in 3 one hour sessions. Some of the topics covered include, the role of the facilitator, active listening practices, using group consensus, confidentiality and consent. If you are interested or want more information on the training or what being a volunteer group facilitator would entail please contact:

Linda Singer or Katrina Wilson

Tel: 01467 629675 or Email: [katrina@grampianopportunities.org.uk](mailto:katrina@grampianopportunities.org.uk)



The European Year of Volunteering 2011



2011 is recognised as the European Year of  
Volunteering and the slogan adopted is

**Volunteer! Make a difference.**

As an organisation which promotes employment for disabled people, we are delighted that for some, volunteering has acted as a stepping stone towards employment - not least within our own team where five of our seven staff started with us in volunteering roles.

During 2011 we plan to extend support, through our mentoring service, to give volunteers the opportunity to use a volunteering-based, approach to learning and recognising work skills. This idea came from a volunteer suggesting she wanted to put together a folder of her volunteering activities and from this came the idea of using portfolios to keep a record of learning and gain accreditation for the skills demonstrated.

"Volunteering is about giving a bit of your time to help others" said Phyllis who gives her time to help organise events for Grampian Opportunities.

"I started as a volunteer in November last year and feel that being a volunteer in any organisation is an important role because both parties benefit. Being able to share my experience and skills has made good use of my time and I have gained a lot from the support and encouragement at GO. If you would like to find out more about volunteering with Grampian Opportunities or have ideas about events you think we should be involved in then give us a call on Tel: 01467 629675

Phyllis Gordon

Websites	
Grampian Opportunities	<a href="http://www.grampianopportunities.org.uk">www.grampianopportunities.org.uk</a>
RNIB	<a href="http://www.rnib.org.uk">www.rnib.org.uk</a>
ODS Consulting	<a href="http://www.odsconsulting.co.uk">www.odsconsulting.co.uk</a>
Community Planning	<a href="http://www.ouraberdeenshire.org.uk">www.ouraberdeenshire.org.uk</a>
WEA	<a href="http://www.wea.org.uk">www.wea.org.uk</a>
Community Networks	<a href="http://www.community-network.org">www.community-network.org</a>
North East Sensory Services	<a href="http://www.nesensoryservices.org">www.nesensoryservices.org</a>
Shared Care Scotland	<a href="http://www.sharedcarescotland.org.uk">www.sharedcarescotland.org.uk</a>
Inspire Ventures	<a href="http://www.cafecoast.com">www.cafecoast.com</a>
Volunteer Scotland	<a href="http://www.volunteerscotland.org.uk">www.volunteerscotland.org.uk</a>

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