

SCHEMENEWS

Newsletter for Volunteers & Friends of Home-Start Caithness
Spring/ Summer 2014
Issue 8

Home
START
Support and friendship
for families

Hello!

Welcome to our Spring/ Summer 2014 newsletter! In this issue we will update you on the latest information affecting our scheme, talk to a volunteer, catch up with family issues in the news and let you know what Home-Start has been up to in the last few months.

As always, we welcome your contributions to the newsletter. If there is something you would like us to cover, or if you would like to contribute something, please contact the office on 01955 609163 or email: office@homestartcaithness.org.uk

New Volunteers!

Since our last newsletter, we have held two volunteer Preparation Courses; one running from October – December 2013 and one during February and March 2014. We are delighted to welcome 7 new volunteers to our Home-Start Caithness family.

Welcome aboard Sheena, Bethany, Katie, Victoria, Gemma, Kathleen and Debbie. Thank you for choosing to take an interest in our scheme and the work that we do.

Volunteer Recognition Event



Home-Start Caithness hosted an awards evening in the Norseman Hotel on Friday 7th February in recognition of volunteers and the invaluable work they do throughout Caithness each year.

We invited volunteers, trustees and staff to share in the celebration and recognition of the work, dedication and support given by all our volunteers, especially our Board of Trustees.

Our newest Volunteers who had recently finished their preparation course in December were among those receiving Certificates.

<u>NAME</u>	<u>STATUS</u>	<u>Length of service (Years)</u>	<u>Special Award and Certificates</u>
Niall	Trustee	14	Long Standing Service
Bill	Trustee	7	Long Standing Service
Rosemary	Chair/Trustee/Volunteer	3	Outstanding Commitment (374 hours this year)
Lorraine	Volunteer	3	Gold over 150 hours
Alice	Volunteer	1	Silver over 100 hours
Vera	Volunteer	1	Silver over 100 hours
Marina	Volunteer	3	Bronze over 70 hours
Andrena	Volunteer	5	5yr Service Certificate
Lorna	Volunteer	3	3yr Service Certificate
Heather	Volunteer	2	2yr Service Certificate
Christina	Volunteer	1	1yr Service Certificate
Moira	Volunteer	8 months	Course Certificate
Claire	Volunteer	8 months	Course Certificate

All certificates and awards were presented by our guest John Thurso, MP, our chair Rosemary Smith and our Patron Cllr. Gail Ross.

A John O' Groat Journal reporter was also present to write about the work we continue to do throughout Caithness in supporting families within their own homes and communities. We all enjoyed a hot buffet meal along with refreshments and everyone had a wonderful evening. A big Thank You to the Norseman Hotel who made us very comfortable and looked after us all so well.

New Funding & Volunteer Recruitment Campaign

Home-Start Caithness has recently formed a partnership with other charities working within the Highlands to support families. We will be working with Action for Children, Care and Learning Alliance and Home-Start Ross and Cromarty to look at ways in which we could, as a partnership of organisations, provide family support services across the Highlands. Funding has been awarded through the Scottish Government's Early Years Change Fund and this will run for a one-year period from June 2014.

We will be using the funding to set-up and run a Family Group in Wick to provide existing Home-Start families with additional support. We are recruiting a 5-hour Family Group Worker as part of this and the group will be run by them, with the support of a team of volunteers, once a week, term-time only.

We are also running a major campaign to recruit additional volunteers, both Home-Visiting Volunteers and Trustees. Our aim is to increase our volunteer base so that we are able to support more families and have a larger pool of people and experience to draw on, thereby strengthening the organization further. Our volunteers are our greatest asset and many people have ended up volunteering with us due to word-of-mouth. We would be grateful if you would encourage friends and family to consider giving some of their time to Home-Start. As you all know it is a rewarding experience and it has such a positive impact on the lives of local families.

We will be advertising for volunteers widely and will be holding some events, so keep your eyes open and spread the word!



Events Diary

Date	Time	Event
Saturday 21 st June		Play@home training with Rachel Jolly
Saturday 20 th September	21:00 to 23:00	Quiz Night @ Castletown Hotel in aid of Home-Start Caithness
Tuesday 7 th October	19:00 onwards	Annual General Meeting

Volunteer Profile

Each newsletter we profile a volunteer, and this issue's volunteer is Sheena Millington, fresh from her newly attended preparation course in December 2013, to tell us a little bit about herself and what made her choose volunteering with Home-Start Caithness.

Name:	Sheena Millington
Where from:	Lybster, Caithness
Strange but Interesting Fact:	My scrambled egg recipe is from Jack McConnell
Favourite hobbies:	Belly dancing, reading, running, crafts and gardening
Favourite movie:	To kill a mocking bird
Favourite thing about Home-Start:	My daughter needed help from Home-Start so I wanted to help

Trustee Profile

Our Board of Trustees is currently made up of: Rosemary Smith (Chairperson); Niall Smith (Vice-Chairperson); Victoria Denley-Spencer; Bill Fernie and Vicky Mackay. This month, we profile one of our new members, Vicky, mum to 3 boys, aged 9, 7 & 5.

Name:	Vicky Mackay
Where from:	Portsmouth, Isle of Wight and Southampton
Strange but Interesting Fact:	I can't touch unglazed pottery, it makes me feel sick and I once skinny dipped in the Nile...
Favourite hobbies:	Holistic therapy and a practicing reflexologist
Favourite movie:	Pretty Woman or Star Wars
Favourite thing about Home-Start:	I love homestart because the service helps empower women to cope with motherhood, not something we all take to naturally.

Helping Families

In this new section, we are going to take a look at some additional Sources of support that local families can access.

This month, we are going to look at the Caithness Food Bank and Health Start vouchers.

If you come across any organisations, useful websites or anything else that you feel other volunteers may find useful, please contact Dorothy at: office@homestartcaithness.org.uk or on 01955 609163 and we will look at including this information in future newsletters.

Caithness Food Bank

Home-Start Caithness has recently become involved with Caithness Food Bank. This was set up by Highland Food Bank (run by Blythswood Care under license from the Trussell Trust) in January 2014 and it provides emergency food supplies for people unable to buy food themselves because of financial distress. We currently keep Food Bank vouchers in the office and can issue these to any Home-Start family that requires emergency provisions. Food Bank clients bring their voucher to a Food Bank centre where it is exchanged for a three day emergency food package, complete with suggested nutritious recipes to help them make best use of the food. All Food Bank clients can receive up to three vouchers in a six-month period.

It is important to remember that this is only an emergency source of support and that a family must not become dependent on it. If your Home-Start family is need of a food parcel, please contact us immediately and we will do our best to get the vouchers to you or the family a.s.a.p.. We will then work with you and the family to review their needs, to look at why they have ended up in this situation and to look at ways of ensuring that their needs are adequately addressed.

The Food Bank currently operates from:

Thurso - Princes Street. It is open every Tuesday & Friday, from 12:00 until 14:00. Work is underway to provide a hub in Wick and volunteers are currently being trained to provide this service.

Healthy Start Vouchers



Many people are unaware of the NHS-run Healthy Start scheme. It currently operates throughout the UK and is a means-tested scheme to help give children the best start in life. Families receive vouchers that can be exchanged through local retailers (Tesco, Lidl, The Co-op, Superdrug, Boots and many local corner-shops are involved) for milk, fruit and vegetables (fresh or frozen) and infant formula. Vouchers are also provided for mothers and children to get free vitamins as well.

So what vouchers can people get?

- If you're pregnant you get one voucher a week worth £3.10
- For each baby under the age of one, you get two vouchers a week worth a total of £6.20
- For each child aged over one and under 4, your family gets one voucher a week worth £3.10

Who qualifies?

- You qualify for Healthy Start if you're at least 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under 4 years old AND you or your family get:
 - Income Support, **or**
 - Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, **or**
 - Income-related Employment and Support Allowance, **or**
 - Child Tax Credit (but not Working Tax Credit unless your family is receiving Working Tax Credit run-on only*) **and** has an annual family income of £16,190 or less (2014/15).You also qualify if you are under 18 and pregnant, even if you don't get any of the above benefits or tax credits.

*Working Tax Credit run-on is the Working Tax Credit you receive in the 4 weeks immediately after you have stopped working for 16 hours or more per week (single adults) or 24 hours per week (couples).

We have a supply of leaflets in the office for you to give out to your Home-Start family if you feel that they may be entitled to receiving Healthy Start vouchers, but are not accessing them. Families are required to complete an application form and this must be signed by their Health Visitor. We are able to help families complete the form, so this should not be a deterrent to anyone needing to access the service. Alternatively, you can find out more information at <http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/>.

Fundraising - Help raise money for Home-Start!

Old Ink Cartridge and Mobile Phone collection

We have begun collecting any old and disused mobile phones, but more importantly, ink and toner cartridges for recycling with a company called Office Green.

As a charity we will be able to gain points for every item collected, but best of all, is that Office Green are prepared to accept **any** used ink cartridge or old mobile. These points would be turned into cash equivalent high street vouchers each year which would in turn be used as volunteer incentives and recognition rewards.

Please encourage friends, families and yourselves to place any unwanted and used items into the box in our downstairs hall way. Alternatively you could pass on to Coordinators during supervision support sessions.

Please, please, please, it really is that easy...

Can we remind everyone that Home-Start Caithness is registered with easyfundraising, which provides a free fundraising service where supporters can raise funds for our scheme when they shop online.

All you have to do is register at <http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/hiscaithness/> and shop with over 2000 well known retailers like Amazon, Argos, M&S, eBay and many more. Whenever you buy something, the retailer makes a donation to Home-Start Caithness. They've helped other causes raise over £2,000,000, so it really does work. It won't cost you a penny extra to shop through easyfundraising and you can even save money with special offers and voucher codes.

Don't delay—sign up today!

Membership of Home-Start Caithness

Did you realise that as well as volunteering with Home-Start Caithness, you can actually become a member? The day-to-day management is carried out by the Board of Trustees, but by becoming a member, you are entitled to do the following things:

- to attend and vote at general meetings. Normally there will be one meeting per year, called the Annual General Meeting (AGM), and you will be given at least three weeks' notice of the place and time of the meeting. We may also need to call other general meetings in exceptional circumstances;
- to receive the annual accounts of our charity;
- to elect trustees by voting at the meeting;
- to vote on any fundamental changes to the nature of the charity, its name and its purposes.



This is an essential part of our governance and we would be delighted if all of our volunteers would join us as members. Please speak to your Coordinator or contact the office for further information.



VOLUNTEER EVENING

Our Chair, Rosemary Smith, hosted a volunteer evening on Thursday 29th May and prepared a beautiful cold buffet for all to enjoy.

Volunteers attending had the chance to discuss our home visiting service and look at what Home-Start Caithness could improve or maintain and how the Service could look in 3 - 5 years time.

Home-Start Caithness is on Facebook!

Please 'like' us! Details of events and training will be posted here and we are hoping that we might be able to attract some families and volunteers as well - every little helps!

If you do join us, please continue to be aware of the need to maintain strict confidentiality - no sharing of sensitive information, as everyone will see it!

... and our new **WEB SITE** please visit us on:

www.homestartcaithness.org.uk



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