

Introductory Newsletter



Sky High

**Suffolk Peer Support
And
Mentoring Network**

**Honorary President:
Helen Cowie**

Hello!

This is the first of what we hope will be a series of newsletters keeping you up to date on what is happening in Suffolk on the Peer Support and Mentoring front. This is likely to be the only hard copy newsletter that you receive as we aim to be completely electronic as soon we can in order to save costs!

As I write this our website is already under construction.

Simon Scholey, whom many of you will have met at the MMAD conference is already working hard on developing it, but we still need your input. We want the network and the website to be '**by you, for you**' so please make your views and ideas known to him on the email address below.

Simon has written an update which you will find in this newsletter.

As you will see we now have a name! We hope you like it and feel that it is in keeping with the balloon image which we introduced at the conference on March 1st. We also have an Honorary President, Helen Cowie! Helen is one of the pioneers of Peer Support in the UK and is a national figure so we are privileged that she has agreed to be with us. More of that later!

It is our intention to do a feature on as many schemes as we can in our newsletters so that we can all share experiences and learn from one another. If you have anything that you wish to be included in the newsletters whether it is information or a request for help, please contact us. Contact details are at the end of this newsletter. Furthermore if any of you would like to act as network reporters please let us know!

Best Wishes

Steve Wooldridge (ABC Services)

On behalf of the Network Development Group

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The 2nd MMAD (Mentoring Making A Difference) Conference on March 1st at Kesgrave Community Hall



Going 'Sky High' – the launch of the Suffolk Peer Support and Mentoring Network at Kesgrave on 1st March ,2006

Over 120 Peer Supporters and Mentors from schools and organisations across Suffolk gathered at Kesgrave on 1st March 2006 to exchange ideas and experiences and to launch the Suffolk Peer Support and Mentoring Network called 'Sky High'. The day consisted of activities focussing on celebrating the work of Peer Supporters and Mentors and was facilitated by trainers from 1st Question, Steve Wooldridge and Jill knell (ABC Training and Support) and Angela Dyer (Mentoring Co-ordinator for Suffolk EBP and Aim Higher). There were short presentations from Needham Market Middle School, Sir John Leman High School in Beccles, HAMS (Haverhill Mentoring Scheme) and Copleston High School, Ipswich. This was the second MMAD conference and was the brainchild of Lynda Skelton and Chris Welch of the Disabled Childrens Team. Our thanks to them for all their hard work in organising what was a great day!

Making it work

Suggestions about networking posted on our flip chart throughout the day

- Finding out how other schools deal with bullying
- Co-operation with other schemes
- Informally sharing ideas between groups of young people
- Sharing good practice and ideas
- A forum to learn about other peoples experiences
- Changing the image
- Opportunity to meet new people-Networking!
- Team building sessions with feeder schools
- Building in Fun activities
- Linking to other mentoring schemes in school and the community
- Getting more people involved
- Hearing how other mentoring schemes work
- Having a chance to talk through challenges mentors face
- After School clubs/sessions
- Sharing resources and training materials
- Acknowledging physical and cultural diversity
- Developing systems so schemes carry on for future year groups
- Making mentoring Fun!!

Some reports from schools attending the conference....

Framlingham College

On the 1st March, Philip Donald, Storm Rae and Adam Darroch-Thompson, all three being part of the Framlingham College Peer Mentor Team, went with Mr. Lawrence, our Peer Mentoring Tutor, to the annual Peer Mentor conference at Kesgrave Community Centre. This event was attended by members from peer mentor schemes in schools across the county as well as many people from other related county organisations

The event can be described as nothing but a success, not just for Framlingham but for all involved.

The day was packed with activities, each with different intentions. To start with, there were a few exercises, just to loosen up and get to know one another. "Getting to know one another", incidentally, was a main focus point throughout the day. We were always encouraged to mix with the groups from other schools with the intention of sharing ideas about each other's peer mentoring schemes. As Framlingham's peer mentoring team was only set up at the beginning of this academic year, we had a lot to learn from everyone.

As the day moved on there were more activities, aimed at furthering our skills as peer mentors. There were also several presentations from other schools about how they run their mentoring services and the ideas they use to help others. These presentations included one from a group of 11 and 12 year olds. This just goes to show that peer mentoring schemes really are springing up all over the place! At the end of the day we were all involved in the launch of the Suffolk Peer Support Network which will work to keep all related groups in regular contact with each other as their schemes develop to 'make a difference' to lives of all students in our schools.

It is certainly fair to say that we all learned a lot from the day and picked up plenty of ideas, some of which have already been put into practice and some of which we hope to put into practice very soon. We all are looking forward to next year's conference very much, as it will be another learning curve for the still relatively young, but successful, Framlingham College Peer Mentor scheme.

Adam Darroch-Thompson
Framlingham College Peer Mentoring Scheme

Needham Market Middle School

On March 1st, we (Jack, Chelsea, Nick and Helen) went to Kesgrave Community Centre to a Suffolk Peer Support celebration. On arrival, we were the first group there and each of us got a name badge. Unfortunately Nick and Chelsea's name badges said Nikki White and Chelsea Holmes.

Soon after we quickly got seats and some peer supporters from Combs Middle School came. Activities soon began when everyone was here. The first activity we did was Nick's favourite in which we suggested the ways that were not helpful to Steve's problem.

Many other interesting activities followed like Speed Dating, so we could meet all the other people and learn about their scheme or Rabbits and Foxes where in pairs people created a house shape by putting their hands together upwards and the rabbit tries to get to a house, this represents shelter and protection in everyday life.

During this day we got a bit of extra training, made friends and launched the Suffolk Peer Support Network by all of us holding onto a parachute and throwing it up into the air without letting go. Overall we had a great day and learnt a lot.

Jack, Chelsea, Nick and Helen
Needham Market Middle School (CATS – Caring And Thoughtful Support)

Chantry High School, Ipswich

On 1st March Rebecca Kingham and I from CHUMS went to the MMAD Conference at Kesgrave. It was a great day. There were lots of other Peer Supporters there from all over Suffolk. We enjoyed the day (and the free tasty lunch!) very much. We did lots of different exercises and some schools did presentations. The Suffolk Network was launched and we had enjoyed the parachute and balloon game.

We came away enthused with lots of new ideas and shortly afterwards we had a CHUMS revamp meeting where we spent time planning going into assemblies to advertise our scheme, doing a DVD, fund raising and going into Primary schools to talk to the Year 6 's who will be coming next year. It was a good day.

Deanna McMahon (CHUMS – Chantry High Upper School Mentoring Scheme)

How I have Made A Difference. Some comments from Peer Supporters shared during an activity at the MMAD conference.

'Some students were making nasty comments and insulting an Iranian boy - I stood up and spoke for him. He felt safer.'

'I helped my older brother who has learning difficulties pass his theory test.'

'I helped a boy adapt to a single parent environment.'

'I helped two friendship groups of thirteen year olds sort out their differences. I helped them talk things through and discuss possible solutions.'

'There was a pupil aged twelve who was new and did not speak much English. I helped to arrange his induction into school.'

'I helped a fourteen year old boy who was having trouble settling into his boarding house. I introduced him to some people who were able to help.'



'I helped a year 8 girl to enjoy school and not be worried that boys would be mean to her.'

Helping my little brother move from Primary School to High School.

Flying High with Sky High

'In year 8 there was a girl being bullied. I became her friend and she got through it and made new friends. My Form Tutor noticed this and gave me an award.'

'I helped a Year 7 boy who had just moved to the school to make friends and talk about his feelings.'

'A year 5 girl - she was getting picked on so I reassured her and talked to a teacher.'

'A girl aged 11. I helped build her self esteem and to make friends within her class.'

'A year 6 girl had no friends. She came and spoke to us for company and felt better.'

'A year 5 girl who was feeling left out in her friendship group. We sorted things by getting them together and talking.'

An Appeal For Help With Some Summer Projects from Chris and Lynda

CALLING ALL PEER MENTORS AND SUPPORTERS!

Can you help us?

We need peer mentors or supporters to assist us with a range of projects this summer 2006.

We will provide you with:

- Extra training to help you feel more confident about working with disabled youngsters.
- Good support so you are never left to deal alone with tricky situations.
- A small expenses payment for each session that you work.
- A certificate/reference if you need it for work/college.

You will gain:

- A brilliant sense of satisfaction and achievement
- Lots of fun, get to try new activities,
- Lots of knowledge about yourself and other people!
- Maybe even a new career direction, certainly something really positive to put on your C.V.

What will be happening?

Interested? Below is a brief list of possibilities where we would like to have peer supporters involved.

- **Forest Challenge:** Thorpe Woodlands camping: outdoor adventure. July 31st-Aug 4th.
- **Circus Skills:** Complete with Big Top and the Foolhardy Circus troupe. Weeks at: Lowestoft August 14th-18th
Stradbroke August 7th-11
- **Carnival Weekend:** Sizewell: Wardens residential Centre, taking part in the Aldeburgh carnival! August 18th - 21st
- **Summer Playschemes** at: Saxmundham, Lowestoft, Bury St Edmunds, Sudbury, Haverhill, Ipswich.
- **A range of summer activities and events** in all areas of Suffolk. **Tell us what you enjoy doing!**

- **Regular Saturday Clubs and teenage groups meeting in:**
Lowestoft, Saxmundham, Stowmarket, Newmarket,
Debenham, Ipswich.

Maybe your school or organisation would be interested in regularly supporting a particular activity or event that includes disabled youngsters?

Do contact us if you would like to know more!!

Chris Welch & Lynda Skelton

Locality Development Officers

Disabled Children's Team

Telephone: **01379 873111**

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For your interest.....

There are various kinds of mentoring taking place throughout Suffolk. Below is a brief article by Angela Dyer about some of those schemes including those involving older students and adults.....



mhigher...
suffolk

Suffolk Mentoring

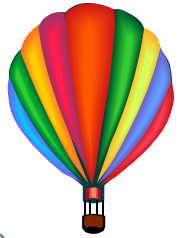
The Suffolk Education Business Partnership (SEBP) offers support to both existing and emerging mentoring schemes within Suffolk Schools by assisting in the recruitment and training of business mentors. Undergraduate mentors are recruited and supported in partnership with Aim Higher Suffolk.

There are currently over 40 schools across the county who are members of the SEBP Mentoring Network. Current mentoring schemes include; *in-house mentoring by teachers, peer mentoring of younger students, undergraduates and the use of business mentors.*

Business mentors involve employees from small, medium and large companies who are matched with students identified as individuals who would benefit from one to one sessions with a neutral adult. Undergraduate mentors are recruited from the regional colleges and Higher Education establishments to raise the aspirations of school students and to promote the benefits of further education.

The age range of the young people vary from scheme to scheme, but are often 14-16 year olds who may need extra help with issues such as time management, resourcing of information, support with coursework and exams and discussing career options.

Angela Dyer Mentoring Coordinator EBP



Sky-High Website - Update

Work on the new Sky High website has begun! We are working hard to implement together the many great ideas we have received from people involved in the project. We are making the site fun and colourful but most of all a really useful resource for everybody. We want it to be a place where you can get great advice but also a place to chill out and chat to your friends. For scheme coordinators we hope there will be opportunities to exchange ideas about what is working well and provide a point of contact.

We have many ambitious plans and are looking for people to help out with the site. Whether you can help with content for the site or even work on the behind the scenes coding we would love to hear from you. Please visit the site at www.sky-high.org.uk and click on one of the links at the top to send your details to us. We'd love to hear from you

Email Group

The Sky-High email group is now up and running. You can sign up today at www.sky-high.org.uk! The email group will help you keep in touch with what is going on at Sky-High. You will be able to send messages to everybody in the group (all messages will be approved first) quickly and easily. We hope the email group will be used to pass on information about what all Sky-High members are up to and link in with the website to keep everybody up to date.

If you have any questions regarding the email group please contact webmaster@sky-high.org.uk.

Simon Scholey – Webmaster

Sky High – Our Aims and Objectives



Our Aim

To encourage young people and adults to help and support others within their community through Peer Support and Mentoring.

Our Objectives

1. To promote the use of Peer Support and Mentoring by providing a forum and network for all adults and young people trained as Peer Supporters.
2. To facilitate the exchange of ideas and good practice.
3. To provide training opportunities.
4. To publicise good practice.
5. To offer advice and support to anybody wishing to set up a scheme.
6. To signpost funding opportunities.

Sky High Network Development Team – Contacts

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Disabled Children's Team

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