

**A LETTER FROM LESLEY ALLEN
CO-EDITOR OF PERSONALITY DISORDER: NORTH ESSEX NEWS**

Dear Friends,

I am writing this letter to all those on our mailing list. I have been co-editor of the Personality Disorder Newsletter for nine years. Twelve years ago, in 1998, as a service user with this diagnosis I became part of the original campaign to highlight the plight of those with personality disorder and, from the efforts of service users with the diagnosis in North East Essex, I have seen The Haven come into being from a dream; to an embryo; to being the current flourishing service. It is with real sadness that I write to confirm that, as some of you already know, funding has not been able to be agreed to continue The Haven's Social Inclusion Unit. This is a vital part of our service and we are now trying to find alternative funds to retain two valued and knowledgeable members of staff and keep the other activities in the unit going. It seems ironic that, just as national guidance such as "New Horizons" and "Realising Ambitions" is hot off the press, aiming for social inclusion and work opportunities for people with mental health problems; this is the very part of The Haven service that has come under threat. At the moment I am receiving support from Inez, our Social Inclusion Co-ordinator, in finding paid employment and, at The Haven, we talk about "Essence of Inez", which needs to be bottled because it is so full of hope and inspiration and is the kind of specialist support people with this diagnosis need.

For those who have already become a "Friend of The Haven", on behalf of the clients here I want to say thank you from the bottom of our hearts, and you might know someone you can pass the pledge form onto who may be interested. The form is also available on-line, on our website. For those of you, who have not yet pledged, please find the enclosed letter and Standing Order Form. We hope no-one will take offence by being asked to pledge, and we do understand if you would prefer not to. But if you do, we felt that a minimum of £5 per month was good as we think everyone can afford £1.25p per week and we have pensioners, and people on benefits alike, who have also become a "Friend of The Haven". Our campaign has begun and our funding thermometer, in the enclosed letter, shows how much we have raised so far. There is a long way to go to raise the £60,000 required and we really need your help. Last week we also launched our media campaign with seven showings on BBC TV Look East:



BBC TV Look East Says: A Centre in Colchester, which treats people with personality disorders, has set up an appeal. The Haven Project is facing a shortfall of £60,000. The centre, which has been running for five years, is one of just a few in the country, it helps over a hundred people, many with problems following abuse when they were young.

PARENTING CLASSES IN DANGER

Parenting Classes, featured on TV below, are where those who may not have received the best of support when they were young, learn parenting skills to help their own children



*Heather Castillo
Haven Chief
Executive says: We
do understand that
local funders are
in a very difficult*



position and have got to look at health across the boards. But we felt we had been so successful and we feel we can't let this part of the project go. We're determined to keep it going and that's staff, directors and clients alike.



Haven Client, Becky says: It's about supporting someone through troubled times; encouraging them to college; giving something back; being part of a bigger picture; improving someone's quality of life; and feeling safe.

Continued Overleaf ...

VITAL PROJECT'S FUNDING PLEA



Learning new skills - Gary Bartholomew with social inclusion co-ordinator Inez Davies

Haven taught me computer skills

GARY Bartholomew who lives in Colchester, survived a tough upbringing. He said: "It was quite a dysfunctional family and there was a lot of brutality and abuse. When my father passed away when I was 22 years old, that was the start of a nervous breakdown. Within a year, I'd gone from about 15 stone to six-and-a-half stone and

A centre for people with personality disorders has been helping scores of north Essex residents since 2004. But the project, which helps adults to re-establish ties with the community, is set to run out of funding within three months. Reporter **JAMES CALNAN** visited the centre, in Lenden, Colchester, and met those for whom it is invaluable.

THE Haven Project offers round-the-clock support and therapy to 140 adults with personality disorders in north Essex. Many have had desperately unhappy childhoods, spent years in mental health institutions or have a history of self-harm. But meeting its lively, happy and outgoing clients, these facts are easy to forget. One 54-year-old man, who did not want to be named, was admitted to a high security hospital at the age of 15 and stayed there for 26 years. Thanks to the help of Haven, he is now living independently.

The project, based in Glen Avenue, Lenden, Colchester, was set up in 2004 with funding from the Department of Health. Day and night, it offers therapy, support and beds for anyone who

needs a haven from the outside world. In 2007, the Cabinet Office gave Haven three years of funding to set up a social inclusion unit. Haven chief executive Heather Castillo said the unit has now given 60 people the qualifications and help needed to find work. She said: "Our clients are adults who have usually had a very difficult start in life. This is a very intelligent client group, but there's a fragility there that needs ongoing support. The social inclusion unit is for people who are beginning to

well enough to think about going to college, volunteering or doing paid work. It's been hugely successful about things we cherish and he for granted - decent homes, family life and the opportunity to back into the community. But the £90,000-a-year funding is only intended as a start-up of will run out in April. Attempts by Mrs Castillo to raise funding locally, have, understandably considering the economic climate, not been successful. She said: "I've been trying for months to negotiate continuation funding with the local primary



Helped - Rebecca Attwater and Helen Price

Pictures: **ADRIAN RUSHTON** 27/01/10 27

care trusts and the county council. But because of the recessionary climate, they have told us no. We decided we couldn't possibly let this part of the project go, so we've launched a fundraising campaign." Inez Davies, Haven's social inclusion co-ordinator, said the more successful Haven could become, the more taxpayers' money would be saved. She added: "The way we operate is to reduce admissions to hospital, and reduce pressures on NHS services, such as mental health teams. "Basically, we're trying to help our clients have a sense of self, so we can help them discover what they like and don't like." In recent weeks, the Friends of the Haven has already raised £10,000 towards its target. To make a donation, visit thehavenproject.org.uk or call 01206 287516.

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Back on track with success in GCSEs

HAVEN helped Helen Price, 32, get her life back on track after the sudden death of her mother. She said: "I suffered periods of depression and just felt suicidal, interspersed with very brilliant moments of mania. Haven has helped me get on an even keel and addressed stuff that's happened in the past. Since social inclusion started, it's helped me realise the person I can be. I want to be the best Helen Price in the world. I had the devil on my work in the form of a maths GCSE. It took me seven attempts and this year, with the help of the social inclusion department, I finally obtained a C. Rebecca Attwater, 26, spent 18 months in the psychiatric system before helping to set up the Haven Project. With the help of tutoring from the social inclusion unit, Rebecca recently received a C in

her English GCSE. She said: "In the past five years, I've only had one week in the hospital, and that was at the start of the project. I've been helped by my English tutor, who has helped me to improve my grammar and punctuation. I've been looking into voluntary working and have been writing to different companies."

Since social inclusion started, it's helped me realise the person I can be. I want to be the best Helen Price in the world

Group helped turn woman's life around

A 48-YEAR-OLD woman from the Tendring area, who does not want to be named, was living the high life in Paris 15 years ago when she started feeling unwell. She said: "By the time I was 33, I was an alcoholic. I was suicidal, I was self-

harming and I was having setbacks of sexual abuse when I was a kid. I was on life support about once or five times. "I've been at Haven, I

haven't been back in hospital for four years. "I haven't had a drink in 26 months. "With the support of the social inclusion unit, she now has NVQ level two qualifications in English and volunteering.

The client continued: "I started coming to the inclusion group, who supported me because I was diagnosed with dyslexia. "I now do voluntary work, helping an old lady with shopping and I just love talking to and meeting people."

Full size version of this article available on our website, www.thehavenproject.org.uk. News Page.

A TESTIMONIAL FROM HAVEN CLIENT CHARMAINE SLADE HIGHLIGHTING COST-BENEFITS

I heard with dismay that funding for this vital work at The Haven will not be continued and I would like to make my views known.

I have Personality Disorder and was referred to this service by my Psychiatric Consultant several years ago. At that time I recognise that I was very ill indeed and again, at that time, few professionals thought that Personality Disorder was a treatable condition. It was, in effect, a dustbin diagnosis and marked the end-of -the -line of hope for recovery.

The success of the care, (or treatment, for want of a better word) at The Haven is nothing short of astonishing. Over a period of time I have changed from an emotional cripple with no self-esteem and certainly no future in society, to a working professional, with a strong network of friends and a fully-functioning family. This situation was created in no small part with the full assistance of the social inclusion team at The Haven. Despite my years of self-loathing, this unit gave me every skill and confidence to fight my way back into society. And they remain there for me, if I need their support again. I am far from alone with my experience of this team. Not everyone is able to recover to my extent but everyone has something to give back to their environment. I don't believe that there is any such similar specialist support throughout Essex for those in the community with a personality disorder diagnosis and to lose their skills would be devastating for many sufferers.

The cost-benefit analysis bears testimony to the success of this project. Before engaging with these wonderful people I was admitted to acute psychiatry services several times every year, often for weeks on end. I haven't had a hospital admission for 2 years now and only come to The Haven for 4 nights rest every few months. Without the support of The Haven and its Social Inclusion work I very much doubt I would be in this privileged position. There must be a huge saving to the NHS as a direct result of successful support from this service. The cost saving will be replicated for every client who makes a full or partial recovery.

I can see that short-term savings can be made by not continuing funding for this service. Times are hard for all of us. But I beg everyone to reconsider. The savings accrued would soon be swallowed up by the increasing costs to statutory services. And this takes no account of the cost in terms of human suffering.

Yours truly,
Charmaine Slade



SAVE THE HAVEN EDUCATIONAL TUTOR
Pictured above is David, our Educational Tutor, who comes on Wednesdays and Thursdays to help clients with English and Maths. By pledging to "Friends of The Haven" this is one of the services you will help to keep going.