

Newsletter – 6th January 2013

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1. **Debenham On-Call!** Debenham On-Call is now a reality.
2. **Dementia Awareness!** the Debenham Project was highlighted for its groundbreaking achievements.....
3. **Donations and Fund Raising** flabbergasted us with a donation of £2,000!

Hi Everyone,

Wishing you all a Very Happy New Year

1. Debenham On-Call: The Debenham On-Call team of voluntary carers, created in collaboration with **Christies Care**, is now a reality. It exists to help the family carer (husband, wife, partner, friend, or neighbour) of an elderly relative or friend who needs support day by day, hour by hour, and minute by minute – a demanding and exhausting role. When there is an emergency, an important appointment, or they may really need just a few hours for themselves, having a specially trained local friend and volunteer who can stand in and cope can be a “life saver”.

Mark, the first carer to be trained for “Debenham On-Call”, was the first to pass through the rigorous training course at Christies Care (which is being provided free of charge). ‘He was a great person, I can really see him being a fantastic carer’ said Alison Hawkins, head of training. ‘Our training has to be intensive, as we train people to be live-in carers, providing 24 hour care, so that their clients don’t have to be packed off to residential homes. Our carers have a great deal of responsibility, so the training has to be the best. So we’re confident that Mark will be able to cope with anything!’ Jan and Steve followed, and now we have 8 volunteers who have been trained to CQC standards and are ready to be “On –Call”.

Please make this service known to anyone you know who could benefit from the reassurance that all they need to do is ring Sam Cage (01449 711551) or the Debenham Project Helpline (01728 862003). Debenham On-Call is not restricted just to family carers looking after someone with dementia. It is intended to offer cover for any elderly and frail person who needs someone with them in the house for all but very short periods of time.

However, symptoms, such as short term memory loss, periods of confusion and disorientation, sudden behaviour changes, wandering, etc which are consistent with dementia (but can also be associated with other illnesses) are often the reason why an elderly relative or friend cannot be left on their own for any length of time. So this is why we are providing a training course for our volunteer carers in dementia awareness, support and management to “professional” standards beginning in a few days’ time.

2. Dementia awareness: Last Spring the Prime Minister asked the Alzheimer’s Society to plan and lead a campaign to tackle the problem of dementia. The plan that resulted was to create “Dementia Friendly Communities” and “1 Million Dementia Friends” across the UK. If successful it will help to recruit a population who will understand the nature of the illness and be confident to step in and help when someone is confused and stressed. It is hoped that communities, companies, banks, local authorities, and many other organisations will seek to become as aware of the needs of those with dementia and, especially, those who care for them, as they have now become aware of those with physical disabilities. And to

respond with understanding, care, and practical help.

Angela Rippon and Jeremy Hughes (CEO of the Alzheimer's Society) are leading a Champions Group tasked with designing the campaign and "making it happen". The Debenham Project has contributed to that group based upon our experience over the last three years. Angela came to Ipswich to give an important lecture and Jeremy to Norwich to help launch Norfolk and Suffolk's response to their proposals. On both occasions the Debenham Project was highlighted for its groundbreaking achievements in the field.

As I indicated, the Debenham Project will also be playing its part with formal dementia awareness training for our volunteer carers. However, we shall also be running a local public awareness programme designed to encourage a basic understanding of the illness, how we can all help, and what support the Debenham Project provides. It is just one element of tackling the problems that dementia presents to every one of us, and the ultimate aim is for each town and village to be a "dementia friendly community". By all the standards Debenham has arguably already achieved the status of: "The First Dementia Friendly Rural Community in the UK".

And we are proud of that – Thank you to everyone who has been part of the project – big or small. We are so pleased about how our project has helped those who are coping with the impact of dementia on their family lives - we can only be there for you and to try to make a difference. BUT THERE IS SO MUCH MORE THAT WE CAN DO.

3. Donations and Fund Raising: Of course such activities do not come cheap despite what the Government seems to think. On average, we have to find core funding of about £9,000 a year to run the project. In addition we have to find the money for special development activities such as the Carers Co-op, Debenham On-Call, and our research work. However, I have stopped being surprised (well almost) how often we receive unexpected and spontaneous donations – some small, some surprisingly large – I am just enormously grateful. Let me tell you of a couple. The first came our way as a result of a group of families who recently attended a dinner dance and (as you do) set up a drinks kitty behind the bar. At the end of the evening they simply decided to give what was left over straight to The Debenham Project. The second occurred at our Christmas Food 'n' Friends lunch at Coopersfield when a couple of unexpected visitors turned up and flabbergasted us with a donation from Suffolk Respite of £2,000! again, and again unexpected, I would like to thank the organisers of the Christmas Festival Evening for nominating The Debenham Project as one of its two local charities and also thanks to the volunteers who "manned the buckets". We would also like to express our gratitude to the family and friends of John Norman for their generous donations made in his memory.

If you would like to know more about our work and services please see our display in the Post Office, ring 01728862003, call in at the Library Resource Centre, or visit our website at <http://www.the-debenham-project.org.uk/>. Past newsletters are archived on the website.

With my very best wishes



Lynden Jackson (Chairman)