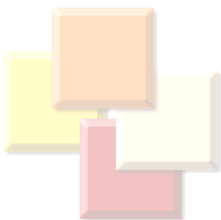


Case Studies

Voluntary Sector Training

December 2010



Case Study: Chignall Estate Residents Association

December 2010



Chignall Estate Residents Association (CERA) is a local community group representing the residents of the Chignall estate in Chelmsford. The group works together to address and act on particular issues for the local community. Their overall vision is to create recreational facilities to improve the health and well being of children from all age groups, to involve them in the planning process, taking on board their ideas of play and giving them a play area that they take ownership of as responsible members of their community. In order to achieve this vision they identified the need for knowledge of funding and how to apply for it.

CERA wished to apply for the Government's Playbuilder Fund but the deadline was tight and the Voluntary Sector Training 'First Steps to Funding' course full. Despite these barriers Voluntary Sector Training assisted CERA by providing course material and additional information and guidance, which helped guide their funding application to a successful conclusion. Roger De Monte, the Deputy Chair of CERA, said,

“Although this outcome was not directly attributable to the funding courses, the course notes were very comprehensive and acted as a catalyst to move forward. This has made us more hopeful for the future...”

Roger has since attended a number of funding related courses including the 'Bid Writing Workshop' and 'Budgeting for Fund Raising'. He believes that Voluntary Sector Training is valuable to community groups in terms of the comprehensive course material and the quality of the tutors. On speaking of one of the tutors, Roger comments,

“He goes to great lengths to make sure you understand the content and his delivery/demeanour is such that you feel fully at ease and able to ask any questions without embarrassment”

On a personal level, Roger believes that his skill levels have greatly improved with each course attended. He says he has been taught how to present and lay out information in a structured way, tailor bids to the funders' requirements, shown how to get into the funders psyche, when to use jargon and when not to, how to project plan and make bids appealing, concise, readable, not boring or a saga.

“I can say my confidence is measurably improved and with this comes the motivation to succeed”

On an organisational level, CERA have seen the difference that training has made in enabling them to move forward, submitting applications for the funding of more recreational equipment in their green open space play area. Antisocial behaviour and vandalism had been a problem on the estate, but giving young people a recreational area where they can play and let off steam without being a nuisance to other members of the public has greatly improved the outcome for their local community.¹

¹ Please note that the map used above has been copied from the Chelmsford Borough Council website parish profiles page and is not the logo for CERA.

Case Study: Integration Support Services



December 2010

Integration Support Service (ISS) is a charity supporting ethnic minorities, refugees, migrants and other isolated communities. Based in Harlow, their purpose is to make a positive contribution to the communities in which they work and to improve the life of both immigrant communities and the indigenous population through education, support services and welfare support.

Voluntary Sector Training has helped Integration Support Services deliver their training plan for new staff members through a programme of nine different courses which were attended throughout 2010. Mimoza, the charity's Chief Executive and founder, explains why she uses Voluntary Sector Training;

“We chose Voluntary Sector Training as it is convenient, close to where we work and also quite a fair price”

Two of the courses attended were ‘Equality and Diversity’ and ‘Mental Health Awareness’. These courses have enabled Integration Support Services to provide a better quality of service to clients particularly those affected by mental health problems. The courses have also helped Integration Support Services to improve their equality and diversity policy to ensure they can target specific groups and therefore meet their organisational objectives. ISS identified that for various reasons a number of specific hard to reach groups were not accessing their services. However, with the knowledge gained through these courses they are starting to make a real difference as Mimoza suggests;

“We are already making progress on attracting more of those people who are most isolated”

Staff have really benefited from the diverse range of courses offered by Voluntary Sector Training and as part of the training plan have also attended ‘Making the most of Microsoft’, ‘Retaining Volunteers’, ‘Principles of Fundraising’ and ‘First Aid’ courses.

As a result of a programme of training for new staff, Mimoza says that staff are more informed and equipped to meet the challenges of their jobs, they have improved experiences and skills, and overall they perform better.

Case Study: Helen Rollason Cancer Charity

Helen Rollason **Cancer Charity**

December 2010

The Helen Rollason Cancer Charity was founded in 1999 and is the legacy of Helen Rollason MBE, who died of cancer aged 43. The charity funds three services: Helen Rollason Cancer Support Centres, Helen Rollason Clinical Drug Trials and Helen Rollason Research Laboratory. The charity receives limited funding and relies heavily on the support of local communities and volunteers.

The charity operates eleven retail shops, which provide important income to fund the vital services offered to cancer patients and their families. The shops also provide the community with information about the charity, its services, as well as current information about fundraising events. The shops are run by groups of volunteers.

Until they received a training brochure in 2009 advertising the range of courses available, Helen Rollason Cancer Charity had been unaware of Voluntary Sector Training. The brochure brought to the charities' attention a need to update their knowledge of health and safety for volunteers working in their retail shops. The Retail Support and Development Coordinator, who is responsible for the retail shops, also identified gaps in her own knowledge. In order to meet the requirements for health and safety in a sustainable and cost effective way the charity sent the Retail Support and Development Co-ordinator to attend a one day course.

The course enabled the Retail Support and Development Co-ordinator to,

**“...see what our Health and Safety requirements are
and gave me the confidence to fulfil these”**

The course has given her the knowledge needed to speak to and train volunteers with regard to health and safety in their shops. As a result of attending the health and safety course she also went on to complete a risk assessment course. Attending this second course has further enabled the charity in risk assessing their retail shops.

The charities' first experience of Voluntary Sector Training has been extremely positive,

“.....this proved to be a helpful course and the trainer and venue were very good. It was the first VST course I had attended and it encouraged me to attend two further courses in 2010”.

Case Study: The Art Ministry

December 2010



Based in south east Essex, The Art Ministry aims to increase the well being of communities through creative activity, particularly the less able and disadvantaged. They operate through a purpose built art room and also run an outreach service within communities.

The Art Ministry identified that their new safety officer, Jack, and their founder and a teacher, Angela, needed to be trained in current health and safety standards to ensure that they were able to deliver art classes without compromising the safety of those utilising their service. Like many registered charities they did not have a lot of money available for training and found that Voluntary Sector Training could offer them the right course at the right price.

As a result of attending the 'CIEH Level 2 Risk Assessment' course, Jack was made aware of some new safety procedures which he has implemented to improve the safety of their premises including fire evacuation and electrical safety. He has been given the tools for the practical assessment of risks involved with running art classes for students with physical and mental difficulties. As a result of this he has been able to put some practical measures in place to mitigate these risks. Angela has also improved her knowledge of how to record accidents properly.

Angela says that she has noticed a number of differences that this training has made to the people who attend classes at The Art Ministry,

'The numbers of trips have dropped following sticks, crutches being stored safely during classes'

Angela also points out that attending the risk assessment course has led to the class layout being changed to allow safe movement by the students with mobility difficulties in particular classes. Further to this the fire evacuation procedures have been developed to take into account the students' mobility and an understanding of their difficulties. These small but important changes, through a thorough risk assessment of the Art Ministries' facilities, mean that service users can feel confident and safe when participating in creative activities delivered by this charity.

Case Study: St Clare Hospice

December 2010



St Clare Hospice, situated in Hastingwood near Harlow, provides care for patients and their families throughout West Essex and East Hertfordshire. Established for over 18 years the hospice provides both care and support for people with life limiting illnesses. It costs £2m a year for the hospice to provide an excellent standard of palliative care, the majority of which they raise themselves.

In order to run the charity successfully a number of staff are employed at various levels from fundraising director to maintenance technician, and with a staff team comes the requirement for training. St Clare Hospice have used Voluntary Sector Training to fulfil a number of their training needs for staff at all levels. Recently, the charity identified a requirement for their Maintenance Technician to gain a certificate in First Aid.

Although the Maintenance Technician does not come into contact with patients, his role is essential in ensuring the facilities are maintained and safe for service users. The course has meant that the hospice is able to meet its health and safety requirements for adequate first aid provision for their employees. On a personal level the course has given the member of staff the confidence and the knowledge to deal with any situations that may arise.

Voluntary Sector Training is enabling charities, like St Clare Hospice, to access the right training for their staff at the right cost. Julie from the Hospice states,

‘Courses are always well run, professional, in good locations and value for money when budgets are tight’.

Case Study: Essex Wildlife Trust

December 2010



Essex Wildlife Trust is a conservation charity which manages and protects wildlife on 87 nature reserves and one nature park throughout the county. The aim of Essex Wildlife Trust is to protect wildlife for the future as well as educate children and adults. The charity is supported by members, local businesses and grant making organisations.

Essex Wildlife Trust employs staff in a number of different roles, including administrative and conservation related work. The charity identified that a number of staff did not feel confident in using Excel, which is widely used across all departments in the charity. As a result three members of staff attended a one day Excel course with Voluntary Sector Training (VST). Maureen, the Staff and Volunteer Officer, explains the difference the training has made,

‘Our admin team who went (two people) feel more confident and are able to work more quickly now, and one of our Reserves Manager is able to plan and record his work aims and achievements without the need for assistance.

Each person felt more valued because they had a chance to get some training. It was also good for motivation because not being able to use Excel was something they found frustrating. It was also helpful because the three people who went don’t always work together so in a small way it contributes to team building’.

Essex Wildlife Trust relies on Voluntary Sector Training to fulfil their training requirements and plan their staff training around the VST course calendar. Maureen explains why they consistently use VST to meet their training requirements,

‘They have consistently high quality training that we could not afford if we went to private training providers. Not only are the courses always well received but the communication and preparation received from VST is flawless. The team are friendly and helpful’.