

Student Community Action



Annual Report and Accounts 2009 / 2010



STUDENT COMMUNITY ACTION Volunteers in Cambridge

Our Purpose

Cambridge SCA exists to encourage the involvement of students in voluntary community work, providing essential services to disadvantaged groups within the community and giving students a valuable learning experience.

Our Values

- The equal rights of all individuals
- Practical activities that help to counter disadvantage within the community
- Cultural diversity
- The two-way exchange of ideas between individuals with different cultures

Our Organisational Objectives

- Provide equal opportunities for all students to become involved in the organisation's activities
- Provide a variety of volunteering opportunities to students by running a variety of projects
- Provide opportunities for students to become involved in the management of the organisation and its projects
- Allow client group opportunities to guide the organisation towards providing the services that they require
- Work in partnership with other organisations

SCA 2009/2010 Who's Who?

The Student Community Action Executive Committee consists of Steering Group members, elected annually from students at the University of Cambridge and Anglia Ruskin University, and Senior Members who are appointed for 3 years. Election to the Steering Group takes place at our Annual General Meeting in March each year. Steering Group members "shadow" current members from the election until the last day of the Cambridge University Easter Term, when they take over responsibility for SCA for the next academic year.

Steering Group: Elected annually at the AGM 2009 /10 Committee:

President	Sharon Christy
Vice President	Vithushia Nithiananthan
Treasurer	Henry Walton
Internal Projects Coordinator	Jonny Walker
College Reps Coordinator	Beth Oldham
IT Officer	Scott Whittaker
ARU rep	Julia Oozia
General committee Member	Helen Campbell
General committee Member	Julia Collins
General committee Member	Alice Beardmore-Gray

Executive Committee:

Comprising senior members co-opted for 3 years and student trustees elected annually.

Chair / Student Trustee	Sharon Christy
Senior Treasurer	Paul Taylor
Junior Treasurer	Henry Walton
Senior member / Staff Line Manager	Joye Rosenstiel
Senior member	Jo Haywood
Senior member	Kate Wilson
Senior member	Ruth Davers (until Oct 2009)
Senior member	Katie Ridley (until Dec 2009)
Senior member	Rachel Duncan (from Oct 2009)
Senior member	Philip Hobday (from Jan 2010)
Senior member	Penny Wilson (from Feb 2010)
Student Trustee	Vithushia Nithiananthan

Staff

Manager	Caroline Ward	caroline@cambridgesca.org.uk (from September 2009)
Administrator	Beejal Parekh	mail@cambridgesca.org.uk (from October 2009)

Senior Members' Report.

The SCA Senior Members have been delighted to work with the talented and effective student officers who were elected at the 2009 AGM. Much has been achieved in the last year with the establishment of the new staffing structure that was agreed in the early summer and the recruitment of our new Manager and assistant in the late summer and early autumn.

The Senior Members were involved in the recruitment, interviewing and induction of our new staff at each stage of the process. We have been pleased to welcome Caroline and Beejal to the organisation and have been delighted with the work they have undertaken.

The Senior Members arranged a farewell and thank you event for Elliot and Jill, our interim staff, in late September and wished them well for the future.

In the course of the year we were sorry to say goodbye to Ruth Davers and Katie Ridley as Senior Members. The organisation owes them both a debt of gratitude, particularly Katie who had been involved in SCA for several years. The executive committee discussed the possible recruitment of senior members and were pleased that Philip Hobday, the Chaplain at Magdalene College, and Penny Wilson, from the Universities Office of Community Affairs, have agreed to become trustees.

Most importantly the last year has seen a large increase in the number of volunteers and projects. We would like to record our thanks to the Officers, Steering Committee and Volunteers for the sterling work they have done to put SCA firmly on the student-volunteering map.

Joye Rosenstiel

Steering Group Report

Due to various internal problems within SCA over the last few years, SCA had a low profile amongst the students at Cambridge University (CU) and Anglia Ruskin University. To rectify this, the steering group (SG) publicised the work of SCA through a range of promotional material and various events. SCA has a series of annual social and fund-raising and events (e.g. carol singing and battle of the bands), which we continued to run. We also tried some new events such as the BSMEG tea party and club night that we found particularly effective as a means to promote SCA to a wider range of students. In Feb 2010, we sent out a survey to better evaluate the effectiveness of this publicity campaign; 33% of respondents had heard about us from the CU Freshers' Fair. Word-of-mouth and the SCA website were the second and third highest ranking avenues respectively for finding out about SCA.

To raise awareness about the benefits of students volunteering for both the community *and* the students we continued to build links with various university agencies and community groups including the Cambridge Hub, Deans and Chaplains Association, Careers Service, RAG and CUSU. We remain extremely grateful for the support given to us by these organisations and hope that these relationships continue to flourish in the future.

To further support and develop our volunteers, the SG decided to trial different types of training sessions. These included child protection, first aid, a careers workshop and a Teach First skills session: *Learning to Lead*. Feedback from our survey indicated that students would like this aspect of SCA to grow. As such, the staff will be creating a training schedule for the academic year 10/11 based on the results of this survey and the ideas of the new SG.

Over the last year, the SG has worked incredibly hard and it is a testament to their hard work that SCA now seems set on a positive trajectory.

Sharon Christy SG President

Manager's Report

Beejal (our wonderful administrator) and I joined the SCA team at a time of great change with a new enthusiastic steering group and a new staff structure. As well as clearing up and redecorating the office, we have been busy developing opportunities for the hundreds of new volunteers that have been recruited and assisting the Steering Committee to put all their ideas and initiatives into practice. Finding volunteers for placements has certainly not been the problem. However, we have been busy trying to develop new and exciting opportunities and reignite old SCA projects that needed a little TLC. Next year we would like to spend a bit more time working with the voluntary sector to ensure that they are able to use and support our volunteers effectively. Although many organisations have requested our volunteers, it has been hard to sustain placements in many organisations, as they do not have the infrastructure to manage them.

A priority for me has been to secure SCA financially during these treacherous recession times. This has mainly involved seeking out new sources of funding and looking at ways of increasing our income through CRB processing and training. We have a very prudent finance committee along with a dedicated steering group so I believe we are as recession proof as we can be.

The Steering group have been totally inspiring this year with their commitment and enthusiasm for the work of SCA. They will certainly be a very hard act to follow and I for one will miss each and every one of them. Finally I would like to thank Beejal for being such a joy to work with and the Executive Committee for making me feel so welcome and providing me with all the information and resources required to settle into my new job.

Caroline Ward, SCA Manager (Oct 2009)

Administrator's Report 2009/2010

My time so far at SCA has flown by! I want to thank everyone at SCA for helping me to settle in quickly and making me feel so welcome.

At the office I've been making sure that the 300 plus new recruits get placed as quickly as possible, and are happy in their projects, which of course would not be possible without the enthusiasm and hard work of the project leaders. I have transferred a lot of the paperwork we have onto the computers, making it easier and more manageable to access information. In addition to this I have been working my way through updating the forms, project handbooks, volunteer and client project guidelines, project leader guidelines, and volunteering leaflets that we use. I hope this will make next year's recruitment process slightly less chaotic!

I am now a CRB countersignatory, which has been particularly useful as we have seen a big increase in CRB clients over the last few months. I will be attending ISA training this month; I hope this will enable me to lighten the load as the changes come into place and that I will be able to help out when new training is required.

As well as over 400 volunteers actively volunteering on projects and events we run, we also have 30 active volunteers on projects run by other community groups. We hope to build our relationships with these external projects next year to ensure volunteers are well utilised and supported in their roles there. One off events have been well attended by our volunteers this year including the annual fireworks and town raids and new events such as the Mill Road Winter Fair and the Santa Fun Run.

Beejal Parekh, SCA Administrator (Oct 2009)

Student Community Action Project Leader Reports

Sunday Club (Ditchburn Residential Home)

Sunday Club continues to run very smoothly with more or less the same routine followed every week. Tea is a major part of the club and almost everyone will get through at least one cup during the two-hour session. Volunteers tend to split up and sit with either a group or an individual resident. Some residents are perfectly content to talk for the majority of the session while others favour dominoes, Jenga or Scrabble. Many of the volunteers have found merely talking to the residents one of the most rewarding and interesting aspects of the club because, as we have discovered, they have experienced so much. One volunteer was shocked to hear that Ely was home to a large Italian prisoner of war camp during the Second World War, just as another was treated to stories of trekking across the frozen Bering Sea. There are normally between 4 and 8 residents attending Sunday Club and between 3 and 6 volunteers, though these numbers are quite variable depending on the week.

The session is always finished with a group sing along to old folk songs, which is accompanied by Themis Mavrogatos on the piano. Singing at the end of every session has been a new activity that has been very popular with the residents and there are even some who only come for the last half hour to join in with the music.

On the last Sunday of Michaelmas Term Sunday Club held a Christmas party that, for me, was a highlight. The volunteers all provided a selection of Christmas treats and we had an extended sing-a-long, including lots of well-known carols.

Liberty Timewell (Project Leader 2009/10)

Saturday Club (Linnett House)

This year, the Saturday Club has been meeting every other Saturday at Linnett House for 2 hours to play board games, drink tea, chat with and generally provide companionship for Linnett House residents. Some 'special' events have also been attended by volunteers at different times, such as a singing recital by some local primary school children and a morning discussion group, in addition to or instead of the usual Saturday session.

The project has been successful, with volunteers turning up to each session and good relationships built with the Linnett House residents. There were times when Linnett House was not available at the regular time and this did lead to a drop in numbers of residents attending the following week. However, as we become more established there staff will be more aware of our time slot and this will become less of an issue.

Helen Young (Project Leader 2009/10)

Homework Help

The aim of Homework help is to give children an opportunity to catch up on schoolwork that they may be falling behind on. It could be that they find completing homework at home difficult for various reasons or simply that they have not quite understood a particular topic and they need a little extra help. In October 2009 we restarted Homework Help sessions at St Philip's Primary School and Coleridge and Parkside Community Colleges. We have also started a brand new club at St. Matthews' Primary school on a Friday afternoon as we had more volunteers than placements!

We have 41 volunteers registered so we are planning on developing a Homework Club in at least one other primary school during the Lent term. Although the majority of Homework Help takes place in the form of clubs at schools, we do take referrals from families where there is a particular need for additional assistance at home. One of the nicest referrals I took recently was from a father who had received help from Student Community Action when he was at school. He requested support for his son who is struggling to keep focused on his schoolwork as he remembered what an inspiration our volunteer had been to him.

Caroline Ward, (Project Leader 2009/10)

TESL - Teaching English as a Second Language

The main purpose of the TESL project is to support EAL (English as Another Language) children and their families, helping them feel happier and more confident about using English. Starting from scratch in September 2009, we are now working in collaboration with 4 different schools that were all keen to restart their TESL programs, which had worked successfully in the past. We also work with a number of families who approached the SCA office directly on the recommendation of their children's school or the Cambridgeshire Race, Equality & Diversity Service (CREDS).

To date, there are more than 40 active volunteers in the TESL project. All of the volunteers are required to commit one hour per week during term time; however, many of the volunteers are willingly matched to several different children and contribute much more than the required time. The SCA Office library is available for them to borrow books for teaching aids and the schools are also building up resources for our volunteers to use.

The two primary schools we work with are St. Philip's and St. Matthew's. In both cases, volunteers teach the children one-to-one at the child's home. The first meeting with the child takes place at the school, with the child's teacher and parents present. The volunteer is introduced and given advice and suggestions from the teacher about some ideas to start with for the first couple of lessons.

We also work with the Coleridge and Parkside secondary schools, where all our assistance is given at the schools in a public area such as the school library. These schools particularly want to focus on students taking GCSEs and our volunteers start teaching after an introductory meeting with Miss Bracciali, from the Inclusion Department at The Parkside Federation, the student and the student's teacher. We have a wonderful group of enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers, and have had fantastic feedback from the schools about the project so far.

"Thank you so much for organising this; the volunteers are excellent, very committed, reliable and great with the students. We all immensely appreciate the SCA support!!"

Miss G Bracciali, Inclusion Department, The Parkside Federation

In the future we will be expanding the project to more schools in the local area, particularly primary schools, to keep up with the demand from new volunteers signing up all the time.

Frances Scott (Project Leader 2009 /10)

Parklife

Parklife involves SCA volunteers taking a group of vulnerable children to the park every weekend. All the children are from single-parent families in the Cambridge area and many are going through extremely difficult periods in their lives. The time that we spend with the children every weekend gives their parents a chance to relax as well as giving the children a chance to run, climb, jump, slide, swing, blow bubbles, throw frisbees and generally have fun!

We tend to be in the park for about an hour and then, after children and volunteers are suitably tired, we go to feed old bread to the ducks -- working very hard not to let the smaller children eat it themselves! After that we take the children back to their mothers, although they are often very reluctant to let us leave them!

We started off on a high this year as we were inundated with new, enthusiastic volunteers but unfortunately the terrible weather has resulted in a number of sessions being cancelled. The number of participants has dwindled, possibly as a result of not being able to run regular sessions because of the weather. However we had a great turn out of Parklifers at the Christmas Party who all really enjoyed themselves and went away with armfuls of goody bags and gifts from Santa!

Roll on the summer and some much needed sunshine!

Mohan Ganesalingam (Project Leader since 2006)

Bounce

Bounce has been very successful this year, particularly since Michaelmas, as a result of a loyal team of around 10 volunteers and a successful advertising campaign at local primary schools. Bounce was developed to ensure that vulnerable children had access to a variety of regular sports sessions that could cope with some of their challenging behaviour. Because of we have not had a shortage of volunteers this year we have been able to support these children on a one to one basis that has made the project very enjoyable for the children and a rewarding opportunity for the volunteers.

We have provided sessions for 30 different children throughout the year, averaging around 8-10 children in each session, all free of charge. We have been able to offer a wider and better range of activities this term including Archery, Trampoline, Climbing Wall, Basketball, Table Tennis and Playground Games. The feedback from children and parents has been overwhelmingly positive, and as one would expect, sessions such as climbing and archery have been particularly well received.

The project is currently running very smoothly and the next step for Nicci Shall, who is taking over from me as project leader from next term, will be to recruit more children from disadvantaged schools close by and to encourage participants from our Big Siblings project to come along and join in.

Jonny Walker (Project Leader 2009/10)

Craft Room

Craft Room is an hour-long craft session for vulnerable children, held every week in term-time. We restarted the project in October 2009 after a year break due to the lack of a Project Leader. With an excellent, well-stocked craft room, and the encouragement of the lovely Liz our Contact at the venue we use, there's really no shortage of creative things to do. Activities range from painting, collage, clay modelling and making Christmas decorations. It has been so cold lately that we had a great session making 'warm pictures' of fires, deserts and sunny seascapes!

The mix of children (aged from about 3 to 10 years) changes each week and what we do very much depends on numbers, their ages and what mood they are in! Although the sessions are always fun we occasionally throw in a few ideas about colour mixing, shapes, and symmetry.

We have a great core of excellent talented and dedicated volunteers and as a result, the children get lots of individual attention. For the volunteers, Craft Room has been a great deal of fun. Getting glitter in our hair and a little bit of paint on our faces gives us a refreshing and much needed opportunity to step out of the University bubble a bit, forget about essays and exams for a little while and make a truly positive contribution to the wider community. As for the children, they're incredible! We feel privileged to have the chance to get to know them and their creative talents!

Rachel Taylor (Project Leader 2009/10)

Taskforce

Taskforce is a project where we respond to variety of requests for help from the general public, community groups and statutory services. Where possible we find volunteers to assist on a case-to-case basis. Many of our cases involve elderly or disabled people requiring regular befriending or practical assistance such as gardening or shopping. Another example is where a volunteer supported a GCSE student who is frequently in hospital and required some practical assistance with their schoolwork to stop them from falling behind.

I would like to expand Taskforce in the coming year, as when opportunities are advertised on the bulletin there is normally a good level of response. Additionally, I would like to improve upon the support and communication with Taskforce volunteers, for example, by keeping a termly feedback record.

Beejal Parekh (Project Leader from October 2009)

Big Siblings

The Big Siblings project matches volunteers with local children who are disadvantaged in some way either through disability, family circumstance or lack of peer group friends. The families are visited by a representative of SCA and the volunteer initially to fill in all the paperwork and ensure the project follows all our Health and Safety checks. The volunteers then visit the child on a weekly basis and spend time building a "Sibling like" relationship with them to build their confidence, give them access to new activities and generally allow the children to have a fun time!

I started leading Big Siblings in the first half of Michaelmas Term and since then we have matched another 25 volunteers with children, meaning that there are now 32 active volunteers on the project. The steering group did a brilliant job in recruiting lots of new volunteers this year and with the fantastic help of Beejal and Caroline, who reorganised the epic tomes of paperwork and speeded up the CRB processing, we have been able to match up many of the little siblings who have been waiting to be matched up for a long time, some for over two years.

We are receiving many new referrals now, as the reputation of the project builds up once again in Cambridge Children's Services, local schools, Cambridge YMCA and the Youth Offending Teams. These children are being paired up within weeks of receiving their referrals, which is fantastic.

I am continuing to lead Big Siblings next year, and things I shall be working on include recruiting more male volunteers and continuing to build relationships with local agencies to ensure that there is recognition of what we do, in order that we can continue to receive referrals for children and young people who will really benefit from the project.

Jonny Walker (Project Leader from October 2009)

Betty Stubbens' Musical Entertainment Group (BSMEG)

Betty Stubbens' Musical Entertainment Group (BSMEG) has now been running for over 40 years and is still going strong. We are a motley group who come from all over the university (and from outside it) who meet outside the Bun Shop at 7pm every Wednesday to get on a minibus to take us to whichever elderly residential establishment we're visiting that week. Once we arrive we have an evening of songs and laughter punctuated by tea and a chat at half time.

This year the songbook has included old favourites such as 'Lambeth Walk' and 'Gilly Gilly Ossenfeffer Kateznellen Bogen by the Sea', from artists as diverse as Andrew Lloyd Webber and Aretha Franklin, all leading up to our finale, 'Time Warp', which sees the members of BSMEG try their hand at dancing at the same time as singing - this can be a hazardous occupation, but we always leave with the audience having thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

We have also enjoyed solo performances from guitarists, pianists, folk violinists and singers, not to mention the poetry readers, whose rendition of 'Chocolate Cake' has produced hilarity time after time.

In November we also held a 'Betty's Tea Party' concert in collaboration with Cambridge Music Week. This involved an epic three-hour extravaganza, including a fifteen-song handbook and marathon cake eating, all taking place in Arbury Community Centre one Saturday afternoon. The event was hugely successful and thanks must go to all the volunteers who contributed and Cambridge Music Week for funding the event.

Helen Campbell (Project Leader from October 2009)

Finance Report 2009

The past year has been a challenging year for SCA financially. It has been a year where the recession has made it increasingly difficult to secure funding (especially for core costs) but having changed the staffing structure to reduce costs; we finished the year in a stable financial position.

We continue to have solid support from Cambridge colleges and other institutions such as the chaplains, and our gratitude must be extended to all of our donors, both institutional and individual.

The majority of funding is still received through grants. It was disappointing that this year one of our long standing sources of money, the Active Community Grant, came to an end but we have continued to seek out new sources of funding and made savings where possible to compensate for this.

Criminal Record Bureau income continues to provide an important part of our finances, and is increasing steadily as we take on new clients and process their forms.

The recession has obviously created a difficult financial atmosphere making grants harder to acquire. The largest impact on SCA has however been a reduction in both the investment income and net value of our investments. Hopefully this trend will be reversed over the coming financial year as the markets begin to improve.

Credit must go to the Steering Group for their hard work in increasing fundraising income. Across the year we have continued with traditional fundraising methods such as street collections, but we have also diversified our fundraising techniques. Alice Beardmore-Gray deserves a special mention for organising a fantastic SCA club-night. The Battle of the Bands sub-committee also deserves praise for working tirelessly to organise what should be a much enlarged and lucrative event. Gratitude must also be extended to the sponsors of this event; KPMG and Teach First, for ensuring costs for running this event have been covered so anything we make on the night can all go towards supporting the good work of SCA.

I would like to thank the Finance Group and staff for all of their hard work and dedication to SCA over the past year to ensure that even in one of the most difficult financial times in decades, SCA has broken even and has produced promising forecasts for 2010.

Henry Walton
Treasurer

Thank you....

Our thanks go to the many organisations and individuals who support us financially and in many other ways, making it possible for us to help others living in the Cambridge Community.

In particular we would like to thank the following for their generous help and support:

BBC Children in Need
Cambridge Active Community Fund
Cambridge City Council
Cambridge Council for Voluntary Services
Cambridge RAG
Cambridge University Societies Syndicate
Kelsey Kerridge Sports Hall
Lion Yard
Penny Wilson, CU Corporate Liaison Officer
Isaac Newton Trust
Ken Stevens Music Store
Talking T's
Simon Baker
STAR 107 Radio
Glassworks Gym
Sean Hannah Hairdressers
Millie's Cookies
Zoo Audio
Loch Fyne
The Belgian Chocolate House
Azendi Jewellers
Teach First
The Careers Service
Cambridge Hub
CUSU
Deans and Chaplains Association
Arbury Community Centre
The Grand Arcade
Kelsey Kerridge
St John's Ambulance
Plurabelle Books

Bill Collins (web designer)
Simon Burdus (Big Fish Ents)
The many individual friends of SCA

And of course –
Our Volunteers!

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