

# Student Community Action



## Annual Report and Accounts 2010 /2011



# **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

## Committee 2010/11

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

<b>President</b>	Aigneis Cheevers
<b>Vice President</b>	David Franklin
<b>Treasurer</b>	Lucy Akrill
<b>Internal Projects Coordinator</b>	Jonny Walker
<b>College Reps Coordinator</b>	Tim Durrant
<b>IT Officer</b>	Scott Whittaker
<b>General Committee Member</b>	Kirsty Wright
<b>General Committee Member</b>	Jacob Cain
<b>General Committee Member</b>	Nicci Shall

### Executive Committee

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

<b>Chair / Student Trustee</b>	Aigneis Cheevers
<b>Senior Treasurer</b>	Paul Taylor
<b>Junior Treasurer</b>	Lucy Akrill
<b>Senior Member / Staff Line Manager</b>	Joye Rosenstiel
<b>Senior Member</b>	Jo Haywood
<b>Senior Member</b>	Kate Wilson
<b>Senior Member</b>	Rachel Duncan
<b>Senior Member</b>	Philip Hobday
<b>Senior Member</b>	Penny Wilson
<b>Student Trustee</b>	David Franklin

### Staff

<b>Manager</b>	Caroline Ward	<i>30 hours a week</i>
<b>Volunteer Development Worker</b>	Beejal Parekh	<i>20 hours a week</i>

## **Senior Members' Report**

The SCA Senior Members have been delighted to work with the talented and effective student officers who were elected in 2010. Much has been achieved in the last year, with the hard work that was put in during the previous two years that led to the appointment of the new staffing structure having born fruit.

The Senior Members have been delighted at the continuing commitment, hard work and skills that Caroline and Beejal have brought to their posts. SCA is again an effective and respected organisation both within the student community and the wider community. We are sorry to be saying goodbye to Beejal but record our thanks and good wishes for the future as she moves on to pastures new. March will hopefully see the recruitment of our new Volunteers Administrator.

The senior members have continued to play their part in the running of the organisation regularly attending executive and sub-committee meetings. Philip Hobday and Penny Wilson, our new trustees in 2010, have brought new ideas and skills to the organisation and we continue to be grateful to Paul Taylor who serves as senior treasurer.

We have continued to develop effective links with other organisations including the Cambridge Hub and a number of city schools.

Most importantly has been SCA's continuing success in recruiting volunteers and our growing links with city families and schools through Bounce and the Home Work clubs. We would like to record our thanks to SCA officers, steering group and volunteers for their hard work in the last year and wish them well for the future

**Joye Rosenstiel**

## **Steering Group Report**

This year's SG were able to build on the positive foundations laid by the previous SG, working hard throughout the year to ensure the continuing success of SCA. The freshers' fair was extremely successful in recruiting students. Facebook also proved to be a successful recruitment strategy, especially for recruiting first years. We also created a new handbook which can be used over several years in a bid to improve efficiency.

As well as continuing with standard fundraising and social events such as raids and college formals, we focused on club nights, which were particularly successful as fundraisers and recruitment drives. We also tried some new fundraising/publicity ideas - five-a-side football tournament, talent show - which went reasonably well and have potential to be developed in future years.

Our college reps co-ordinator has done a great job with regards to encouraging college reps to be more enthusiastic, by means of social events etc. Other SG members have made a really valuable contribution in utilising their connections with other students or groups - for example sports societies - in order to widen the support available to SCA.

We have worked closely with a number of external bodies, including the Careers Service, Big Fish Ents, and the Cambridge Hub. We have continued with last year's training sessions - child protection, first aid, a careers workshop and a Teach First skills session.

Thanks to the hard work and enthusiasm of the SG this year, we have been able to build on last year's strong foundations and hopefully have left future SGs with lots of potential to work with.

**Aigneis Cheevers**

*SCA President (2010-11)*

## **Manager's Report**

I am delighted to report that SCA appears to have weathered the turbulent economic climate with relative ease - so far..... One of our biggest fears was that our City Council grant would be drastically reduced which would have left us having to review all the projects we provide. Thankfully it remains the same for 2011/2012 which is wonderful news. Due to a number of new funding partnerships, in particular, our recent agreement with The Hub, we are feeling optimistic that our projects will retain all their funding for 2011/12. However, as the council and other local charities are forced to make cuts to their services, we are anticipating a higher demand on our projects. We are preparing for this by setting realistic limits on the numbers of clients we can accept to ensure the quality of the projects do not suffer.

Finding volunteers has once again not been a problem. If anything we have had too many people wanting to volunteer and not enough time to dedicate to finding the perfect placement for each one. We have responded to the increase in volunteers by developing some of our projects into more schools, care homes and adding sessions in existing venues. However, this does cause extra work in the office. We definitely feel we are at capacity now!! For next year we want to improve the role of each Project Leader as we believe this will take some pressure off the office and hopefully increase the support volunteers get.

This year's Steering group have once again been totally inspiring with their commitment and enthusiasm for the work of SCA. Not only have they been very effective, they have also been a pleasure to work with. They are currently in the process of recruiting some new members who I am confident will take over the mantle with equal enthusiasm.

I remain very grateful to the Executive Committee who continue to be a positive guiding force. They give up their precious time to ensure SCA stays true to its roots, professional and effective in serving the community.

We end the year on a sad note as Beejal is returning to education to complete a MA and is therefore leaving us. In her 18 months with SCA she has transformed and updated the admin systems, developed new partnerships and projects and has done her utmost to ensure that every volunteer who has come through the SCA door has been given the best possible volunteering experience. She has been a delight to work with and I shall miss her dearly.

**Caroline Ward**  
*SCA Manager*

## **Volunteer Development Worker's Report 2010/2011**

It's been a really good year at SCA, and I'm very sad to be leaving and will miss everyone very much.

I want to echo what Caroline has said about the projects. They have all improved dramatically this year, we have added new sessions in schools and elderly people's homes due to an excess of volunteers, and individual referrals have also increased for TESL, Big Sibs, Homework Help and Taskforce.

We are definitely at capacity in the office, and I feel that having another full time member of staff during term as planned is the most efficient use of the staff time. I would also like to echo the key importance of good, committed project leaders. They would reduce the workload in the office dramatically, allowing more time to develop projects, and spend more time on volunteer training and monitoring.

**Beejal Parekh**  
*Volunteer Development Worker (2009-2011)*

# Project Reports

## Education Projects

It is in our Education projects where the biggest developments have taken place this year. The Homework Help and Teaching English as A Second Language (TESL) projects have increased their sessions in existing schools; set up in 2 new schools and more than doubled the number of individual clients we support within their homes. The number of afterschool clubs we help at also now include netball, sewing, art and film clubs as well as the traditional Homework Help clubs. From evaluation we have carried out, we put these developments down to increased confidence in our projects; word of mouth and better links within schools to the SCA office.

As well as developing existing projects we have set up two brand new projects: - Linton Language Futures and Pathways to Literacy. Pathways was the brainchild of Jonny Walker who has been on the steering committee and been an active SCA volunteer for the past two years. He felt that there was a need for a project that focused on improving children's literacy standards in a fun way and he also wanted to offer volunteers a flexible way of working with children from all backgrounds on a one to one basis. Through other volunteering work he was undertaking with SCA he identified large but hidden social disparities within Cambridge and he wanted to target specific schools who required the most assistance. We currently have 15 volunteers working with children on a one to one basis during school hours in two local secondary and one primary school. We have a number of theatre trips planned for these children funded by the National Lottery who have funded this project.

Language Futures was another exciting development last year. Our volunteers are helping children from Linton Village College learn foreign languages in a totally different way. Rather than limiting the number of languages children can learn at school, Linton VC hope that children can learn any language that is relevant to them – eg. they have relations who speak a different language or they may want to get a job in a different country – by mainly using distance learning packages. Our volunteers play a vital role in mentoring these students by emailing the students once a week, (writing questions in the language they are learning ) and meeting them once a term to talk face to face to practice vocabulary and help the teacher assess progress.

Tina Rice, Language Futures Co-ordinator has this to say about SCA's involvement:-

“SCA has been a tremendous support to our pilot project 'Language Futures' here at Linton Village College. The mentors recruited by SCA continue to be an integral part of the project helping our pupils to access the languages of their choice through regular email contact and termly visits to the school. The pupils benefit hugely from this contact and we hope to continue the partnership in the future.”

Priorities for 2011/2012 include building up a more accessible resources library at the SCA office and ensure links are strengthened with the schools to ensure volunteers receive maximum support and guidance to utilise their time with the students.

**Caroline Ward**

*Manager*

## **Social and Practical Projects**

### **Saturday Club Annual Report**

This year has seen a great change to the previous setup of the Saturday Club, since most of the residents who enjoyed the activities of the previous years had moved on from Linnett House, and so new plans had to be made. Visits were therefore planned to be monthly in Michaelmas, during which I assessed what the new residents at the home would prefer to do. It turned out that the residents had a common interest in art, and so the meetings in Lent term (approximately fortnightly) had an artistic focus, in which students and residents all had a go at painting and looked through art books. It was also thought that including lunch in the club meeting would help to make it more popular.

Since the new change of focus in the Club meetings, there has been a noticeable increase in interest from student volunteers and residents alike, which promises to make the Club more popular in the future. Since this year has been a year of transition for the club, however, the number of visitors has fluctuated quite a lot, as people have not yet settled into the new system.

Linnett House is that it is not a traditional care home. It is more like a block of private flats, with a small communal area (in which the Saturday Club meets) that the residents don't use frequently. The only difference with a typical block of flats is that they have a manager that lives with them, who is on call if there is a medical emergency but otherwise only takes care of the administration of the establishment. The residents do not socialise much, and this is likely to be a key factor in the lack of interest in the club before. It may therefore take time to build up a committed 'Saturday Club' community in the future.

**Katy Wei**

*Project Leader (2010/2011)*

### **Sunday Club (Ditchburn Residential Home)**

Sunday Club this year has continued in much the same way, though we have recently begun to implement a few changes. The usual routine is tea, biscuits and a chat, with the volunteers and residents sitting in groups according to what the residents prefer to do (for instance, play dominos or simply chat). We always finish off with the group-sing song of the old favourites such as 'Home on the Range' (I accompany these on the piano), and this continues to prove very popular with the residents, who it seems would usually like to sing many more songs than we manage to fit in! It is a very nice way to round off the afternoon, finishing every time with the obligatory verse of 'Old Lang Syne' for which everyone joins hands!

Last Michaelmas term, both volunteer and resident numbers had for some reason begun to dwindle rather, but with a number of new and enthusiastic volunteers this term, along with the regulars, things are definitely picking up. We recently delivered some simple leaflets advertising Sunday Club to the flats, having discovered that many residents (other than the core group who are without fail there every week) were not actually aware of it, and this had an effect that very same day, with a couple of new faces, interested in finding out what we do, and who will hopefully continue to attend, and hopefully even more will come in the near future. The aim is obviously to get as many residents coming as possible. We also decided it would be good to try to broaden the activities we do (different games, knitting, handicrafts, films – whatever the residents prefer), but so far the routine has continued as usual (it appears that in general, routine is favoured over change! It will take a little time).

**Claire Jones**

*Joint Project Leader with Nicola Ashworth*

### **Sunday Club (St George's Court)**

Sunday Club at St George's only started recently and we have had about 4 sessions to date. The activity runs quite smoothly with about 3-4 volunteers participating each week (although numbers vary from week to week). Volunteers have mainly been working on the temporary residents (first floor) and permanent residents (top floor). Volunteers on the temporary floor usually sit with groups of about 5-7 residents and talk as well as occasionally trying to engage them with games such as scrabble or reading the paper. Other volunteers visit the residents in their room and have conversations with them. Each volunteer will usually speak to about 3 residents during their 2 hour session. The first few sessions have mainly aimed at familiarising volunteers with the residents and trying to engage them in conversation to get to know the residents better. In the next couple of sessions, we aim to gradually incorporate a wider range of activities such as board games and crafts for those residents who would like to participate, whilst still continuing with visiting and talking to residents in their rooms for those who prefer one-on-one interactions. One challenging aspect of the activity is that not all residents are interested in having volunteers come and speak to them. However as the activity progresses and volunteers are more familiar with the residents, this problem can be easily overcome. Overall the volunteers have really enjoyed participating in the activity and speaking to residents, many of whom have lots of interesting stories to share.

### **Nguyen Minh Ngoc Chit**

*Project Leader (2011)*

### **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 home, although they are often very reluctant to let us leave them!

We've been fortunate to have a group of particularly dedicated volunteers this year, and have also had better weather than in previous years. As a result we have been running trips most Sundays, and so have been able to provide extra stability to the children we work with at a time when it is particularly needed. We hope that everything continues to run this well through the remainder of the year.

We're looking forward to the sunny weekends!

### **Mohan Ganesalingam**

*Project Leader (since 2006)*

## **Bounce**

Bounce has undergone some dramatic changes this year. From an hourly, weekly session in the Easter and Michalmas terms with around ten participants, to a very lively group of thirty children who currently regularly attend. This change has been linked to the move from Kelsey Kerridge to the gym on Sturton Street enabling more participants easier access, coupled with a very successful recruitment campaign in local schools.

Bounce certainly seems to be meeting its aims of providing activities for young vulnerable members of the local community. We have a regular team of 12 volunteers, as well as some pairs of big and little sibs. As a result we are able to provide one on one attention to those who need it. Activities include football, dodgeball, parachute games and stuck in the mud as well as an externally run Kung Fu session.

Whilst it is undeniably positive that bounce has grown successfully, the growth has created a few problems whereby the age range is possibly too large. The new project leader, Oli Crawford, is in the process of reviewing the age range to possibly make it smaller or split it into manageable chunks. He is also looking into getting training for the volunteers. I hope that bounce continues to develop into a successful sports club!

### **Nicci Shall**

*Project Leader*

## **Craft Room**

Craft Room is an hour-long craft session for vulnerable children, held weekly in term-time. The project was regenerated in October 2009 and I have been the project leader since April 2010. We use the well-stocked arts and games room and the advice of our contact at the venue Liz to come up with ideas for each week and there is never a shortage of activities to do. Activities include painting, drawing, collage, model making, beadwork as well as playing games with the children. Recently we have been doing a lot of painting because there have been a lot of younger children and they really enjoy it!

The children are generally aged between 3 and 10 years and the number of children vary each week due to the nature of the venue where we hold the activity, though numbers recently have been fairly static at between 4 and 6. We try to keep the sessions as informal as possible and let the children decide which activities they wish to do, although some sessions are more structured, particularly if there are older children.

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 is a great deal of fun, allowing them to escape the University bubble while making a positive and valued contribution to the wider community. The children are incredible and always lively, we feel privileged to have the chance to get to know them and their creative talents!

### **Elsie Powell-Smith**

*Project Leader (2010/2011)*

## **Taskforce**

Taskforce is a project where we respond to a variety of practical 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. We currently have volunteers supporting elderly people with befriending, household tasks and gardening. We also have volunteers helping young adults with learning difficulties, people with mental health problems, a young adult who has had a stroke, adults with poor English and a lady with ME. When opportunities are advertised on the bulletin there is normally a good level of response.

## **Beejal Parekh**

*Volunteer Development Worker*

## **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 go to the home together or we meet there if it is more convenient. Once we arrive we have an evening of songs and laughter punctuated by tea and a chat at half time.

This year we were lacking both the minibus and a pianist, which means that for many of our performances we either sing a capella or someone plays the guitar. Our new songbook includes fun and well-known songs like "Ain't we got fun" and "We go together". Sometimes we also bring in some favourites from last year like "Bring me sunshine" and "Any dream will do" or take requests from the residents.

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.

Our numbers vary from week to week, but we have found that we can throw an enthusiastic performance with 13, but also with 5 people. We have a strong backbone of people who just can't seem to say goodbye to the happiness Betty's brings, as well as a number of people who come for the first time or occasionally. Wherever we are and no matter how many, it is the enthusiasm and the joy that make Betty's a great gift to both the residents of the homes we visit and to ourselves.

## **Mareike Herzog**

*Project Leader (2010/2011)*

## **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 initially visited by a representative of SCA and the volunteer 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!

It has been another very strong year for the Big Siblings project and we have doubled our numbers (again!) from this time last year; we now have 60 volunteers paired up and working with a range of local children from around Cambridge, which really is fantastic. As with last year, huge credit for this must go to Caroline and Beejal who have taken on the bulk of the administration of the project and made it far more efficient than when I was bumbling in and out of the office.

Thanks also to members of the steering group who have helped out on the project by conducting Home Visits when we have been particularly busy.

We are coming to an interesting new time for Big Siblings and some decisions will need to be made in the near future about where next the project should turn. We are very close to having matched up all eligible children from our Waiting List of referrals, meaning we may need to actively recruit for children should the project continue to expand to match the demand from the volunteers.

That said, we are likely to receive fewer referrals from our usual referees as the YMCA's Youth Inclusion Support Panel project is soon disbanding and this has traditionally been one of the main external agencies to forward children on to us.

In terms of Big Siblings for next year, the next project leader's main role will be to ensure that the project retains a prominence among the students in the University. Big Siblings has a quite unique appeal to a lot of volunteers who would get involved in this project specifically and would be less inclined to get involved in other group-oriented projects, so next year's Steering Group should look to possibly promote Sibs itself, alongside SCA generally. As ever, we tend to receive referrals for more boys than girls so tend to need more male volunteers even when we have an equal take-up from students.

At risk of collapsing into a sentimental puddle of emotion, I have had a fantastic time with Big Siblings and it has been one of the most engaging, enjoyable and defining aspects of my time in Cambridge. By the end of this academic year I will have been working with my own little Sibs for two years and one year respectively, and can safely say that having spent many a weekend out with them – popcorn fights in the cinema, exploiting the free samples at Fudge Kitchen, cycling about, cake-making, piggybacking, kite-flying, fishing - and really getting to know them and their families has kept me sane from work and brought me a lot of happiness. With my two boys themselves as well as some of the other Big Sibs I have met over the two years, I'm sure I'll have friendships lasting long after Cambridge.

Long live Sibs!

**Jonny Walker**

*Project Leader (since October 2009)*

# Finance Report 2010

Despite the continuing difficulties caused by the recession, this year has been a successful one for SCA financially, due largely to fantastic commitment from the staff who have sought out new sources of income while making savings in several areas.

The majority of our funding is still received through grants. We have received particularly strong support this year from Cambridge City Council, Children in Need and the Societies Syndicate of the University, as well as many of our many smaller grants. We are very grateful that grants are still being awarded despite the difficult financial atmosphere.

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.

Criminal Record Bureau income continues to provide an important part of our finances, but we are aware that the system may be dramatically changing over the next year. We must adapt to systems put in place by the current government if we are to continue to use the processing of criminal record checks as a source of income.

Credit must go to the Steering Group for their hard work in increasing fundraising income. Aigneis Cheevers has created a fantastic link with Simon Burdus, managing director of Big Fish Ents, and this connection has allowed us to take some of the profits from big club nights in Cambridge. We hope that we can maintain this excellent relationship over the coming years. A special mention should also go to Holly Cracknell from Homerton College for the significant donation received following a themed formal she organised.

With many voluntary organisations winding up at the present time, it is promising to see that SCA has maintained its reserves this financial year. With funding from such diverse sources, SCA is in a good position for the coming year despite the difficulties that all voluntary organisations are currently facing.

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 SCA has continued to thrive. It has been a pleasure to be allowed to work with SCA over the last 12 months, and I will be sad to leave my post.

**Lucy Akrill**

*Junior 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:

Aiming High  
Activities4Cambridge  
Awards for All  
BBC Children in Need  
BBC Radio Cambridgeshire Trustline  
Cambridge Active Community Fund  
Cambridge City Council  
Cambridge Community Foundation  
Cambridge Council for Voluntary Services  
Cambridge Hub  
Cambridge Wine Merchants, especially Brett Turner – Mr Party Man!  
Cambridge RAG  
Cambridge Kung Fu  
Cambridge Community Circus  
Cambridge University Societies Syndicate  
Cambridgeshire Constabulary Community Trust  
City Life Building  
Deans and Chaplains Association  
Isaac Newton Trust  
Lion Yard  
Penny Wilson and her team at CU Community Affairs  
Simon Burdus (Big Fish Ents)  
Sport Relief  
Sport Unlimited  
St John's Ambulance  
Teach First  
The Careers Service

**The many individual friends of SCA**

**And of course –  
Our AMAZING Volunteers!**

Student Community Action  
10 Pembroke Street  
Cambridge  
CB2 3QY

01223 350 365

[mail@cambridgesca.org.uk](mailto:mail@cambridgesca.org.uk)

[www.cambridgesca.org.uk](http://www.cambridgesca.org.uk)

