



Cambridge SCA

Annual Report and Statement of Accounts

2012-13

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

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Management Structure

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.

Executive Committee

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

Paul Taylor	Senior Treasurer	
Joye Rosenstiel	Staff Line Manager	
Jo Haywood		
Philip Hobday		
Penny Wilson		
Nicola Buckley		
Sophie Hoare	Chair	<i>Student Trustee</i>
Harriet Cook		<i>Student Trustee</i>
Oliver Crawford		<i>Student Trustee</i>

Steering Group

Sophie Hoare	President
Harriet Cook	Vice President
Oli Crawford	Treasurer
Hayley Flood	Internal Projects
Fang Yen Sin	Secretary
Lois Taylor	Publicity/Events
Gloria Young	College Reps
Gareth Cottiss	Outreach

Office Staff

Caroline Ward	Manager	<i>Works 30 hours a week</i>
Ania Rygielska	Volunteer Administrator	<i>Average of 20 hours a week</i>

Steering Group Report

Almost all of this year's Steering Group were newcomers to the SG, including myself, providing the energy and enthusiasm needed to continue the good work of last year's SG alongside starting up some new initiatives. The support of the Senior Members, Ania, and especially Caroline, has been invaluable in this.

At the start of the year we created two new roles on the Steering Group. As Outreach Officer, Gareth Cottiss focussed on the issue of recruiting male volunteers, making contact with men's sports societies and men's welfare officers on college JCRs. We have also had a hugely positive response to a survey exploring SCA and outreach issues, and I look forward to hearing the findings. As Secretary, Fang Yen Sin has greatly improved the efficiency of SG administration, and taken on the task of producing a termly newsletter for all volunteers, a practice I hope will be continued by the next SG.

A priority this year has been raising SCA's profile in the student community. At the start of the year we designed new publicity materials, and set up a 'SCAvenger hunt' during freshers' week, which I hope will become a permanent feature in college freshers' week timetables. Although it is always a challenge to recruit college reps, Reps Co-Ordinator Gloria Young has motivated a core of committed reps who continue to advertise SCA in their colleges. Beyond the university, we have maintained beneficial links with local businesses and larger organisations, such as Teach First, who have provided training for volunteers. In particular we have enjoyed collaborating with Cambridge HUB, and have opened talks with them regarding opportunities for SCA in their new building later in the year.

One of the highlights of this year was an extremely successful social/recruitment event held in collaboration with Cambridge HUB and RAG, one of a number of social events intended to raise SCA's profile in addition to making volunteering enjoyable. Facebook has been an effective means of advertising here, and Vice-President Harriet Cook and Publicity and Events Officer Lois Taylor have done a great job improving SCA's social media presence more generally.

Fundraising has not been such a central concern as in previous years, but we have continued the traditions of bucket-shaking at the City Council's firework display and also the Halloween raid. Early in the year we organised a balloon race, which besides raising money had the added bonus of amusing clients at the summer children's party! Treasurer Oli Crawford is currently planning a major fundraiser with the Cambridge Footlights, to be held at the start of next term. We have also established a positive relationship with Cambridge RAG, assisting with and benefitting from their new grant scheme.

Finally, I hope that one of the legacies of this year's SG will be the starting up of new volunteering opportunities with Cambridge Libraries, which are currently being finalised by Hayley Flood, our Internal Projects Co-Ordinator.

All in all, I think I can safely say that everyone on the Steering Group has really enjoyed the experience; this year seems to have flown by. I wish the next SG the very best of luck, and I am confident that SCA will continue to flourish through the hard work of everyone involved, and especially through the commitment of all the volunteers. Thank you everyone!

Trustees' Report

The SCA Senior Members have been delighted to work with the talented and effective student officers who were elected in 2012. Much has been achieved in the last year and senior members were pleased to join in the 40th Birthday celebrations. Thank you to Nicky Buckley and the university community affairs section for working with steering group members and the staff to ensure that the event was a great success .

The Senior Members have been delighted at the continuing commitment, hard work and skills that Caroline and Ania have brought to their posts, not least in continuing to ensure that SCA's grant applications have resulted in the organisation continuing to offer a varied range of opportunities for clients and volunteers. SCA continues to be an effective and respected organisation both within the student community and the wider community.

We are pleased that Ania has continued to develop the online access that is offered for prospective volunteers and for Caroline's continuing involvement in the summer sport project. The latter event has continued to attract large numbers of children and featured on BBC Radio Cambridgeshire.

The senior members have continued to play their part in the running of the organisation regularly attending executive and sub-committee meetings.

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 Homework Help 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

Manager's Report

For me personally, this has probably been the most enjoyable year yet. The buzz around celebrating SCA's official 40th Birthday was wonderful and it was so inspiring to meet many of the people responsible for SCA's fantastic history. It was lovely to hear from past committee members about how some of the projects started and to see how proud they were to realise that 20 or 30 years on we are still continuing the good work. Delving into the archives made us realise just how many families SCA has helped over the years and really how very little things have changed in terms of the structure, values and projects we run.

Ania and I have been working together in the office for nearly two years now and I feel we compliment each other very well, which has helped the smooth running of SCA. Ania's new technology expertise has ensured we are incredibly efficient at signing up and matching new volunteers while our structured weekly meetings together have enabled us to monitor the projects closely and sort out any problem quickly.

This year one of my highlights has been setting up and running an SCA session for the "Childrens University" at Waterbeach School which you can read about on page 11. It has been great to have a break from the office once a week and spend some hands on time with the children. Seeing how inspired they are by our volunteers has made me realise even more that it is not just what we do to help on a practical level, but that our volunteers are such great role models for the next generation.

Our Steering Group this year have been wonderful and with Sophie at the helm they have worked incredibly hard fundraising; recruiting new volunteers; developing new projects and getting SCA to be more sociable! My only regret with this job is how quickly the Steering Groups come and go, I can't believe it's already time to start recruiting the next one.

As always I am incredibly grateful to the Executive Committee who give up their valuable family time to attend meetings to ensure SCA achieves its goals in helping the community. Finally the biggest thanks of all must go to our hundreds of volunteers who remain committed to helping and inspiring others. Their generosity in giving their time to help never ceases to make me very proud to be part of SCA. I just hope I am around when SCA celebrates it next big Birthday!

Volunteer Administrator's Report

Reading through my last year's report, I spoke a lot about how digitalisation of our processes has streamlined our work. I am pleased to say that the sign-up and reference collection webforms have been working smoothly this year. The resulting spreadsheets and Excel formulae allow me to easily collate data as and when necessary. This, for example, includes checking if our one-to-one volunteers are due to graduate or go on a year abroad next year, or when we last heard from a volunteer making monitoring easier. I have discovered the wonders of Mail Merge using spreadsheets, which means we can write a "Dear so-and-so " e-mail to everyone without spending time copying and pasting the message.

However, we found that complete digitalisation is not always a good thing. Over a short period of time the volunteers, after visiting the office, were sent an e-mail with the link to the guidelines on-line. This meant that some volunteers didn't bother reading the guidelines, and some others didn't feel confident about the project. Since January, we have paper copies of the guidelines for each of the projects, which we give to the volunteer in the office. We also talk the volunteer through the guidelines so that we don't need to worry if they actually read the documentation or not.

We had a slightly frustrating start to the new Academic year in 2012 as we noticed a drop in volunteers registering – this year we had nearly 30% fewer people signing-up than we did in the same period last year. If I were to guess why the volunteer numbers are down, I'd say there are two possible causes. Firstly, this is the first year of £9k fees and students may have to take on part time jobs leaving less time to volunteer. Secondly, the 2012 Olympics could have inspired students to choose to participate in sports over volunteering. It could just be a simple blip but we do intend to keep monitoring numbers to check this is not a continuing trend.

During this year we found that some of our group projects running in schools and have faltered due to lack of people at the establishments not having the personnel to support the projects from their end. For example, after a change of Headteacher at St Luke's, they were no longer interested in us running our Homework Help Club or the Lunchtime Reading Club. Caroline and I tried contacting other local schools, offering to provide volunteers for school clubs, especially Homework Help and Reading Groups. We were disappointed that very few schools replied. However, we renewed our partnership with St Phillip's and assist with their Homework Club and St Luke's have also recently contacted us again requesting support for their afterschool football club. Hopefully we will be able to build upon these new links next year.

On the positive side, we have had a wonderful steering group this year who have done a great job to promote SCA and to get our volunteers to meet up socially. They have introduced a termly newsletter from the Steering Group to the volunteers updating them on new projects and giving testimonies from current volunteers, which keeps communication fresh.

At least two of our group projects are totally full now and we only have a handful of one-to-one clients left to match so despite the slow start, the quality and retention of volunteers has been good. With 130 one to one Big Sib, TESL and Homework Help clients now matched we are fast reaching our capacity despite us not advertising these projects to the community at all. Word of mouth is all it takes to keep these projects as full as we can manage.

In summary, this year was a time for refining the processes we use and increasing our monitoring of volunteers. Although we have fewer volunteers on our books, all of the projects are either at capacity or working well with the wonderful volunteers they have.

Ania Rygielska

Project Reports

SCA runs 11 internal projects.

Big Sibs

The Big Siblings project, or 'Big Sibs' as it is affectionately called, is a one-to-one project that matches student volunteers with children between the ages of 5 and 11. The 'little sibs' are children who are disadvantaged in some way either through disability, family circumstance or lack of peer group friends. The 'Big sib' effectively becomes an 'older sister or brother' to the little sib, creating a safe space for the child to take a break from, what may be, a difficult home situation and have a time set aside just for them.

Beginning with a home visit from an SCA representative and the volunteer, the project is run smoothly to ensure that all parties are comfortable with the arrangements and that a good relationship is built between the big sib and the family from the beginning. This also allows the representative and volunteer to ensure that all the paperwork is filled in and Health and Safety checks are carried out correctly. The big sib then organises weekly, two-hour meet ups with the little sib, where they might play games, go out on trips, bake, chat and have fun with the child. The project gives the child the opportunity to spend time with a role-model figure outside of their own family helping them to grow in confidence, gain access to new activities and have some fun!

Big Sibs is proving to be a rewarding experience for everyone involved:

"Going to see my little sib is the highlight of my week. It's great to escape the student bubble and my time with her is incredibly rewarding. She keeps me on my toes, and after we get the homework out of the way each week she's always got an exciting project on the go; painting rock animals, building castles, baking giant cupcakes! I would thoroughly recommend Big Sibs to anyone."

- Rosie, 'Big Sibs' Volunteer

"My daughter's Big Sib came at a very crucial time. I had just given birth to my 3rd child, who was also born with a disability. Naturally, there was a lot of adjustment going on with us personally, and my daughter might have been subjected to more than she could handle. Her Big Sib lightened the mood for her, gave her an outlet and much needed attention. When her Big Sib was expected, she would be lit up with excitement, looking forward to someone spending time with her, and about her. The Big Sib program has been probably the most beneficial to us, keeping in mind that we have no family in this country."

- Mum of a Little Sib

We currently have slightly more clients than we did last year, with 39 boys and 20 girls adding up to a total of 59 clients. The age range spans from 5 to 12 with a pretty even spread across the ages. Whilst last year we capped the age of the clients at 11, we still have a few 12-year old clients who were already matched with a Big Sib and have had the same one for years.

We have had more male volunteers this year (around 4 to 6 more than last year), and have subsequently been able to match several boys who were on our waiting list throughout 2011/2012 academic year without being matched. However, we need more male volunteers, as there are still several boys who have not been matched to a big sib. We have a ratio of almost 3 female volunteers for every male. Male volunteers are often drawn to the more practical projects -sports and teaching- and it is possible that the 'older sibling' role is not one that appeals to them in the same way as it does to the female volunteers. One way to draw in more male volunteers would be to target the advertising at male volunteers: a real emphasis on the interests of the male clients may be one way of doing this (i.e. 5 year old boy, likes sport and computer games).

Half-terms 'treats' have been provided for the little sibs this year, with each volunteer able to claim £15 back for a special activity. It was decided that it was easiest for volunteers to organise this individually with their little sibs and the feedback for this has been very positive:

"I took my littlesib to the cinema during her half-term holiday, as her parents told me she is not often able to go. I looked online for some cheap half term activities and saw the 'kids films' had £1 entry per child. The parents later told me that my littlesib had really enjoyed the one-on-one time away from the house. I had a great time too!"

- Jenny, 'Big Sibs' Volunteer

This year (as with most years) one of the biggest issues with the project has been maintaining the relationship between volunteers and clients. There have been a few situations where volunteers have stopped visiting clients without SCA's knowledge or where the clients have just stopped getting back to the volunteer or who keep changing plans at the last minute without informing the volunteer and so volunteers have had wasted journeys to visit them. We are tackling this issue by increasing out monitoring to ensure the office hear from either the volunteer or the client at least three times a term. Some other ways to tackle this could include:

- Determining volunteer and family availability prior to matching them up to ensure the best match in terms of schedule.
- Encouraging the family and the volunteer to organise regular weekly meetings well in advance.
- Encouraging the family to keep in contact with the volunteer and alert SCA and the volunteer if there are any changes in the family situation or contact details.

This year, we as the project leaders have aimed to meet up with each new volunteer once prior to their first meeting with the child. This ensures that new volunteers are clear on the nature of the role they are taking and also gives them an obvious contact point and the opportunity to ask any questions they may have. If this is continued in the future it may also help to avoid breakdowns in the volunteer-client relationship.

Charlie Bindels and Jenny Honeywood
Joint Project Leaders 2012-2013

The Sunday Social Club (Bounce)

Bounce has continued to thrive this year as a project, which provides a variety of ways for disadvantaged children to let off steam, whether through group activities, sports, quiet games or arts and crafts. We are now firmly established at the City Life Centre on Sturton Street; its free parking and easy access remains a draw for parents. We have retained a high level of attendance, with around ten children coming to each session (with an age range of five to fifteen), while the turnout of volunteers has been solidly high, averaging at around five a week. This allows the project to function as both a provider of one-to-one attention for children with special needs and as a means for kids to participate in group games under the supervision of adults. We could not provide the range of activities we do without the commitment of our volunteers, who make sure that every child is being supervised and is doing something they enjoy. This means that both volunteers and children get something out of every session and have good reason to come back, enabling longer-term relationships to be built up. Some of the children have been coming for four years now, as have some of the volunteers.

In the future, I hope to integrate Bounce more closely with TESL and Big Sibs, since children on those projects could benefit from the opportunities to have fun and socialise, which Bounce offers. We had a one-off collaboration with the Gates Scholars this year, which was hugely successful – hopefully this can be repeated in the future.

Oli Crawford
Project Leader 2011 - 2013

Craft Room

Craft Room is a small project run weekly for vulnerable children in the Cambridge area. It generally involves arts and crafts such as painting, drawing and card making. However, it also expands to playing with toys and the sand pit depending on what the children feel like doing. The number of children changes from week to week, as not everyone is able to attend weekly. At the moment we have quite an age range from about 2 to about 9 and there is anything from 6 to 12 children in a session. This means that the volunteers are able to help different children at different times, giving them a varied volunteering experience.

Volunteering with Craft Room is a lot of fun and can be very rewarding for the children and the volunteers. This year we have decided to change the volunteer structure, having a select number of volunteers who try to attend Craft Room at least once every two weeks. This has worked very well as it has meant that the children become comfortable with the volunteers and get to know them quite well.

The sessions give the children the opportunity to decide what they want to do and often get much wanted one-on-one attention from volunteers – although does often leave the volunteers run off their feet! For the volunteers, we enjoy the chance to make a new friend and make a difference in the children's lives – and even enjoy being exhausted after the session! In the future it would be beneficial to plan some of the sessions and get arts and crafts materials specifically for them as it could be an exciting change from the usual weekly free-for-all.

This year we have also expanded alongside the Park Life project to do regular trips to Funky Fun House, which the children really value. I hope that this can be continued in the future.

Sophie Shall
Project Leader 2012-2013

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!

In 2012, we were able to keep the project running over the summer and Christmas holidays; it was easy to see that the extra stability made a real difference to many of the children we work with. We've even been told that when the children are going out somewhere during the week, they often ask if the volunteers are coming!

Mohan Ganesalingam
Project Leader 2009 – 2013

Childrens University

On Thursday afternoons myself and two or three SCA volunteers meet at Waterbeach school to run a session for the Children's University. During this time the whole school stops normal activities and the children get to attend a course of their choice offering them exciting and innovative learning activities and experiences. Initially our volunteers started helping the teachers at a range of courses such as gardening, school radio, calligraphy and lego construction. However, by the second term the school asked us to run our own course and our volunteers unanimously chose Creative Cooking! Not only was it popular with our volunteers, I have been informed by the school that it is the pupils most popular and talked about course with our attendees taunting their classmates with the goodies we create each week!!

Mrs Johnstone organises the Children's University and she had this to say about our involvement:-

"Waterbeach Community Primary School set up the Children's University with the aim of enriching the curriculum and giving children the opportunity to decide on what they would like to learn. To do this successfully we needed expertise from outside the school. We say this as a way of not only bringing in new skills but building bridges to our local communities. Mrs Ward and her volunteer team from Student Community Action have been a fantastic asset to the school. Each term they have taught cooking skills to small groups of children who wouldn't have had the opportunity in large class situations. It is the most popular workshop and every term children ask for more! I am extremely grateful to Student Community Action. Thank you." **Mrs Johnstone, Waterbeach Primary School**

One of the regular volunteer is Jiong Tu. As she explains, it is not just the children that benefit from the University:

"I have helped with the Children's University since May 2012. I helped with the gardening during which our little garden group (seven children and two adults) made a lovely scarecrow, cleaned the flowerbed, and watered the plants in the school garden. Later I helped Caroline with the cooking. Our little cooking groups changed termly with children ranging from 5-10 years. Together we experiment with burgers, cookies, cakes, fruit smoothies with everyone enjoying the peeling, cutting, baking and eating :) The kids learned how to cook safely, tried various new foods, and enjoyed sharing food with friends and parents.

As a student from China, I got my primary education in a small county in the early 90s China, I found the experience in the UK primary school was totally different from mine. The small group education here make sure every child was carefully taken care of, it is greatly different from my school where 60 or 70 students in a class with only one or two teachers. I like children a lot, and enjoyed the time spent in the Children's University. I like to discuss with the little kids about their favourite food and the food we eat in China, while the older children enquire about what life is like for children in my country. When I am at the Children's University, I myself feel like a little child again, learning new things in a very different way from my previous education. " **Jiong Tu**

Caroline Ward
Project Leader 2012-2013

TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language)

This project works with children aged 5 – 16 years, who do not speak English as their first language and where another language is often spoken at home. Our volunteers provide support on a one to one basis either in the child's home or at school.

TESL client number fluctuates from year to year, mainly because families come here for a year or two, and then move on. For example, this academic year we took on 8 children who will be leaving before the autumn. At the moment we have 33 volunteers working with 50 children one-to-one. In addition to this, the sessions at Parkside and Coleridge have proven more popular this year – 5 students are visiting the schools regularly to help children during their English lessons.

All the TESL volunteers I have been in contact with this year have given extremely positive feedback, with recurrent themes being that clients are responding well to the support, their parents appreciate the help being given, and that the volunteers themselves love what they are doing!

Many TESL volunteers, along with volunteers from other education-related projects, attended a very valuable training session run by Charlotte Edwards from Teach First. Charlotte went through general teaching tips, answering questions on how to tackle particular issues and challenges, and I am confident that everyone who attended gained a lot from it.

Nowadays, TESL referrals rarely come from teachers. The numbers are stable because of word-of-mouth among various foreign-language speaking communities, which shows that SCA is providing excellent service. This year the Spanish speaking community referred 9 children to us in one term alone! .

This year we have been working hard to increase our monitoring of volunteers and have aimed to have contact with either the volunteer or family at least three times a term to make sure things are running smoothly. Ania has created an additional column in the spreadsheet, which allows us to see at a glance how many times we've checked in on a pairing each term.

We have also tried hard to get volunteers to record progress of their pupils as we are getting asked more and more by funders to show the impact their funding makes in the community.

Sophie Hoare and Ania Rygielska

Homework Help (St Matthews)

The Homework Help Club at St Matthew's has grown significantly over the past year. We currently work with around 12 - 15 children every week, with students from Year 2 up to Year 6. Our new contact within the school, Kate Wilson, has encouraged every teacher to nominate the children in their class whom they think would benefit most from attending the Homework Help Club. This ensures that our efforts are well-targeted at the children in the school who most need help, support, encouragement or just a relaxed space to do their homework in. The Club appears to be surprisingly popular within the school, with children telling me that their friends also want to join!

After a slow start at the beginning of the academic year we now have an excellent base of dedicated volunteers from across the university, meaning that there is normally someone on hand to advise on a particular science or history project. For most of last term we got an average of six volunteers a week, all of whom were immensely supportive and enthusiastic – it can sometimes be quite hard to motivate the younger children at the end of Friday afternoon! But the majority of the children still leave with the bulk of their homework complete, and we are often able spend the final part of the session playing hangman or giving out times-table challenges.

I think our real success lies in the fact that most of the children clearly appreciate and benefit from the help, concentrating harder and gaining in understanding. The room is often filled with raised hands asking volunteers to check answers or explain things. Last week we finally reached the stage where we had nearly equal numbers of volunteers and children - a situation I have been striving for for the last term, and one I hope will continue. This meant that almost all the students benefited from one-to-one help, with visible positive effects, especially in the younger age groups, and everyone (kids and helpers!) went home with a feeling of a job well done. I am always immensely proud when I see the progress that individual children have made each week, and I hope that they will continue to consider the club as 'the place to be' on Friday afternoons over the coming years.

Bethany Megson
Project Leader 2012 - 2013

Taskforce

Taskforce is a project which offers one-to-one services to clients that would benefit from assistance, but do not qualify under any other projects. There are three major groups that can be distinguished: **teenagers with learning difficulties**; **elderly** people living at home who ask for company or practical help such as gardening, and "other". The "other" group this includes helping a lady who recently had triplets, helping a woman with ME, or assisting someone who has had a stroke.

This year we were fortunate to find volunteers for most of our clients, even when the case initially seemed tricky to cater to. We received a request from a social worker; she knew of an elderly lady who would benefit from some social stimulation. The problem was that the elderly lady spoke little English, and her mother tongue was Persian. After a quick search, I discovered that there is a Cambridge University Persian Society. I sent them an e-mail requesting that they publicise the case, and within a few days I heard from two people who offered to visit the elderly lady. We have arranged the home visit, and now both volunteers are in touch with the clients, visiting her when requested. This case just shows how versatile we can be in finding volunteers to fit mot situations!

Ania Rygielska
Project Leader 2011-2013

Befriending the Elderly (Stanton House)

After the demise of our project at Ditchburn Place due to lack of residents participation we started to look for a replacement venue. One of our Exec members put me in touch with the co-ordinator of Stanton House – the independent living facility near the Grafton Centre. Between us we agreed to visits at 2pm on Sundays and I set about recruiting some volunteers. Initially this was successful with 12 students signing up, although nobody wanted to take on the role of Project Leader. This meant that I had to fulfil this role from the office and attend on a Sunday when I could.

All went well to begin with, but in the Lent term the project stumbled into a few problems. For various reasons the timing no longer suited many of the volunteers. The lack of a project leader who attends regularly means that managing it is somewhat challenging as we do not always get feedback on how the sessions have been. This lack of communication and organisation has led to the number of interested resident dwindling.

On the positive note, I organised for a group of Gates scholars to attend one of the sessions as a taster. They enjoyed it very much and at least two of them continue to attend regularly.

The residents that attend speak very highly of our volunteers and put forward ideas to make the sessions more popular among the other residents.

I hope that in the next few months we'll be able to find a project leader and change the time to a more mutually convenient time or even possible change the visits to very other week to keep it fresher and enable more volunteers to attend.

Ania Rygielska
Temporary Project Leader 2012 – 2013

Befriending the Elderly (St Georges)

Volunteering at St George's has gone from strength to strength this year, with seven volunteers now regularly visiting the care home. Despite no longer working at weekends, the activities co-ordinator Susanna Leach is very keen for help from volunteers, and indeed students now go in Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays every week. Help usually takes the form of assisting with group activities such as bingo or quizzes, as more hands on deck means that a greater number of residents can attend. There are also some opportunities for time spent one-to-one should either party wish.

Last term there was a gift collection by students from Fitzwilliam College, and every resident received a Christmas present. These were dropped off at the end of term at a small carol concert performed by student volunteers. This was a huge success, and was very popular with the residents.

The biggest challenge has been organising suitable times for volunteers during the week, due to people's busy timetables. The care home is also now insisting volunteers are CRB checked by Excelcare as well as by the SCA, so this means that volunteers' activities are initially restricted.

The activities take place over a range of units, so volunteers are able to come into contact with respite residents, those with dementia or learning difficulties, and those with medical problems. This means that the volunteers are spread fairly evenly across the care home, and all the residents are able to benefit from their visits.

Natasha Marchant
Project Leader 2012-2013

Betty Stubben's Musical Entertainment Group

Betty Stubbens' Musical Entertainment Group (Betty's) been running for over 40 years and is still going strong. The last year has seen our numbers grow so we now usually have a minimum of five of us singing. We usually meet at a care home, going to a different old folks' home, community centre or sheltered housing complex each Wednesday evening. Steven, one of the long-standing members kindly continues to liaise between the group and the care homes to ensure we reach as many as possible. The lack of a minibus has not been an issue, with most of us cycling or walking to homes, we are very grateful to Matt for bringing the piano each week in his car.

The residents attending the session range from six and over twenty, depending on the home. We congregate in a communal space where we set up the keyboard and distribute songbooks. We then alternate between a song from the songbook, which the residents are strongly encouraged to join in with, and a solo from one of the group. Solos have included songs about 'Taylor the Latte Boy', classical guitar solos and Matt's endless supply of Pam Ayres poems. Group songs include 'Singin' in the Rain', 'The Purple People Eater' and the very popular 'A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square'. Ross has done a stunning job this year of accompanying us on piano, guitar and accordion. At half time we stop for a twenty-minute interval and distribute ourselves amongst the residents for a chat. Last week I had a great chat with two ladies, an aunt and her niece, about Brian Cox (whom they adore) and about how the aunt used to sing 'The Purple People Eater' to her niece back in the fifties.

We all enjoy Betty's immensely – a number of members have been coming for years and didn't let graduation stop them! It's brilliant to be able to listen to some of the amazing stories some of the residents have, and to see their faces light up as they recognise a song and start humming along (or even, memorably, leading their own singing of 'We'll Meet Again' which wasn't even in the songbook!). I have loved being project leader, and am sure that whoever takes up the mantle – all our members are so committed and enthusiastic – will do a great job.

Katharine Howell
Project Leader 2011-2013

Junior Treasurer's Report

2012-13 has been a successful year for SCA financially, thanks in large part to our staff's excellent work in seeking out new grants and making high-quality applications. We have managed to run a surplus and increase our overall reserves, as well as providing higher levels of funding for an expanded range of activities.

The majority of our funding is received through grants: Cambridge City Council and the Societies Syndicate of the University remain among our largest supporters, though we have also benefited from numerous smaller sources of funding. Our access to these grants is made possible by the diligent and thorough work of our staff, who assemble successful applications and so enable our volunteers to continue to make a much-valued contribution to our community. The overall amount raised through grants was up on last year, coming to just over £29,000.

The colleges are always an important source of donations for SCA. This year we saw generous new donations from a number of colleges, as well as renewed contributions from colleges who have regularly provided funds for SCA in the past. College JCRs and Chaplains have also made valuable contributions, for which we are very grateful. Indeed, we seek to further enhance our links with the chaplaincy of the university in the future. The income generated through donations was up by a third on last year, to over £13,000.

Criminal Record Bureau income is still a significant source of funding, and we continue to have a reliable stream of forms to administer. No Government changes to the CRB system have yet been implemented, but we remain vigilant to the possibility of changes in the system and are prepared to adapt to any alterations as they are announced. Revenue raised through CRBs was, like our other sources of income, higher than last year.

The Steering Group have, as usual, made a much-appreciated contribution to fundraising. Although we have not collaborated with Big Fish Ents on the same scale as previous years, raids have continued to raise money, as did the regular Bonfire night bucket-shaking. In Easter Term of 2012 we launched SCA's first ever balloon race, gaining sponsorship from Teach First, and raising over £100; we have also laid the groundwork for future collaborations with the Cambridge Footlights, through comedy nights, and with Cambridge RAG, who plan to implement a regular grant scheme for SCA in the near future.

All in all, SCA has had a very good year, with all our major sources of income being higher than last year. This has enabled us to spend more on activities, notably the Children's University and Big Sibs, as well as hosting more events, such as children's parties and the 40th anniversary celebration. We are in a good position for the coming year and can be very happy with our performance over the last twelve months.

Oliver Crawford
Junior Treasurer 2012/2013

Thank you's....

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:

Our Funders

Awards for All
BBC Children in Need
Birketts Community Grassroots Fund
Cambridge City Council
Cambridge City Council & South Cambs Reward Fund
Cambridge City Council Olympic Grant
Cambridge Community Foundation
Cambridge Council for Voluntary Services
Cambridge University Societies Syndicate
Cambridge RAG
David Hardy Project
Deans and Chaplains Association
Isaac Newton Trust
Mills & Reeves Community Foundation
The Outlook Fund

Our Partners

Other organisations

Activities4Cambridge
Cambridge Student Hub
Cambridge Women's Aid
Cambridge Wine Merchants, especially Brett Turner
Nicky Buckley and her team at CU Community Affairs

Primary Schools

St Matthews (Homework Help club)
St Phillip's (Homework Help club)
Queen Ediths (Homework Help club)
St Luke's (Football club)

Secondary Schools

Parkside (TESL in school)
Coleridge (TESL in school)
Manor (Aim Higher club)

Care Homes / Independent Living Homes

Barnabus Court
Ditchburn Place
Ellis House
Royal Albert Homes
Stanton House
St George's
Stories House
Whitefryers

The many individual friends of SCA

And of course –

Our AMAZING Volunteers

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