

Because we all need friends and family.

social networks:	prevent homelessness promote mental health and well-being create inclusive communities - and make us feel good about ourselves
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Please take a few minutes to read over this edition of the newsletter where you will find information on:

- Scottish Social Networks development of a **Social Networks Assessment**
- The recent merger which created **Relationships Scotland**
- **Bethany Christian Trust's** Passing the Baton Project
- The success of the **Scottish Social Networks Training Day for Trainers and Managers**
- An update on **Towards a Mentally Flourishing Scotland** consultation
- Recent updates to **contact details**

As usual if there is anything you would like included in the newsletter or a contribution you would like to make please email me to let me know

lesley.stenhouse@scottishsocialnetworks.org

Best Wishes,

Lesley (Lesley Stenhouse, Forum Coordinator)

Social Networks Assessment – how do you do it? Assessment of social networks was one of the recommendations in the Homelessness Task Force report and, in the current climate of scarce resources, the high cost of tenancy failure and 2012 looming ever closer, identifying those at greatest risk and targeting appropriate support is essential. To support this process, Scottish Social Networks is looking at how clients' social networks can be assessed, with a view to developing **best practice guidelines and a supplement to the training pack**. We have already contacted Local Authority strategy officers and supporting people lead officers but would also greatly value input from other sources. We know there are many voluntary sector organisations out there with expert knowledge in this area and would find it really useful to hear what your organisation is doing on social networks assessment. Please contact Lesley Stenhouse on 0131 524 9869 or email info@scottishsocialnetworks.org to contribute or discuss further.



On April 1st 2008 a new charity became a leading voice for families in Scotland. **Relate Scotland and Family Mediation Scotland have merged to become Relationships Scotland.**

Relationships Scotland will provide relationship and family support services across Scotland. Commenting on the merger, Relationships Scotland's Chief Executive, Stuart Valentine said: "Relationships Scotland's role will be to support and develop an accessible network of these services for families experiencing transition, separation and conflict – realistically, many people may not know what services are available to them at any stage in their relationship difficulties, so the 'one door' option can provide vital help when things seem to be in crisis".

For further information call [Gay Hickey](tel:01315141068), Head of Public Affairs, Relationships Scotland, 0131 514 1068, or email gcox.fms@btconnect



Bethany
Christian
Trust

Passing the Baton is a **Bethany Christian Trust** project aimed at preventing homelessness. It is a practical volunteering project, coordinated by trained staff and executed by the people that can really make the difference — the people in our communities. We have 2 types of volunteer; **Community**



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Representatives who conduct a basic assessment and coordinate a small team of volunteer buddy mentors. They also organise things like social events and social action 'hit squads' that can paint flats. **Buddy Mentors** who informally 'buddy' vulnerable people and accompany them to engagements and events. We offer '**Transitional Support**' for individuals coming out of homelessness services and '**Resettlement Support**' by helping individuals to integrate into healthy, supportive relationships in their community. Our ethos is "two are better than one" and peer support is at the heart of the project. Three of our Community Reps in Edinburgh have come through the project and now through training and support are effectively helping others. To date we operate in both Edinburgh and Aberdeen and have supported 32 individuals; only seeing one resettlement breakdown.

The Scottish Social Networks Training Day for Trainers and Managers took place on the 28 May at the Thistle Hotel in Edinburgh and was a great success.

The training day was designed specifically for **trainers, managers and team leaders**, particularly those working in supported accommodation. On completion of the days programme participants were given a free copy of the Training Pack which, with the knowledge gained from the day, equipped them to cascade the training to their organisations' front-line staff and volunteers. Places for the training day were heavily oversubscribed and as a result we hope to hold another training day in the near future to meet demand.



We received some valuable feedback from participants; including the following comments on the training – "it has helped me identify what is lacking in my project with regards to promoting social networks..." and "I can take the pack and deliver the training direct to senior managers."

Following the recent consultations in connection with **Towards a Mentally Flourishing Scotland: the Future of Mental Health Improvement in Scotland 2008-2011**, comments and suggestions that were put forward are now being considered. Full details of responses are now available to view online through the Scottish Government website: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/04/03092148/0> Additionally, an analysis report of all the responses can also be viewed online: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/05/21122124/0> The development of an action plan is currently in progress; in partnership with the National Reference Group. The plan should be published in late summer, and will set out the future direction for work towards improving mental health from 2008-11.

Updates to contact details

We have recently updated our database with new contact details for key contacts at the following organisations –

South Lanarkshire Council's mediation co-ordinator is now Anne Inglis who can be contacted at anne.inglis@southlanarkshire.gov.uk North Lanarkshire Council's Julie Hunter is currently on secondment and her role as Senior Strategy Officer has been filled by Steve Mason who can be contacted at masonste@northlan.gov.uk



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