

Kairos News

March 2013

Moving On



I feel that I have come to the end of my journey with Kairos as I am now moving on with my life.

Kairos helped walk with me on my journey through recovery, and believed in me when I didn't believe in myself. I have come along way since I began using this service and feel that I am no longer that shy timid person with drug problems. I have recovered fully and am now starting a new chapter in my life.

Since I was the Service User representative for Kairos, I realised that I was happy being able to help Service Users and this is something I became very passionate about. I have now become a volunteer for

Recovery Partnership and could not be happier. I love my life.

Sometimes, life throws things at me and this can be difficult but I have come to realise that without sad times, I would not experience these happy times. That was a long learning curve for me. This is what helped me to overcome everything. I will never take any kind of drug again.

But back to my role as a volunteer. To be able to help people with drug or alcohol problems is just the best experience. To be able to walk alongside people who are experiencing difficulties in their life with regards to drug and alcohol problems is a perfect new chapter in my life. I help in the Needle Exchange, the women's group and helping clients. I am also working on doing an overdose workshop with another volunteer which I am looking forward too.

I want to give all the staff and volunteers a huge thank you for all the support you gave me as I believe Kairos has helped me a lot and I want to thank the women as well, as without them, there would be no Kairos. They are all lovely women and it has been an amazing experience walking this journey with them.

I will always be a part of Kairos though by being a friend. Occasionally I will pop by to see you all as you have all had an impact in my life and I miss you all. I want to wish everyone good luck for the future as I am living proof that, if you want to achieve your dreams...go for it. Anything is possible. I have achieved mine. I am now in my second year of University doing a course in Drug and Alcohol Counselling and also getting married this year. As one door closes, another one opens...

All the best... Val

Get fit and fundraise!

The Coventry Fun Run is taking place on Sunday 9th June 2013 at 10.30am. It starts at the Coventry Memorial Park. The length of the run is approximately 3.5 miles and goes through Earlsdon and Cheylesmore finishing back at the Memorial

Park. You can run, walk, or a mixture of both, and there is no time limit in when you need to finish by (Kairos staff breath a sigh of relief!).

If you would like to join us



**COVENTRY
FUN RUN**

in raising money for Kairos contact Jenny at Jenny@kairoswwt.org.uk

WINGS: Cornerstone

Monday's 11.30 – 3pm

Do you find it difficult to say "no", to get your voice heard or to get people to listen to you? If you do then make sure you have our WINGS sessions in your diary. Kairos will be running an assertiveness course from 22nd April to 3rd June 2013.

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Prison Inreach

My name is Caroline. I've been using Kairos services for nearly 3 years. I came into custody in 2011. Kairos continued to offer support and advice by attending the prison once a month.

This was a very welcome visit and I always look forward to seeing them. The support and advice they have given to me has helped me to get through my sentence. They have always been friendly, professional and so caring.

When I came to jail, I was in a bad place both emotionally and physically. Along with the support of Kairos and prison services, I am now learning to like myself again, to be confident and to never be afraid to try. I'm constantly doing courses or projects and feeling proud of myself. When my monthly visit comes I look forward to sharing my experiences with Kairos.

The prison system can struggle to help prisoners on release, however, I'm out soon and I'd normally be unsure of my future but Kairos are continuing to

support me. They have done things for me, arranged transport on release to take me to my appointments, they have helped me to explore accommodation options and assisted me with setting up health and legal appointments on release.

I honestly cannot say how I'd be without them. They are amazing people and I hope they continue to work with other women like me here who have no one else to turn to or just need the extra support.

Thank you.

One Billion Rising

The 14th February was a day to make a stand against the horrific violence that women endure every day in every country across the globe. Organised by the V-Day movement on its 15th Anniversary, One Billion Rising called for men and women everywhere to 'strike, dance, rise!'. Its message:

'One in three women on the planet will be raped or beaten in her lifetime. One billion women violated is an atrocity. One Billion women dancing is a revolution'. 'One Billion Rising is a global strike, an invitation to dance, a call to men and women to refuse to participate in the status quo until rape and rape culture ends, an act of solidarity, demonstrating to women the commonality of their struggles and their power in numbers, a refusal to accept vio-

lence against women and girls as a given and a new time and a new way of being.'



At Kairos WWT, One Billion Rising was an opportunity to rise for the women of Coventry who are exploited on our streets, enduring horrific violence and degradation. Within our communities there is still the false belief that violence against sex workers is acceptable. We rise

against all violence to women and we champion the schemes in our city that promote justice and safety for all women including the Ugly Mugs and the Visual Evidence for Victims Schemes.

We celebrate with our sister organisations, CRASAC, Coventry Haven and Panaghar who dedicate their services to victims of violence across Coventry and we stand shoulder to shoulder to say NO MORE! We were proud to be a part of this global revolution.

Our thanks to Coventry Feminists and our wonderful volunteers Jen B and Thea who organised the event, support from Foleshill Women's Training, CRASAC, Panaghar, Lady Godiva, Coventry Haven and Whitefriars and the brilliant busker who got us out of a technical jam and lent us his PA system!

Happy International Women's Day



in-

To celebrate International Women's Day 2013, our women have been busy writing poetry and creating artwork. We encouraged our women at our Evening Drop In and WINGS group to think about a word that would carry them through 2013, that would sum up what they would want for themselves for the year ahead, or a word that would

inspire them. The words **hope**, **change**, **children**, **balance**, **strength** and **achieve** were amongst words chosen and used by our WINGS group in a creative writing and art workshop. The artwork will be displayed in the Evening Drop In.

I Saw
I saw woman like a rock in the stream
I saw resilience like the sunset turning round
I saw change with feathers of light
I saw hope like a jet through the sky
I saw strength, the comfort of home
I saw chocolate. The struggle was over
I saw balance fighting to be free
I saw life, electric fireworks in my brain
I saw inspiration reach for the stars
I saw achievement, a warm glowing future
I saw children safe from stormy weather
I saw Kairos women working together.

Thank You and Farewell



In April 1999, Kairos WWT came into being. A small group of women in Coventry, inspired by the

work of Anawim in Birmingham, led by Barbara McGowan and accompanied by two of the Sisters from Anawim, went out in pairs on Outreach in the streets of Hillfields, to meet and get to know women who were working there.

Over the last 14 years, Kairos WWT has grown beyond what any of the early volunteers and

founders of Kairos could have dreamt of and Barbara has been fundamental to the development of the charity over the years.

Kairos WWT has been very fortunate to have benefited from Barbara's vision, energy, talents and commitment since its beginnings through her roles as founder, Project Manager and volunteer. We, as staff, trustees, volunteers and Service Users, will be sad to see Barbara go but know that wherever her journey takes her, she will continue to touch the lives of many.

In 2009, Kairos celebrated our 10th Anniversary and Barbara wrote a piece for our special

edition Kairos News. It seemed fitting to revisit that article:

"My life has been enriched by each of the women I have met during the last ten years. I thank God for your strength, your initiative, your determination, for the progress you have made, for your ability to make do with little, to take life as it is comes and all this with a wonderful sense of humour!"

Thank you Barbara for your strength, your initiative, your determination, for the progress we have made, for your ability to have made do with little and to take each of our women as they come....

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LOTTERY FUNDED

Our Thanks

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V Carrol, Gordon and Eileen Garnett, St Barbara's Church, Salvation Army, Hillfield's Baptist Church, Knights of St Columba, Macmillan Nurses, All Souls Church, The Church of St Thomas More, Jackie Capitani, Carol Barrick and our anonymous donors.

Let's talk about sex...and sexual exploitation

Our newest service, the Protective Behaviours Project continues to go from strength to strength. Over the last 12 months, 174 young people (aged 11-18) had direct contact with a Kairos Project Worker through a Lloyds TSB supported initiative aimed to raise awareness of issues surrounding sexual exploitation.

In partnership with The Children's Society Streetwise Project, CRASAC and COMBAT our worker attended 9 venues across the city, targeting those most vulnerable to grooming and

sexual exploitation (including a Teenage Pregnancy Unit, an Extended Learning Centre, two youth centres, 3 supported accommodation projects and two secondary schools). 100 young people participated in a one-off assembly and small group work, whilst 74 young people participated in a series of awareness raising sessions covering topics including:

- Consent
- Respect
- Relationships
- Grooming
- Risky situations

- Trafficking
- Prostitution

Our worker has also undertaken 1-1 work with two young women aged 18-24 to offer more intensive support around understanding sexual exploitation, exploring ways to increase personal safety and raising self-esteem.

The vulnerability factors for young women at risk of sexual exploitation are synonymous with the vulnerability factors for women at risk of prostitution and our own women's stories tell us how one can lead to the other....

(trigger warning for the story)

My Story: A Dark Place to a Darker

When I was a child I used to stand what was happening. I was confused and really hide in the corner of my bedroom waiting for my dad to come and hit me. The violence had been going on for a number of years, so I ran away from home and slept outside. I was hungry, thirsty and very cold. It was very lonely.

I was walking down the road the next evening when I saw a girl my age. She told me that she had run away from a children's home and had a family in Wolverhampton who I could stay with. I thought it sounded exciting and that it would be somewhere warm to stay. I thought that this girl was very friendly and would make good company, someone who I could have a laugh with.

When I reached Wolverhampton, my life changed for the worse. We went into a taxi and on arrival of our destination she told me to wait in the taxi for her while she knocked on the door. She went and then appeared with two other women who shouted at her, asking why she knocked on the door and run away. I didn't understand what was happening. One of the women was tall in jeans and the other woman was tall and voluptuous, wearing a really short skirt. The larger of the two dragged me from the taxi and thumped me in the eye. I was in a lot of pain and was crying so much. Little did I know that it was going to get a lot worse.



The blonde girl and the tall slim girl were laughing and joking and here I was with a tear stained face and a black eye. I didn't know what was going to happen next.

The larger woman told me that I would do whatever she said; otherwise she would really hurt me. I was so scared. She took me to a corner and I waited. A man came and she told me I had to do what he wanted. I was too scared to disobey her and had to do sex-

ual things I had never done before. I told him I didn't want to do this and please get me help, but he said he didn't want to get involved. That single day changed who I was. I ended up keeping this to myself and choosing sex work as my lifestyle as well as becoming a drug addict.

I hated my life. I had become everything I hated: drug addict, prostitute, a prison number. I'd hit rock bottom. Life was crap. I just didn't have the strength to let myself out of such a bad situation. And as the days became weeks and then months. The worse my life became. Working on the



streets was a nightmare. Over the years I have been repeatedly raped and the sad thing is it just becomes a way of life, a risk that comes with the job. I started working just for the money and to furnish my house then it became a necessity to be able to get my drugs. Little did I know when I started sex work, the dark places it would take me.