

Pedal your way to a smoothie

GET fit, have fun and feel healthy all at the same time by trying out a smoothie bike.

Aberdeen Cyrenians has arranged to borrow one over the weekend of August 3-4. It will be at Asda at the beach on Saturday and Bridge of Dee on Sunday between 10am and 4pm when you will have the chance to come along and have a go.

The smoothie bike is an exercise bike and smoothie maker in one. It is a fun and innovative way of getting exercise and meeting your five a day. The bike has been fitted with a blender attachment to which you add your favourite fruits - pedal the bike and within minutes you will have a delicious and nutritious smoothie. Pedal power converts the mix of fruit, fruit juice and ice cubes into your smoothie.

For a minimum £2 donation to Aberdeen Cyrenians you can try out this amazing machine and reward yourself with a healthy, tasty drink.

The smoothie bike in operation

Aberdeen Cyrenians Quiz

This quiz was drawn up as part of a recent Service Users Get Involved event, purely as a bit of fun. It had many Summer Street staff scratching their heads. How much do you know about Aberdeen Cyrenians? We'll give the answers next month.

- When was Aberdeen Cyrenians established?
a) 1960 b) 1968 c) 1974
- What did Margaret House used to be called?
a) Women's Hostel b) Steve's Home c) Cyrenians House
- How many projects are there in Aberdeen Cyrenians?
a) 4 b) 6 c) 7
- How many times a week is Street Alternatives open?
a) 2 b) 3 c) 4
- Which of these are examples of service user involvement?
a) House meeting b) Bingo night c) Cinema trip d) Suggestion box
- Who is the Chief Executive of The Cyrenians?
a) Paul Hannan b) Scott Baxter c) Susan Montgomerie
- What was the Summer Street building before Aberdeen Cyrenians were here? Pick 2
a) nightclub 'the 62 club' b) dance academy c) bingo hall and cafe d) a school
- How many trees are in the front garden of 311 Clifton Road?
a) 0 b) 3 c) 5
- How many years has Clifton Road been offering a service to young people?
a) 21 b) 10 c) 30
- How many volunteers support the work of Aberdeen Cyrenians at the moment?
a) 69 b) 24 c) 89



Choir's noteworthy effort

ON Saturday May 25th Aberdeen Bach Choir hosted a Come and Sing event at High Church Hilton to raise funds for two charities, Aberdeen Cyrenians and Alzheimer Scotland. 124 singers registered in total - around half were Bach Choir members, some sing with other local choirs and there were singers from as far away as Inverness and Edinburgh. The opportunity to spend a day singing two wonderful pieces by Faure - the Requiem and the Cantique de Jean Racine proved a big draw.

The Bach Choir's musical director, Peter Parfitt, led the day which was a fine combination of work and fun, and the Choir's regular accompanist Drew Tulloch was there to keep everyone on track. Friends and family came along at the end of the day to hear a performance and their donations helped towards the final total of funds raised. In the end, each charity received a cheque for £700.

A&I workers feel impact of recent welfare reforms

LAST year, some 800 people sought help from the Aberdeen Cyrenians' Advice and Information service team at the four, weekly drop in sessions. It's a busy service and likely to get busier as the year progresses and more changes to benefits are implemented.

Under recent welfare reforms, the Under Occupancy Rule came into operation in April and Universal Credit will be introduced in October, both of which are causing stress for some of the most vulnerable people in the country. The Under Occupancy Rule, also known as the "bedroom tax", means that tenants have to pay upwards of an extra 25% in rent for each unused bedroom in the property. People who have lived at the same address for 30 years, who have seen their family grow up there and who consider it as home can now face the headache of trying to pay the extra bill. If they are reliant on benefits they have to consider cutting down on electricity, gas, food, clothing, social activities, bus fares etc to do this.

Aberdeen Cyrenians' Advice and Information workers have seen an increase in the number of people at the drop in sessions who need help and guidance with The Under Occupancy Rule. The arrival of a standard letter threatening eviction for arrears incurred by the new rule prompts many people to attend a drop in session in a panic. One of the six Advice and Information workers will try to reassure them about the process, what the rule is for and explain the options open to them. They will also try to guide them through what help is available, assist in filling in relevant forms and point them in the direction of other aid agencies.

The Advice and Information staff are expecting a very busy time come October when Universal Credit is introduced and benefits are paid monthly instead of weekly in the hope that everybody will learn to budget. But there is the worry that many of the

most vulnerable who have chaotic lifestyles simply won't be able to cope with one large sum of money each month and there will be the temptation to spend it, regardless of the consequences, on substances, alcohol or gambling as soon as it is received.

The biggest single issue the Advice and Information staff deal with is finance in any form. Benefits or sanctions on benefit is a recurring issue. Benefits can be sanctioned because someone is assessed as medically fit for work but is unable to attend a job seeker appointment. That can lead to benefits being

sanctioned for up to 13 weeks and with no money to pay for gas, electricity or food. In addition to receiving Advice and Information service users in this situation can after assessment, access Aberdeen Cyrenians' Street Alternatives, service which provides hot meals, laundry, food parcels, clothing and access to showers. Drop in sessions are held at 62 Summer Street currently on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday afternoons.



In rehearsal for the Come and Sing event

Thank you very much

THANK you to everybody who responded to our food appeal last month. Our stocks have been replenished through many, many donations from individuals and organisations including Befriend a Child.

Here's their story:

"STAFF at local children's charity, Befriend A Child, have lent their support to fellow third sector organisation the Aberdeen Cyrenians.

The eight-strong workforce of the Bon Accord Square-based charity, which provides a 1:1 befriending service to vulnerable and underprivileged local youngsters, has backed the homeless charity's latest food appeal.

Aberdeen Cyrenians current stock of non-perishable foods has become severely depleted due to continuing increased demand from across the City. All donations are used to make food parcels that are distributed to service users or used to make meals for the Street Alternatives Project which provides hot meals to some of the most vulnerable people in our community.

Duncan Peter, Fundraising Development Manager at Befriend A Child, said: "We have always had a strong relationship with Aberdeen Cyrenians and have done joint fundraising events together in the past. We understand more than most the importance of the work they do, very often - like ourselves - with underprivileged and disadvantaged local people.

"The Food Appeal was a really easy way for us to get involved and support the Cyrenians' work. All the staff at Befriend A Child agreed to donate some of their pay from May and we bought as many appropriate food items as we could with the money we had collected.

"We were all surprised at just how much we were able to get for our money and we are delighted that for a relatively small individual contribution we have been able to get the Cyrenians food appeal off to a good start this summer." Scott Baxter, Depute Chief Executive of Aberdeen Cyrenians, added: "We are so grateful to all the staff at Befriend A Child for their kind support of our latest Food Appeal. The goods which they have donated will be used to provide hot meals and food parcels for the people in our communities who really need our support."

Anyone who would like to support the Aberdeen Cyrenians food appeal by donating non-perishable items such as tinned foods, sauces, cereal, rice and pasta should drop their donations off at 62 Summer Street or call 01224 625 732 for further information.

This month's concern is for toiletries. Stocks of

- soap
- shampoo
- conditioner
- deodorant
- shower gel
- razors
- toothpaste
- toothbrushes

are all lower than is comfortable so if you can help out, we would be very grateful.

Scott Baxter, left, and Duncan Peter with the Befriend a Child donation



Thanks, Sainsbury's

The six, city-centre Sainsbury Local stores which have chosen Aberdeen Cyrenians as their charity of the year collected approximately £600 worth of customer and colleague food donations in May. Scott Cran, manager of the Alford Place branch secured a £500 community grant for Aberdeen Cyrenians.

Very special bakery deliveries

DONATIONS-in-kind are very important to Aberdeen Cyrenians and the organisation is particularly lucky in the support it receives from local bakeries. Over the course of a year, regular gifts of bread, rolls, sandwiches and cakes save Aberdeen Cyrenians thousands of pounds.

The donations are shared among the various residential projects as well as being included in the food given to Street Alternatives users on Tuesday and Thursday evenings and at weekends. It's a system that works well since service users are always appreciative of what's been handed in and the bakeries are pleased that the day's excess stock has gone to a good home and hasn't been wasted.

All the regular donors - and these include Greggs, Déjà Vu, The Breadmaker and John Smith and Son in New Pitsligo - agree how difficult it is to gauge exactly how much to bake each day so each has looked around to find a way of making sure anything left when their shops close is put to good use. John Smith has been making a weekend delivery to Wernham House for more than 14 years.

"My late wife Jennifer suggested dropping off whatever was left each Saturday. She knew about Aberdeen Cyrenians through her involvement with the WRVS and reckoned it was the most deserving cause," he said. "I'm not sure exactly how long ago we started, but she died 14 years ago and the relationship was well established by then. In those days it went to the drop in facility at Summer Street."

John is on the point of retiring but is confident that even once he has gone, the donations will continue.

A more recent link has been forged with The Breadmaker, the artisan bakery and coffee shop, in Rosemount which opened seven years ago and has been donating surplus produce to Summer Street ever since, thanks to its founder Donald Anderson who felt that the aims of the two organisations were similar.

The Breadmaker's social aim is to provide a range of meaningful employment, training, educational opportunities and social activities to adults with learning disabilities with a purpose of integration into the community.

The ethos of the Breadmaker is that of fully supporting and enabling apprentices to work in a realistic and

dynamic setting, offering a stimulating and positive experience to each individual, valuing and recognising their contribution and input as a team player within a thriving bespoke business. Breadmaker deliveries arrive every day or every other day.

Déjà Vu Sandwich Bar is another regular donor, thanks to Roy Duncan who opened it on Rose Street in 2006. He's a former Aberdeen Cyrenians employee who has so much admiration for the organisation he wanted to do something for it even after he left. All his sandwiches are made fresh each day so what's left when he closes up comes across to Summer Street to be used.

A more recent arrangement is with Greggs and was brokered by the council-run Bon Accord Hostel. They had arranged with Greggs for a daily uplift of surplus stock but found this was too much for the hostel to use, so suggested Aberdeen Cyrenians take over one weekly slot with the result that several trays of rolls, bread and cakes arrives at Wernham House and Summer Street each Thursday morning.

To these bakers and all other regular donors, everybody at Aberdeen Cyrenians says a very big Thank You.

Part of the weekly donation from Greggs



Spree books

This year's Spree books go on sale at 62 Summer Street on July 1. They cost £23 each with Aberdeen Cyrenians receiving £5 for each one sold. Once again the book will be full of money-off vouchers for dining, leisure and recreation, health beauty and wellbeing, shopping and services.

Volunteer's view – this month Iain Graham of Iceberg

SEVEN years ago Iain Graham was referred by his social worker to Aberdeen Cyrenians. He was homeless. Fast forward to 2013 and Iain is still turning up regularly at Summer Street, but as a vital volunteer at Iceberg, the community interest print and design venture whose profits go to help the work of Aberdeen Cyrenians.

He's pretty much built in with the granite blocks which are home to Iceberg in the car park at 62 Summer Street and has been with the project since before day 1 in 2008, a unique claim to fame.

"The opportunity came up for volunteers to help with Iceberg when I was coming to Summer Street as a service user," he said. "I said I would like to get involved in the business and commercial side since my background had been in accounting and admin. I was keen to get involved in the nitty gritty, not just the art operation."

Iceberg Design and Print is a fully equipped, modern print shop providing design, commercial print, full-colour digital output, large format printing and much more. It can handle all forms of print design work, anything from business cards to annual reports and any size of flyer or poster from A6 to A0. Many businesses choose to place their

printing orders with Iceberg as part of their corporate social responsibility commitment.

Over the years Iain's voluntary role has evolved and expanded, until now he does most of the ordering and buying, takes care of all the admin and finishing of the printed materials..

Iain admits there have been many times when he has thought about going back to the world of paid work but an on-going medical problem has prevented that – and his age. "After you get to a certain age many employers don't want to know. I used to apply for jobs but got nowhere. Iceberg is a good place to work and what I do is satisfying."

He's seen the business grow and develop. "It's not just a commercial project or a community interest company. It also provides training and work experience for service users.

"We say Iceberg is printing with a social conscience and that, along with our competitive prices, obviously appeals to many of our clients. Right now we seem to be attracting a lot of work from clubs, restaurants and students and we have always had good support from churches."

From service user to indispensable Iceberg volunteer, that's Iain Graham.



Julia, our 102k hero

WHILE Aberdeen Cyrenians always strives to go the extra mile for its service users, supporter Julia Milne has pledged to go even farther – 102 kilometres to be exact.

Julia is a women's support worker with the Caledonian Project and frequently works with Aberdeen Cyrenians Violence Against Women staff and service users. She's also a keen runner so earlier this summer she set herself the personal challenge of running 102 kilometres and raising £500 in sponsorship for Violence Against Women.

"I'd tried to do something similar a few years ago but I didn't train properly and I hurt my knee but this time I was more organised," she said. "One of this year's events was the Belfast Marathon and they sent me a personal training programme each week which was really useful."

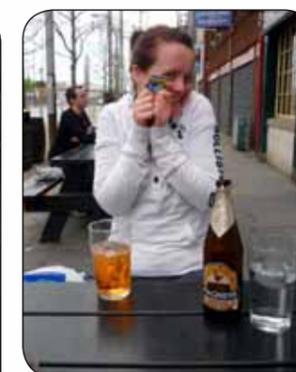
The figure of 102 kilometres came about because Julia wanted a "big number" and she regularly takes part in the Garioch half marathon, the Baker Hughes 10k and the Balmoral 10k. This year she opted to do the Balmoral 15 mile trail – "it was tough and two miles from the end I needed icepacks for my knee to keep me going" – and added the Belfast Marathon, Stonehaven half marathon and a 5k race in Edinburgh to her



running calendar to bring her total to 102 kilometres. The last of the runs is the Stonehaven one in September. Although she has already reached her £500 target she is hoping more money might still come in.

"It's been difficult to go back to the same friends and members of my family to ask for sponsorship all the time so if I do it again next year I'll have to think about organising some kind of raffle as another way of raising money. "And yes. Absolutely. I am thinking about doing something next year. Something different. There's an ultra between Glasgow and Edinburgh which is tough. It's the equivalent of two marathons in one day....."

Fiona Whitehouse, Aberdeen Cyrenians Depute Manager who heads the Violence Against Women project, said: "We are so grateful to Julia for undertaking this challenge and delighted at how much she has raised for the Violence Against Women project. This will help us to continue to provide much needed support-through one-to-one support, groupwork and our befriending service to vulnerable women in the local area who have experienced violence and abuse."



Julie in Belfast

You can support Jullia by donating through www.justgiving.com/Julia102k or by texting JJMM77 followed by the amount you want to donate (£1,2,3,4,5 or £10) to 70070.

VAW Women's Group

We plan to start our next 12-week women's group programme in July 13. This group is for women who have benefited from support and are ready to move forward with their lives into education, employment, volunteering etc. For more details contact Diane on 01224 625 732.

Our Clifton Road Project marks 21 year's service

July Coffee Bash

The next Coffee Bash will be at Aberdeen Cyrenian's HQ at 62 Summer Street on Saturday 20th July from 2.30pm. Entry £3, free for children under 12. That gives you unlimited access to cakes and refreshments.. All funds raised will go to support the work of the organization.

ABERDEEN Cyrenians' Clifton Road project opened its doors 21 years ago when the world was a different place with different attitudes to young people in care. Since then, more than 200 young people have called it home. Back in 1992 the project was specifically for care leavers only, who were subject to a rigorous referral programme which lasted eight weeks. The result was that the first residents were pretty much handpicked and already had some skills.

"I see it as a work in progress and it is changing constantly," she said.

Right now, the Clifton Road Project offers residential care and support to young people who have been looked after and who are making the transition from a care setting to independent living.

It can accommodate 10 young people aged between 16 and 21 five in bedsits in the main house and five in self-contained

flats in the garden behind the house. The support offered is tailored to individual needs and all care plans are devised on an individual basis, in consultation with the young person.

A focus of the work being done is on learning and developing the skills necessary for living independently in the community. The aim is to provide support on many issues - emotional issues, finding employment, accessing training and education, dealing with substance misuse, relationship issues with families and friends - really anything that will help the young person be able to cope better with his or her life.

Initially support is given in the main house's assessment unit, where five young people live. Basic skills are assessed, and support is given to develop these. The ability to work within project policies and procedures and systems is also assessed. Once a young person is ready to take the next step, he or she moves to one of the five training flats in the grounds, where

they can take on more responsibility and progress towards gaining their own tenancy. This progression to a flat takes different lengths of time for different individuals, depending on their abilities and can take from six weeks to six months. "One of the fairly recent changes is that the 'flat people' as we call them, have to leave the main house by 8pm each evening and learn to be on their own in the evening, just as if they in their own tenancy," Jane explained. "They don't have a key to the main house, but they do have the key to their own flat. Each service user in the main house gets a key to his or her own bedsit immediately and after six weeks here there is a review to see if he or she is ready to also have a front door key. Some come here straight out of a children's unit, aged 16, and the responsibility of a front door key is a leap too far." The length of stay at Clifton Road is around a year, but this is flexible according to individual need and may be shorter, or longer as required.

Residents are involved in all major decisions like the installation of CCTV and changing the day they get their £30+ weekly food money from Friday to Monday.

Clifton Road is all about preparing young people to go off and live in the wider community

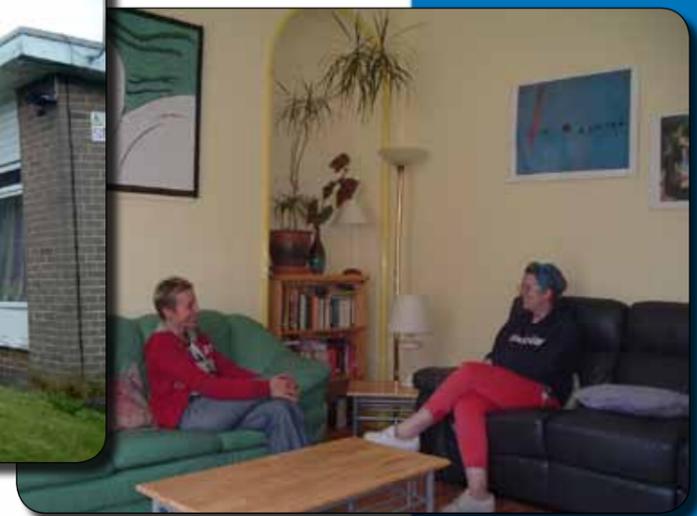
"When they leave here we try to make it a very positive experience. They will have been here for a reason and being in Clifton Road is a stepping stone to the next stage in their lives," Jane said.

"While they are here we try to create a warm and friendly atmosphere where the young people feel valued.

"While they are here they are right on the childhood-adulthood cusp. If we can change their direction by even one degree, in time there will be a much wider divide between where they are and where they might have been."

Board games plea

The Street Alternatives project is looking for donations of board games. Monopoly, snakes and ladders, ludo, Cluedo or anything similar is very welcome. They can be dropped off at Summer Street during office hours.



Our Clifton Road Project from l to r:

Clifton Road Project; the front office; the chill out area; the kitchen; the flats; the sitting room.