

WEST EUSTON PARTNERSHIP

Newsletter

Special Anniversary Edition



Happy 25th Birthday!

Improving local people's opportunities in health, employment and community life since 1992

It's a pleasure and a privilege being the Director of West Euston Partnership (WEP). I've been in this post for 4 ½ years and during this time have seen the charity grow, building on its legacy of regenerating the local area in response to racial unrest, crime and disadvantage into an organisation that not only makes a difference, but continues to strive to do more.

In its 25 years of existence WEP has moved on from being a Council run body, to independence and now an established renowned charity. Punching above its weight when it comes to providing the community with exemplar services and changing lives for the better.

Key to WEP's success is listening and acting on what our community wants through surveys, evaluations and comments made by service users. As a learning organisation WEP has



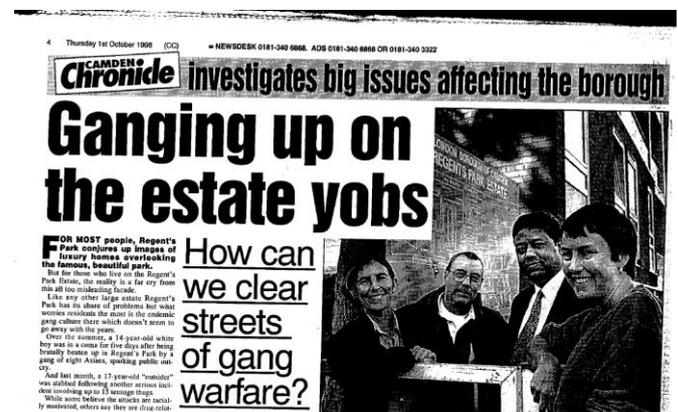
Photograph taken by Bianca Pascall

Sharon Gordon
WEP Director

taken on board expert advice on strategic business and financial planning. It's not surprising therefore that WEP's flagship projects, covering health and employability, are improving lives not just locally, but across Camden.

WEP's offices, the One Stop Shop on Hampstead Road and the HPod, both based in the midst of the local area, are environmentally sustainable and accessible via all modes of transport. WEP has an open door policy, so come and visit.

You know somewhere is good to work when you don't mind coming in each day and putting in the time. That's my take on working at WEP's helm. Here's to 25 more years!



Out of the Past

Today, Regent's Place could be any other corporate or business hub, the last place you would imagine a local charity to call home, but it is home to something, shall we say, very special.

However, 30 years ago, West Euston was a forgotten borough of London. Lack of

opportunities, racial tensions and violence were a part and parcel of daily life. 'It was a nightmare', according to Mohammed Joynal Uddin, founding member, and chairman of West Euston Partnership (WEP), as well as a long-term resident of the Regents Park Estate. From spitting on people attending the mosque on Drummond Street from the surrounding houses to bloodshed and gang fights. The people of different communities, cultures, and races, did not want to see one another. The conditions children were growing up in, and the lack of respect for the elderly, was a cause for concern.

Joynal and others began thinking what to do to bring the community together, to 'reduce the nightmare', to unite a broken and diverse community. They had no money, so they made contact with the council. They made a successful bid, which sparked the forming of West Euston Partnership. Soon, other organisations became partners, including London Borough of Camden, University College London, British Land, Metropolitan Police, London Fire Brigade and the London Electricity Board.

The focus was on regenerating and redeveloping the whole estate. Central heating and insulation were installed, old windows were replaced with double glazing. Then the newly formed WEP began work with the

disaffected young people of the estate. In a daring move, WEP set up the "Yurt Project" and sent sixteen of the most disaffected youth to Belfast, exposing them to the effects of violence on the community and making them reflect on the violence they see or take part in back home.

Next, WEP wanted to hold their own community festival in Cumberland Market. They were told the festival would become a battleground and end in multi-racial violence. Instead, cultures mixed, food was everywhere, music was playing from 25 different languages. The festival was a great success and continues to this day.

Here and Now



Now in its' 25th year, WEP continues to work with its' partners and the community to improve the health, wellbeing and employment of the many cultures, ethnicities and generations of West Euston. The challenges may have changed from the concrete wall of racism of the late 20th century, but WEP is still working to bring down the divides between communities and lessen inequality.

Continuing from the past, the multicultural Fair at Cumberland Market is still on going, carrying on the tradition of bringing people together.



Regents Park meets Belfast - the sixteen youths who took part in WEP'S ambitious Yurt Project

WEP is actively reaching out for new volunteers who care about the community to enrich the charity and to be involved in its many projects. WEP over the years has developed a range of projects including:

Employability Project



The Employability Project is one of the main services of WEP focused on helping people become employment ready. Its main strength is to offer tailored support and a holistic approach to helping individuals either achieve their employment goals, or discover them.

The Employability Project not only asks clients to self-reflect on what skills and experience they need to move forward, but also helps to build confidence and put themselves out there on the employment market. Flexible and responsive, no one goes away from WEP empty handed.

Last year the project helped over 124 people to find further training and volunteer work, 34 of which entered into employment.

Well Fair Project



The Well Fair project brought together people with multiple health issues and needs, encouraged people to get involved in activities and networks, and challenged negative health perceptions by promoting healthy and positive life styles and choices for body and mind.

Activities included yoga, singing, healthy cooking classes, and GP outreaches into the community. Over the course of the two-year period it was running, the Well Fair Project achieved some major improvements for people's health. Of the original nine targets which were agreed for the project, five were exceeded, and two showed excellent results. Three hundred and ninety people reported improved wellbeing and 309 people said they enjoyed an increased sense of community and empowerment. The original aim had been to reach 190 people for both targets.

25th anniversary and Cloud Nine Community Festival



This year WEP will mark its 25th year at the Cloud 9 Community Festival. Do join us for

what will be a great day out to celebrate the 'changing face' of West Euston.

Local Voices - WEP clients tell their stories

Isabel's Progress



Photography taken by Lynda Berry

Isabel Dos Santos Miguel is a long term and valued volunteer at WEP, who as a mother and partially sighted, has found acceptance in an organisation willing to treat her with real equality.

How long have you been a volunteer with WEP, and what are your duties?

I started volunteering for WEP in February 2015 as a receptionist. I greet the visitors, manage the diary for the staff, sometimes I get involved in WEP projects and input data.

And what made you volunteer?

First of all, I volunteered to expand my experience and general skills, however, because of the staff, and the Director, I felt drawn to all the projects, the values, the mission. Also every day I learn something new. Not just from the clients but from the Director and the staff. Also I felt there was real consideration given to diversity and equality at WEP. I am partially sighted, and once the staff

knew that they were very attentive for my special needs and did all that was possible to provide the equipment that was needed.

What did you learn as a volunteer for WEP?

WEP has helped me expand my communication skills and interpersonal skills. I used to be very shy, but doing this work, I start to be more open. I have developed my general skills, as well as verbal, and written ability.

How has WEP helped with work life?

When you are a mother, some employers start to put up barriers, however doing this volunteering job, I think I have gained back my confidence. I started to have a 'Can Do' attitude. It has made me be more open minded, in terms of separating family, work and other social events. I have children, and sometimes I used to find it hard to leave the children at home, but when I started this volunteering, I think I could leave them at nursery more easily. It has been a way of re-entering public life.

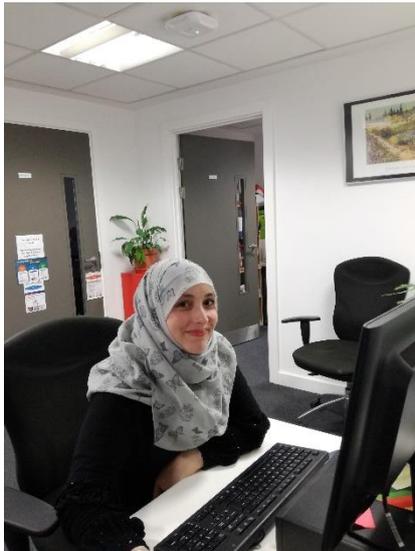
So you think WEP has definitely changed your life for the better?

Yes, it has. All experiences I can use in my potential employers, or future employers.

What do you want to do with your life now?

I would like to spend time with my children, so I am looking for work in a school or college so we can have holidays together. I recently finished a children and young people in the workplace course, and completed a Teaching Assistant placement, and registered with an agency, and to find something long term and permanent. WEP has helped me with my confidence to communicate with all ages, and levels of staff, which has been vital in the diverse school environment.

Haala's Journey



Photograph taken by Lynda Berry

Haala Abouargub is a young woman with a big dream of breaking into the ICT industry. A trailblazer for women in technology, Haala Rose tells the story of how she found her big break with the help of WEP's Employability Project Advisor David Hermanstein.

I found out about WEP through the Richard Cobden Centre, adult education centre. I went to see David. I had applied for loads of jobs with no luck. Originally I wanted to do architecture, but found myself drifting away from it, and had been working in teaching which I knew I did not want to stay in. But then David told me about a course, the normal cost of which would be a grand, which had only a few positions open which were free.

The course prepared you for a career in technology project management and business analyst. I wasn't aware of the profession and imagined you had to be qualified, but Careers Sharp allowed me to gain a whole new insight into the ICT industry.

I had the opportunity to work on real life projects straight away and develop a mobile app, digitise a plumbing company, and work on interfaces and screen designs.

David was a really positive influence. He made finding a career a more viable possibility than it was before. I never went to university, though I did A levels three times, including Arabic A levels, but David's advice, combined with the Career's Shape course, helped me gain the confidence that I could be where I wanted to be. Whatever experience you have, it still counts even if it is not professional.

Have you enjoyed this newsletter? We welcome any comments, suggestions or ideas to make the next newsletter even better. Please email us at: info@westeuston.org

Credits

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