

**CARERS IN HERTFORDSHIRE
YOUNG CARERS PROJECT
CONFERENCE REPORT
2010**

£ WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE? £



“Who wants to be a Millionaire?”

Young Carers Conference

27th October 2010

9.30 am.	Arrival/tea/coffee
10.00 am	Welcome/Housekeeping
10.05 am	Ice Breaker
10.20 am	DVD – What Young Carers Mean to us
10.25 am	Paul Ragan – Guest Speaker
10.50 am	Young Carers – Presentations
11- 05 am	CSF Feedback
11.10 am	Comfort Break
11-25 am	Who wants to be a millionaire? Quiz
11.50 am	Young Carers Question & Answer Session
12.00 am	Summing Up – Sue Reeve CEO
12.05 am	Final Comments – Mayor of Broxbourne
12.10 am	Lunch

Introduction:

In October 2010 the 9th Young Carers Conference took place, at Campus West, Welwyn Garden City.

When members of the Young Carers Council were asked what theme they would like for this years conference, they were adamant that they wanted to focus on the proposed cuts to services and the impact those cuts could have on young carers in Hertfordshire.

Earlier in the year, Paul Ragan, a self made millionaire had appeared in the television programme 'The Secret Millionaire'.

In the programme Paul supported young carers, and revealed that he had been a young carer himself, so had an in-depth knowledge of the difficulties and responsibilities young carers face. It was decided to invite Paul along to Conference as our guest speaker, and the theme 'Who wants to be a Millionaire' was born!

"Conference" is a very public opportunity for young carers to make their voices heard, to be listened to, and make professionals more aware of the issues they face as young carers within families.

At the Conference members of the Young Carers Councils made presentations to delegates which were fun, but carried a serious message including the achievements of the Project, up to date information on the service provided, and the progress of our work in schools.

As always, the young carers gave up their time and their knowledge in the hope that other young carers across the county will benefit.

A very big thank you to all members of the Young Carers Council, and all young carers that attended the event – making it one of the most successful yet!

**Cindy Honour
Project Manager.**

Aims of the Young Carers Conference:

The Annual Young Carers Conference is an opportunity for young carers to make their voices heard – reflecting the ethos of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child ‘children and young people have the right to express their views and have them taken into account in all matters affecting them’.

With this in mind; the young carers’ councils devise ways of informing delegates of their views, their opinions and their need for support.

Traditionally, Conference always starts with an “Ice Breaker.” This year delegates were given a picture of currencies from around the world, and young carers who had matching pictures had to partner with delegates and spend five minutes talking about their experiences as young carers.

For some delegates this was their first opportunity to talk directly with a young carer.

Following on from the “Ice Breaker”, a DVD film with members of the Young Carers Council was shown. The DVD was called ‘What Cost’ and looked at how young carers benefitted from the support of the Project, and what they would miss if funding cuts meant they were unable to access the Project in the future.

Young people are their own best advocates and the DVD made it very clear how strongly they felt about the support they get and how they felt about impending funding cuts. It was a very powerful way for them to get their message across to all attending the Conference.

Another aim for this year’s Conference was to show young carers that with the right support and determination they can achieve their goals.

At this point Paul Ragan our guest speaker gave a remarkably frank and moving account of his own childhood as a young carer.



Delegates and young carers were impressed with his honesty, and young carers said after the event.

“It was good to hear from an adult who knows exactly what it is like to be a young carer.”

Project Achievements

Following on from our guest speaker, members of the Young Carers Councils gave a presentation showing what the Project had achieved over the past year. This is one way the Project ensures we feed back information to young carers and professionals.

This year, Members of the Council made the presentation fun by taking on the roles of news readers.

Ellie (Chair of the Council) and Steffan, a senior council member, were the studio reporters, and gave a very eloquent report on the following before handing over to our Events Correspondent, Grace (senior council member)

Project Achievements

In the Past Year, the Project has:

- Received to date 195 referrals
- Carried out 177 home visits
- 23 referrals received direct from schools.
- Waiting list for home visits of 4-6 weeks.



Young Carers Conference 2008



- Increase in referrals downloaded from the Young Carers Website
- Quarterly newsletters to all Young Carers and Professionals on mailing list
- Young Carers DVD's



Young Carers Conference 2008



Young Carers Councils:

8 members on the Senior Council
10 members on the Junior Council

We meet at least once a quarter and more often when we are planning the annual conference or other event.



Young Carers Conference 2008



Events Correspondent:

Grace reported on the varied activities organised by the Project over the last year.

“Since October 2009 the Project has run 14 trips providing 243 places and opportunities for young carers to have a great time out from their caring role. The trips and activities programme included, Art workshops, Beauty day, Thorpe Park and many more.”

Trips have included:

- Art Workshops
- Quaser
- All girls beauty day
- Outdoor activity sessions
- Lazer Paintballing
- Thorpe Park
- Zoo

And Still to come:

- Ski Snow Centre
- Karting
- And Much More!

Young Carers Conference 2008

Information Correspondent:

Reporting next was Kasey, (a member of our Junior Council), and our Information Correspondent who told delegates:

“We are pleased to say the koolcarers website (www.koolcarers.org.uk) is a great success and the Project is receiving more and more referrals downloaded from the site.

We are planning to update the website in the very near future, so watch this space. Who knows, we may have an event to launch the new site!!!!

Quarterly news letters are sent to all young carers and professionals on our mailing list. Some of the articles are written by Young Carers. If you do not receive a copy, then let us know.

We are very proud of the two DVD's made by Hertfordshire Young Carers, One, for the senior and one for the junior age group. Both of these are used in school assemblies as a tool for helping to identify young carers”.

- Increase in referrals downloaded from the Young Carers Website
- Quarterly newsletters to all Young Carers and Professionals on mailing list
- Young Carers DVD's

Young Carers Conference 2008

Education Correspondent:

It was then time for Katherine, (a member of the junior council), our Education Correspondent, to tell us about the school work being undertaken across the County.

“By taking assemblies in school, we are able to raise the awareness of school staff and students to the issues that face young carers. More young carers have been referred directly from schools.

- ***20 Secondary schools and 8 junior schools are currently providing in school support.***

The Young Carers Transfer and Support Plans ensure that young carers continue to receive support once they move from Primary to Secondary School. We are also in the process of having Young Carers issues incorporated into the SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) themes and resources will be available to teaching staff via the Herts Grid for Learning website.


The Project will continue to work in close partnership with Children Schools and Families, Extended Schools Coordinators and Family Support Workers to encourage more schools to provide support for young carers. “

School Work


Secondary Schools:

Assemblies/PHSE lessons.

- 20 Secondary schools in the County offer support in school time through:
- Drop-in sessions
- One-to-one work
- Young Carers Support Groups
- 6 Young Carers Transfer Plans completed.




Young Carers Conference 2008




Primary Schools

Working in partnership to identify and set-up support systems for young carers in Primary and Junior schools

Case studies and examples of good practice are available



Young Carers Conference 2008



Financial Correspondent:

Our Financial Correspondent Kailin, (a member of the junior council) gave a very serious report on the current situation with regard to funding. He told delegates:

***“The theme of this Conference is: “Who wants to be a millionaire”
So, it would be a good idea to look at the funding side of the Young Carers Project;***

As you know the Government has in their wisdom decided to cut funding in the present and coming year.

The Prevention 513 grant, the Young Carer’s Project received to support school work has been cut. This was a great concern to the Project as it meant a post could be lost and support for young carers drastically cut. However, our thanks to Becky Gwynne at CSF, for locating some additional funding to carry the Project through to March.

In the meantime Sue Reeve, CEO and Carers in Hertfordshire Staff have been busy putting bids together for Children in Need, the Big Lottery and Youth in Focus. No decisions on these will be received until February/May, so watch this space!

All young carers are keeping their fingers crossed that funding will be found. If you would like to hear more about how young carers feel about the possible loss of service, a short DVD is available from the Project, called "What Cost".

- Prevention 513 Funding Cut from December
- CSF Bridge the Gap until March
- 3 Funding Bids being submitted
 - Children in Need
 - The Big Lottery
 - Youth In Focus

It was then over to the Studio, for an update on the situation with local Support Groups, and a look to the future.

“Just before we close for the day, some important additional information about local support. Working in Partnership with Connexions, CSF Professional Assistants and Extended Schools Co-ordinators, after school groups have been set up in several areas.

For a full list of these groups, go to our website www.koolcarers.org.uk.

Looking to the Future:

We know there are still gaps in the service, and the Project is working in partnership with CSF, Extended Schools and Youth Connexions to close the gaps that still exist in local and school support.”

The Future

The Future
Gaps in Service
Funding Cuts
Funding Bids

However, in the current financial climate and with the constant threat of cuts to services, we are not sure at this point if we will have the funding or the resources to continue our current workload, let alone close gaps or expand the service. Carers in Hertfordshire, as always will do its best to continue support for young carers and have submitted three funding bids, we are hoping at least one will be successful! We will keep you informed.

“Thank you for your time – it’s now goodbye from our Roving Reporters and us here at the News Desk, as we hand you over to”

Becky Gwynne:

Young Carers Project Officer for Children, Schools and Families.

CSF Report/Feedback

Targeted Advice Service

Following the move of Young Carer Professional Assistant Posts to Targeted Advice Service in February 2010 over 60 referrals have been made to the team. The workers' roles include offering a support service to young carers in recognition of the responsibilities young carers carry and supporting families to access support services to reduce the caring role of the child or young person.

A database of young carers known by CSF has been set up; this now includes over 100 young carers. Workers are now able to make contact with young carers and their families following the provision of support and services, to ensure these are working effectively to reduce the caring role of the child or young person and if not, to work in partnership to provide a more effective service.

Young Carers Development Officer

Sharon Austin is now in post. Key areas of work include raising awareness of young carers issues within Adult Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol teams to ensure young carers are identified to provide early identification and preventative work.

Sharon is also in the process of monitoring outcomes for projects supporting young carers including Youth Connexions groups and schools groups.

Schools Development Work

A questionnaire is currently being completed by schools support groups identifying the difference groups make to young carers. Early feedback clearly shows the value of support groups.

What Young Carers Say

'If I didn't have the support group to go to I would have to help Mum and have nothing to do.'

'I am happier since going to the project because I feel like a normal child'

'I get time off from looking after my brother and I meet new friends in the same situation as me'

'I feel I can talk to someone and let out my feelings. I feel like I'm not the only one'

'It has helped me to feel better about what has happened at home'

'We talk about things when we need to but we are never pressured.'

A range of training has been delivered to School Governors, Schools Workers and Extended School Co-ordinators to drive this work forward, highlighting the importance of identifying and supporting young carers.

External funding bids in partnership with Carers in Hertfordshire have been submitted to B.B.C. Children in Need and the National Lottery. If these bids are successful it will enable work to continue with schools to set up local support groups.

Young Carers Information

A new CSF leaflet has been produced and launched to ensure children and young people with caring responsibilities can identify themselves and receive support when they need it. The leaflet has been designed in partnership with young people and is being distributed throughout all schools in Hertfordshire, GP surgeries, Youth Connexion buildings.

Carers in Hertfordshire Young Carers Project

This project continues to make a significant contribution to the provision of services to young carers through newsletters, trips, activities, support groups and schools development work. The young carers' groups and council gives a voice on issues that affect them. It is essential that their input is built into routine consultation on service provision as a matter of course.

The 513 Prevention fund contract has unfortunately been affected by Government cuts and therefore the contract is due to finish is Dec 2010, under spend from Young Carers Grant has been allocated to meet this gap until end March 2011, ensuring the school work continues.

Young Carers Scrutiny

A scrutiny of young carer's services has been requested by members of the County Council, this is due to take place on 18th Nov 2010. Information from CSF, Carers in Herts, Youth Connexions and the Young Carers Council will be presenting.

Members thanked Becky for her Report and after a short break delegates and young carers, took part in a 'Who wants to be a Millionaire' quiz. The quiz highlighted statistical information about young carers and included a few 'red herrings', but was a great success with the winning table being presented with chocolate coins and an imitation cheque for £1,000,000!



Every year, at the end of Conference young carers are invited to take the floor and answer questions posed by delegates. These are the questions asked and the young carer's answers.

Questions addressed to Young Carers from the Floor:

Q1	Were any of the young carers reluctant to be referred to the Young Carers Project and if so what persuaded you to allow this to happen?	A1	I was not reluctant at all
		A2	At first I was a bit scared but then I became more confident to share my feelings. Mum was happy for me to join.
		A3	It made a real difference to my caring role. Grandad has a hernia (take his dog for walks) Mum has MS and Dad has asthma. – mould in the house makes it worse.
Q2	Does your caring role change as you get older?	A1	It changes all the time. Leaving school made a difference as college did not know my circumstances. It can depend on the sort of day you are having.

		A2	It has been hard looking after my mum and brother. I have no time to do anything. Getting older makes it easier.
Q3	Bullying – does school help?	A1	At my other school they didn't help. I was told it was a nonsense and was ignored
		A2	I was bullied during class and had detentions but moving school has helped.
Q4	Were you bullied because of a lack of understanding about your role as a carer?	A1	I got in trouble at school because I couldn't keep up with my project work, it was a real problem because I could only produce 5 pieces of work when 7 were needed and I did not have enough time to produce the work. Now I do have understanding from the school.
		A2	Things are a lot better now – I have friends who are also carers and my caring role has reduced.
		A3	Having to care for yourself as well stops you from fitting in if you are not able to spend as much time on how you look as others e.g. make-up clothes etc. This makes you get bullied.
		A4	Bullying is wrong – the teachers don't understand about the caring role and you don't feel you can turn to anyone.
Q5	How many had problems with school not knowing they were carers?	A1	Majority of young carers on the panel raised their hand.
	Paul Ragan explained that being a young carer had made him tough emotionally and gave him the skills and confidence which he has today which is good. As you grow up what would make a difference to you to turn your current experience into a positive?	A1	We will know a lot of stuff. We will be at an advantage
		A2	Careers – caring so young I could step into areas that grown ups might not be able to. I should be able to transfer my current skills.
Q7	How could you be supported more by the Young Carers Project?	A1	A bit more information and meetings once a month
		A2	Nothing – The Young Carers Project is doing the best it can.

Every Year we like to get feedback about the Conference, whether or not it has been helpful in raising awareness for the adult delegates and whether or not it has been fun and enjoyable for the young carers. Below is a summing up of the comments received from delegates and young carers.

Young Carers Evaluations
Nos. Attending: 29 Young Carers
18 young carers completed evaluation forms

General Questions:	No's. who said yes	No's. who said No	
<p>Did you have the opportunity to speak to professionals about young carers issues and your caring role.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 said yes • Comments were • Yes and they listened really well. • Yes, lots • Yes and it made me feel less enclosed about what I do • Yes at school and at the Conference • Yes I have, and we have a group at school also 	<p>1 said no 1 no comment</p>	
<p>What question would you have like to ask professionals or us, but didn't get the chance to?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what are you going to do about bullying – why do so many YC's get bullied at school • What they would feel like being a young carer • How we could contact the professionals about anything • Would like to know if the funding will be continued for the project • What do they think about young carers 		
<p>What were the best three things about Conference?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The atmosphere, meeting others, Paul Ragan • The quiz, the news, the professionals • You got to speak, meeting a young carer, talking about problems • Meeting professionals, quiz, presentations • quiz, ice breaker, lunch • quiz, buffet, questions • Speaking to Pro's, people listening, Paul Ragan, Q&A. • The buffet, quiz, guest speaker • Meeting new people, meeting the millionaire, having fun • The Quiz, ice breaker, guest speaker • Quiz, lunch, talking to Professionals • Quiz, lunch meeting professionals • Quiz seeing millionaire, the lunch • My speech, the quiz, the icebreaker • Paul Ragan, quiz, meeting other people • Spoke to Pro's, meet new people, • Millionaire, quiz, meeting new friends • Guest speaker, quiz, professionals asking questions 		

Further Information	General Comments:
<p>What could we do better?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email list of attendees just before event to encourage others • Nothing x 9 • Would like Guest Speaker to stay longer • Put publicity on internet – carers put info on making the news or article in First News to help get funding. • Longer and more games • Not sure • I really enjoyed it but I think the presentation could be shorter. • Nothing I really enjoyed it and hope I can attend another one • Nothing because it was all good • It was very well organised and managed
<p>Is there anything else you would like to say about the day?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was a great success and I think I really did benefit from the whole experience • I didn't know many people – made welcome by older young carer, he was very nice and cool • I would like to say a big thank you to all them who helped me • It was a lot better than last year and the guest speaker was good • It was really enjoyable and nice to talk to the professionals • It was very enjoyable and I had a good time • It was great to get an insight to the life of a person who was once a young carer himself and how he turned his life around. • It was a fun day • It was absolutely brilliant • It was really fun • I would like meetings more • I really enjoyed the day

Delegates Evaluations

Nos. Attending: 66 Professionals

36 professionals completed evaluation forms

General Questions:	These are a few of the comments from the evaluation forms:	Nos. who said No	
<p>Has this Conference increased your awareness of young carer's issues, is so how?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has opened my eyes to issues I had never thought of before. • Yes – by reminding me that it is a huge issue for society and the bulk of the caring lands on the shoulders of young people • Yes as always, Input from YC's is crucial for them and the cared for – saving loads of money • Reminded me of the difficulties • Yes • Has increase my awareness of young carers and the problems they encounter 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I thought it was amazing, I want to do more for these wonderful children • Yes by bringing the starkness of the children's situation to life • A resounding Yes • Teachers not understanding YC's needs • By being more aware of school groups 		
<p>Which parts of the event are most likely to make a positive impact on your practise?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The final question and answer session • The evidence on bullying • All • School issues always come up. How can we include teaching staff? • Q & A session x 2 • Access to outside care • Speaking to my doctors helping to identify young carers • Having young people talk of personal experiences. • DVD and Q & A session • DVD and realising these children need support with or without funding • Meeting young cares and networking with them • All of it was relevant and will make an impact • Project activity ideas from young carers 		
Further Information	General Comments:		
<p>What topics would you like to see covered at Conference in the future?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding drop in schools • How to develop the project and involve those whose needs are still hidden. • Future Plans • Access to outside care • Bullying x 4 • Achievement at School • 16-25 age group • Career choices • Young Carers into schools as ambassadors? • Update on financial support especially voluntary funding for the Project • Multiple Caring roles perhaps should be addressed more • What difference to other services make to young carers: social care, schools, other services? • Referrals and how young carers can be supported though this – concerns about 'social services' getting involved. • Project activities – from young carers. 		
<p>Any other Comments:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More, More, More – Excellent again • Thank you for another great experience. Very professional children/young people and adults. • It was great to meet young people and have a good laugh in the quiz 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I would love to get more involved• You are doing a wonderful job you deserve as much support as you can get.• Well done you are all stars!• Brilliant as always enjoyed input from Paul Ragan• Excellent, good to see young people speak so confidently• As a new member of staff this conference was a brilliant experience for me• Amazing Children – but we need to get to the other 7,500• Young people were fantastic & so willing to talk, it was a real pleasure• Fantastic formula with young carers chairing meeting. They were all great.• The YCC did a magnificent job hosting the event – thank you.• Young Carers question and answer session needs to be longer – very informative.• Thoroughly enjoyable and welcoming, positive approach of carers enhanced the conference – absolute pleasure• A brilliant conference organised by inspirational young people – well done• As usual I found the conference very moving, I wish something like this could get more publicity.• Conference so well put together, each section about right, well balanced.
--	---



Conclusion:

The event was extremely successful with more professionals and young carers attending than ever, and excellent feedback about their experience and learning during the day.

The guest speaker Paul Ragan gave an honest and moving account of his childhood and being a young carer. Our young carers found his talk inspiring and informative, and for them, it was great to hear an adult speak with experience, of how it feels to be a young carer. They recognised and understood totally what he was saying.

Staff from across agencies attending the event, were impressed at the ability and skill of the young carers in presenting and facilitating the day. They worked extremely hard to get their message across. We hope this will improve support for young carers across the county.

The issue of bullying in school is still high on the agenda, with most of the young carers who took centre stage to answer questions, saying they had or do experience bullying. We will pick this up at our next Conference and ask staff

‘ What Can you do to prevent young carers being bullied’?

We know there are still gaps in service, local support groups will be on the agenda this year as will support for young adult carers 16-25 years.

We will report on our progress in these areas at Conference 2011. We hope to see you there.

Our thanks to Members of the Young Carers Council for putting on such a good event, to Paul Ragan for giving us his time and telling of his experiences, to CSF for their continued support and to all delegates who took part and helped to make it such a success.

Cindy Honour
December 2010.



Professional Comment

"This Conference has increased my awareness of young carers and the problems they encounter"

Young Carers Comment

"Conference was great we got to speak to professionals and talk about our problems"

**Carers in Hertfordshire. A Company limited by Guarantee
Registered Company Number 4131036 (England & Wales)
Registered Charity Number 1085491
Registered Office: Hertfordshire Carers Centre
The Red House
119, Fore Street
Hertford
Hertfordshire
SG14 1AX**