

Dovetales



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Issue 7 - October 2009

BIGGEST-EVER GRANT IS ACHIEVED IN OUR SILVER ANNIVERSARY YEAR

Big Lottery Fund win to train young people



THE DOVE SERVICE has received £477,850 from the Big Lottery Fund to train young people over the next five years so they can support other young people whose friends or relatives have died.

The grant will fund a significant expansion of our current project to train mentors to go into schools, colleges and youth clubs to support children struggling to cope with bereavement.

It is the largest grant in the history of the charity and was achieved in our Silver Jubilee year.

Chief executive Dr. Simon Hankins said: "We are based at the Dudson Centre, which young people can find difficult to reach.

"We are now visiting schools, colleges and youth clubs to make

our services more accessible.

"We have tested the approach in Newcastle and Stafford and it has gone down very well so this grant will enable us to do it in Stoke-on-Trent. We will train young people to provide a level of emotional support to their peers. It is training to listen, know what to say and what not to say.

"It is not a case of saying, 'pull yourself together', because that is not helping anyone.

"It is more listening and letting it come from the person, how they are feeling and helping them to express that.

"People may feel anger, become more withdrawn, or if a loved one has suffered, feel relief and guilt because of that.

"But issues of grief which are not resolved can cause serious problems later in life."

The mentoring scheme for schools in Newcastle and Stafford has been acclaimed by teachers and pupils.



Celebrating our 25th birthday

This month sees the 25th anniversary of the founding of our charity by Dr Linda Machin. Now an international authority on bereavement and loss, Dr Machin is guest of honour at our Silver Jubilee celebrations at the Quality Hotel, Hanley, on October 23rd.

Centre pages: Looking back at how it all began →



How the Sentinel reported the story

The Dove Service offers support and counselling in Staffordshire and South Cheshire for those struggling to cope with bereavement or a life-changing illness. Registered charity number 1086625. Tel: 01782 683155 Email: info@thedoveservice.org.uk www.thedoveservice.org.uk

We are very proud of the fact that 2009 is our 25th anniversary year and have organised a celebratory event at the Quality Hotel in Hanley for Friday 23rd October featuring the Hothouse Big Band.

It is hard to imagine how it was for Dr. Linda Machin 25 years ago. What is it that drives someone like Linda to keep going despite knock-backs and disappointments? You can read Linda's story on pages 4 and 5 of this issue.

We have come a very long way from those early years. Along the way we have changed our name from Bereavement Care to the Dove Service, changed and then evolved our logo, extended our services from working only with those who had suffered bereavement to also working with those who are affected by a serious and life-threatening illness (including the sufferer, their family, carers, friends and others) and this year, in response to the recession, are seeking to widen our scope to provide support to those who have suffered a significant loss in their lives. We are also making our services far more accessible to more people by extending our services out into localities and even delivering them

From the CEO's desk...



directly into communities such as schools and care homes. We have extended our reach to include Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire, parts of South Staffordshire and South Cheshire.

We work with everyone, our services are open to all. We have undertaken specialist projects working with those with learning disabilities, children and young people and people from the black and minority ethnic communities. This year we are focusing on

children and young people and those with learning disabilities and are continuing to work with Staffordshire Community & Learning Partnerships (clusters of schools) in Newcastle and Stafford districts as well as with those with learning disabilities, their families, carers and others in Newcastle and the Moorlands districts.

As part of our focus on young people we have set-up our Uth Speaks young person's advisory group which helps us to shape existing services and develop new services for children and young people and their families.

It was thrilling to learn that, in our 25th year, we have won nearly £500K from the Big Lottery Fund to extend the work that we are doing with young people in Newcastle and Stafford into Stoke-on-Trent.

This will enable us to undertake work that will benefit young people aged 10-18 as well as their families, the professionals who work with young people and many others.

That work started in early October this year and the young people within Uth Speaks are very involved in the development and roll-out of that project.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

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Fundraising

The Dove Service is grateful to the following major funders:

- NHS Stoke-on-Trent
- Stoke-on-Trent Adult Social Care
- Stoke-on-Trent Children's Services
- NHS North Staffs
- Staffordshire LD Partnership
- Staffs CC Adult Social Care
- Barracks Trust, N-u-L
- Coalfields Regeneration Trust
- Clayton C&LP
- Newcastle C&LP
- Sir Graham Belfour C&LP
- Robbie Williams Give It Sum
- Big Lottery Fund YPF
- MHL Support (Bibby Line Group)

The Dove Service would also like to thank:

- Blue Planet Communications, Keele
- Brown & Corbishley, Newcastle-under-Lyme
- Select Coaching, Butterton
- Dean Statham llp
- The Davison Partnership, Burslem
- Tesco, Hanley
- Sainsbury's, Hanley
- Knightstor, Market Drayton
- The Printing House, Crewe
- Convenient Wills, Newcastle-under-Lyme
- Fones4Funds, Stoke-on-Trent
- Donna Louise Trust Prize Draw, Trentham
- Everyclick (www.everyclick.com)
...and everyone who has made a donation to the Dove Service.

Uth Speaks - and it's a thumbs-up for the new group!

THE GROUP OF YOUNG PEOPLE set up to advise the Dove Service has made a flying start - and has already changed its name.

"We set this group up to be an advisory body facilitated by two experienced counsellors", said Chief Executive Dr Simon Hankins.

"Wonderfully, they started by saying they were not keen on the name Youth Advisory Group and changed it to the funkier Uth Speaks - or US for short. They have also devised their own logo!"

Meetings of Uth Speaks are facilitated by Alan Vann and Carol Minshull who brought an ice breaking activity to the first meeting which helped members to get to know each other.

One of the first projects that the group is looking at is the

mentoring programme being delivered in schools and elsewhere in Stoke-on-Trent, funded by the £477,850 grant from the Big Lottery Fund. That work has already started and members of Uth Speaks are very involved in its development and roll-out.

The group established ground rules for all meetings including trust, honesty, respect, valuing opinions, listening, not judging and confidentiality.

At one point the group decided that a formal structure was a bit pedestrian so, as the sun was shining, they moved outside.

"This allowed for a lot of creativity, shared ideas, fun, and group bonding and was led very much by the young people themselves", said Alan.

Everyone's view was that the first few meetings have been really fun and successful.

"The evaluation method was chosen by the group members, who decided that simplicity was the best route using a thumbs up for good and thumbs down for bad", said Alan.

"Group members have given all meetings to date a unanimous thumbs up!"



CHARLIE JOINS THE TEAM

A warm welcome to Charlotte (Charlie) O'Dell who has joined the Dove Service as Service Development & Delivery Manager. Previously, she worked in Project Management for Manchester Metropolitan University.

Charlie, who has a degree in Business Management, has worked in counselling for four years as a volunteer with North Staffs MIND and with students at South Cheshire College.

She also has experience of working in a variety of industries, including hotel management, finance, engineering and higher education. "I am looking forward to the many and varied challenges that my role at the Dove Service will bring", Charlie told *Dovetales*.

Answer yes to the 5 questions below and we would really like to hear from you:

1. Are you under 18 years old?
- Would you like to:
2. Meet new people?
 3. Have your views listened to?
 4. See your suggestions turned into reality?
 5. Help us (the Dove Service charity) ensure that the services that we offer to young people are suitable and accessible.

We have established a Youth Advisory Group - Uth Speaks - which meets every 6-8 weeks on a Saturday for about two hours, at our head office in the Dudson Centre, Hanley.

You will be working with other young people and some of our counsellors to review our services, check out our literature and website and anything that we do connected with making our services relevant and accessible to young people.

Interested? Email info@thedoveservice.org.uk or call Sarah Mockridge or Mary Chanot on 01782 683155 for more information and to sign up.

THE DOVE SERVICE
UTH SPEAKS GROUP



HAVE YOUR SAY AND MAKE
A REAL DIFFERENCE!

Dr Linda Machin started the charity in 1984 and gave herself six months.

LINDA MACHIN can remember exactly where she was when the first make-or-break decision about our charity was taken - sitting in a car park in Hanley.

"I had just been interviewed by the Citizen's Advice Bureau about my request for a room in their office in Marsh Street. They asked me to wait outside while they discussed the matter".

Luckily for Linda - and us - the CAB called her back in and offered her a room. That was in 1984 but the roots of the Dove Service were laid several years before when, as a qualified medical social worker, Linda often worked with families where someone was dying. She wondered what happened to vulnerable relatives in their bereavement after her work with them was finished.

"There seemed to be little awareness that bereavement is a profound experience which for some people requires special care", she said.

The first steps

Linda took up a post with the Diocese of Lichfield and initiated a bereavement project in 1979. With the help of local clergy bereaved families from a cross-section of social backgrounds were contacted and interviewed about their experience of loss.

"We found that 60% of people had needs that were not being met - this was an awful lot of people. It was quite a moment when I saw those figures".

As a result of this study, Linda began organising workshops to help people look at grief and its consequences.

The content of these sessions was produced as a study pack by the Diocese and later published by Pavilion books. With these developments the idea of forming an organisation to address bereavement needs took hold.

"We called the service Bereave-

Where every cloud has a silver lining...



Founder of the Dove Service Dr Linda Machin looks back to the early days of our charity, when even the name was different.....

ment Care and began a six-month trial to test its viability using three experienced counsellors. The CAB covered the admin. costs and I continued to be paid by the Diocese.

"The Rev. Gareth Morgan, Rector of Hanley, was the first Chairman. He went off to London and got funds for the next three years under the 'Opportunities for Volunteers' scheme. That was the start of our organisation - a place to live and the on-costs paid".

Linda makes the touch-and-go birth of the charity sound like a walk in the park. But she does remember the tough times.

The Rev. Morgan was also Chair of the Governors at St. Luke's CofE Aided Primary School (where Sir Stanley Matthews had been a pupil). "We needed a new room and he called me and said 'I have a room at the school come and see'. It was in a small separate annexe in the playground. It was snowing, the tap in the corner was dripping and it was full of old sports equipment 'What do you think?' he said!"

The Manpower Services Commission paid for an architect to divide the space into two counselling rooms, general office, mini-kitchen and a meeting room.

Today, she is a respected authority on bereavement - and we are 25 years old!



Speaking volumes

Some of the books written and co-authored by Dr Machin

"To begin with, there were no windows or doors while the work was being completed. I remember working in my overcoat with a bit of polythene pulled across the doorframe.

"In those days there was little opportunity to train as a counsellor. I would interview potential volunteers and final selection would occur when they had completed the inhouse training course".

From the beginning, Bereavement Care set out to meet three objectives:

- A direct **service** to the bereaved
- A **training** resource for health and social care organisations
- A **research** base from which new ideas could be explored and tested.

Over the years many people helped Linda to develop Bereavement Care and deliver counselling. She lectured abroad and in 1990 took up an academic post at Keele University. In addition to teaching on undergraduate, qualifying and post qualifying courses for social work and counselling students, Linda introduced a Certificate in Bereavement Counselling.

Linda's research has led her to develop a new model for understanding the diverse reactions to grief - the *Range of Response to Loss model*.

She was awarded her PhD in 2001 for her work in validating the RRL model, achieved by devising a measure to test the variability in loss response. The tool, the Adult Attitude to Grief (AAG) scale, was

Then...

Basic, but welcome space was found at St Luke's School as our numbers grew.



Now...

Modern and more relaxing rooms for clients and counsellors available at our HQ in The Dudson Centre.



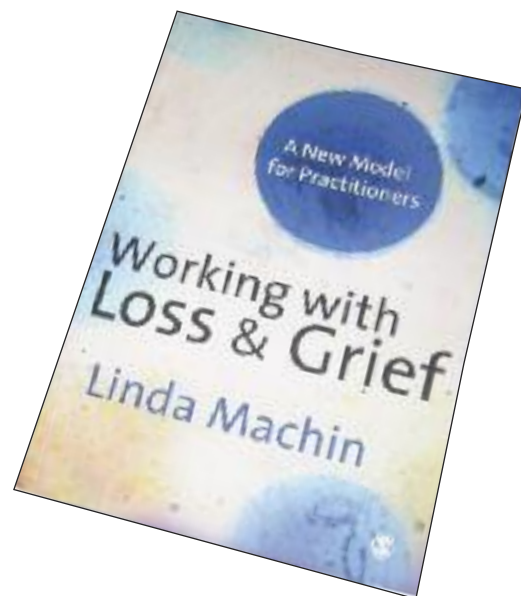
able to provide a profile of the complex dimensions of grief experienced by individual bereaved people. The AAG scale is being used in a growing number of hospices and bereavement services in the UK. The Marie Curie Service has adopted it nationally. Jill Jenner, Services Delivery and Development Manager, is working with Linda on a vulnerability score for Dove Service clients based on the scale.

Linda was also a founder member of the national Bereavement Research Forum with Marilyn Relf and was its Chair for a number of years.

She had a number of years away from the charity which she began. In those years it changed its name to the Dove Service and is now seeking to extend its service to cover all forms of loss, although bereavement remains our major focus.

This year, she rejoined the Board of Trustees as an adviser. "The fact

that Linda is guest of honour at our 25th birthday celebrations says a lot about what the charity that she created thinks of her", said Chief Executive Dr. Simon Hankins.



Our founder's latest book 'Working with Loss and Grief' was published this year.

Jill Jenner, Service Delivery and Development Manager, continues her series of articles on grief

One of the hardest tasks in life to accept is the fact that we will all die. We generally do not have a choice when this will be or how it will happen. Harder still is to be the one who has been left behind feeling a maelstrom of emotions that may not make any sense.

Counselling helps us to begin to make sense of our emotions, to gradually accept the death and begin to make sense of our own life and what it means for us.

Dr. Linda Machin founded the Dove Service twenty-five years ago because there was very little support locally for those who were struggling with their emotions surrounding bereavement.

Twenty-five years on and the need for counselling and support are far greater - why should this be?

Many clients come to the Dove

Why should I come for counselling and when?

Service because they feel that they are unable to 'off load' to those that are close to them, they do not wish to burden them or upset them further with their feelings – they have their lives to lead. Our support network is more fragmented these days. Pressures to be financially secure are greater, fears of losing a job and taking time off are higher but thankfully also the stigma of coming to counselling is less. It is OK to ask for help.

I am often asked when is a good time to come for bereavement counselling. Is there a right time?

The answer is no. The Dove Service counselling is available anytime when it feels that it is too hard to cope with what is happening and the feelings are too great to deal with. That may be immediately after the death, it may be several years of trying to get on with your life, or it may be after another death (even of a pet, or other loss) that has brought up issues surrounding a previous bereavement.

It is OK to ask for support and to be listened to without judgement so that we can accept and move forwards in our own lives.

Chrissie's story: The healing power of bereavement counselling

My name is Chrissie Weaver and I am proud to be a counsellor at the Dove Service. Several years ago, when considering training placement options I was heard – rather rashly as it turns out – to state "I'm not doing bereavement, it's depressing". I could tell immediately from my tutor's raised eyebrow that I had said something foolish. Maybe that's why I applied to the Dove Service anyway.

With the benefit of hindsight it seems I was wrong on two levels.

Firstly, since I started in 2003, I have found my work to be many things including touching, emotional, sometimes frustrating and at its best exhilarating, but never depressing.

Secondly, as I suspect my tutor knew (he was a very wise man) my life experience has informed my work and influenced who I am today.

When I was ten years old my mum died of a stroke. In those



Chrissie Weaver

days there was no one to suggest that I, or anyone else in the family, would benefit from bereavement counselling. It probably didn't even exist! We didn't speak about our feelings, afraid of upsetting the others and most of all my dad, who had suddenly become a widower. So we all held it together and 'got on with it'. That's a phrase

that has become familiar to me in the counselling room, as has "I wish I'd known earlier that this place was here".

Sometimes I work with clients whose grief has 'bubbled up' after many years. Often they are telling themselves "I should be over this by now", yet in my own experience the loss of my mother combusted after 26 years. I needed to take time to allow my grief to re-surface and acknowledge what I had lost. For a time it felt as raw as the day it happened. For this reason I understand how complex grief is and how damaging it can be if help isn't available when it's needed.

I am therefore proud to be part of a service which allows our clients to come to us at the point of need, whenever that is. As we strengthen and grow further into the community my hope is that everyone knows we are here when they need us.

“I liked all of the training - it helped me deal with the feelings if someone dies and also what to do about it” - Year 6 pupil

As a trainer in bereavement issues faced by young people, there is nothing so rewarding as feedback from the pupils themselves, *writes Lisa Fitch.*

The headline comment from a Year 6 Primary School pupil reveals how valuable Dove Service awareness training is. Choosing just one comment from 280 pupils has been the hardest part of writing this article!

In March this year I had the privilege to work with Key Stage 2 pupils and staff at John Wheeldon Primary School in Stafford (funded through the Sir Graham Balfour Community & Learning Partnership). Training consisted of four, three-hour training sessions with 32 staff and eight, one-hour sessions with Years 3, 4, 5 & 6.

Headteacher Margot Colgrave, who attended the training, provided us with this extensive feedback following my visit to the school...

“Having worked in schools for nearly 25 years, many as a Senior Leader, there is one thing a school can never be truly ready for – ironically that the only certainty in life is death.

“I have experienced a range of death situations – sudden tragic, expected and unexpected – whether pupils, pupils’ close relatives, staff or their loved ones and on into community deaths.

“Most staff will not have had training linked to supporting people through bereavement. I have been lucky enough to be able to use my gut reactions to provide the best kind of support I can in whatever the circumstances.

“The amount of contact time we have with children is considerable. Relationships of trust are formed as we develop our whole school family. Frequently school can provide a safe place away from the



Lisa Fitch takes pupils through some issues of loss

direct family where questions and themes can be explored.

“Once a death has occurred it can be hard to access instant support for those most affected. Sometimes this is due to lack of knowledge as to where to go, but it can be availability, cost or indeed families not perceiving they want anyone else involved. Every bereavement journey is

‘The bereavement awareness training for all Key Stage Two pupils and staff was beneficial to all concerned in numerous ways’

- Margot Colgrave, Headteacher

different and the level and kind of support required can change over a considerable length of time.

“It felt ideal to me to have a system whereby basic bereavement training was firmly embedded across staff and Key Stage Two pupils before a death rather than having to go into fire fighting mode. I considered this to be so important that staff training occurred in the working day which obviously had large cost implications.

“The bereavement awareness training held in our school for all Key Stage Two pupils and staff was beneficial to all concerned in numerous ways. The pastoral care of children and staff has always

been a high priority for us as a school and any training such as this supports that ethos and raises awareness of the feelings that others, and indeed ourselves, might suffer at a time of loss.

“The loss of a friend, a pet, a loved one is often difficult for children to comprehend. Indeed as adults we sometimes struggle to find the words to support our

friends and colleagues who have suffered a loss but this training provided the words, terminology and focussed our thinking on a range of issues

surrounding loss which many of us would not previously had considered to be a loss; for example the separation of parents through a marital breakdown, the breakdown of friendships etc.

“The training provided the tools to address these issues with children and be emotionally aware and avoid misuse of terms linked to death that would cause greater distress to the child.”

To reinforce Margot’s summary, when asked at the end of training what aspects of the course were most helpful, a teacher told me: “Being able to open up about personal feelings gave me more of an insight into how difficult it is for a child to open up”.

A CHARITY 'FIT FOR THE FUTURE'

AGM hears of rapid progress after restructure

WAITING LISTS down to almost zero, the charity on a sound financial footing and more services being delivered in the community were among the highlights of the Annual General Meeting held at the Dudson Centre on September 24th.

The rapid progress made by the charity followed a challenging year of restructure, Chief Executive Dr. Simon Hankins told the Members in his Annual Report.

The first few months of the restructure were "a difficult time for the charity, involving many challenges to the established ways of working. For some, the changes were too much and they decided to leave; for others, the new ways of working were seen as refreshing, challenging and very much needed", he said.

The second part had seen the introduction of new ways of working which had resulted in a leap in activities and service provision.

The provision of awareness and educational workshops for schools in the Newcastle and Stafford districts had seen a dramatic increase in the number of children and young people accessing counselling in those areas.

"The first 25 years have seen the birth of the Dove Service and witnessed the usual growing pains of any new venture. We have matured into a dynamic, progressive and professional organisation that is fit for the present and the future", Dr. Hankins added.



THE EARLY YEARS—Two images from the personal archive of our founder Dr Linda Machin. ABOVE, with first chair the Rev. Gareth Morgan receiving a sponsorship cheque from Bass in 1987; BELOW, with Manager Anne Burrows (left) and Carol Rodgers (Administration) greeting the Queen in 1999.



There are people all around us who encounter bereavement or life-changing illness...

The Dove Service offers training for professionals, individuals, children, young people and those with learning difficulties.

Courses include:

- Bereavement and loss issues and supporting children and young people
- Bereavements issues surrounding adults
- Active listening and basic counseling skills
- Peer mentoring and supporting others
- Emotional intelligence - not being afraid of feelings
- Self-esteem and stress management

...and you can train to help them

Contact Charlie O'Dell
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email charlie.odell@thedoveservice.org.uk

