Man Shed Extending the Reach and Engaging the Community

Kathy Birch, Programme Lead Day Services; Martin Osborn, Facilities Supervisor; Julia Russell, Head of Marketing and Communications.

WHAT?
Some groups of people have been less likely to access hospice support. At Princess Alice Hospice during 2015 of every three women accessing 1:1 bereavement support only one man did. Men’s Sheds have grown in popularity in the UK and Halton Haven Hospice had developed a shed for bereaved men. The vision for the Princess Alice Man Shed would be to provide support to men and women; patients, carers and bereaved relatives.

The Man Shed has had a significant impact on hospice life. It has created opportunities for people under our care to be offered shoulder-to-shoulder support while engaging in practical activities and learning new skills.

This informal approach has helped to break down pre-conceived barriers and misconceptions about hospice care which has extended the reach of our care and engaged our local community in new ways.

WHY?
• To provide alternative informal support for patients, carers and bereaved relatives (men, women and young people).
• To diversify volunteering roles.
• To demystify hospice care by engaging the local community and “hard to reach” groups.

WHO AND WHEN?
• Seven volunteer session leaders
• Two volunteers for admin support and sourcing of materials
• Patients, carers and bereaved relatives working together
• Seven 2 hour woodworking sessions each week
• Basic DIY and computer literacy sessions for bereaved women
• Local wood carving group using the workshop one morning a week

HOW?
A cross organisational project group of staff, volunteers and users from clinical and non-clinical departments was formed to manage the project.

• A fundraising appeal was launched and raised in excess of £112,000 to build and fit out the shed.
• New volunteering roles were created and recruited in to. Specific training and induction programmes were developed.
• Health and Safety processes were developed to include risk assessments, Safe Systems of Work and other guidelines.
• Links were forged with local businesses resulting in donations of wood and other consumables.

I’m struggling with grief and living alone. It provides companionship, socialising and an outlet for creativity.
Bereaved Woman

A great place to meet new friends and share camaraderie. Life is well worth living.
Bereaved Man

It makes me feel useful and reminds me of going to work.
Patient

It’s given me a new focus in my life.
Volunteer

manshed@pah.org.uk