

# Supporters' Newsletter

## Looking forward with hope

2020 brought many different emotions but we now look forward to new challenges in 2021



In the sunshine of the early months, among the fear, the sadness and sometimes disbelief, we saw ordinary people doing extraordinary things. At Stand-by-me we did not sit still but seized the opportunity to develop new skills and find ways of connecting with those facing distressing times. The families, with whom we work, have amazed us with their courage and young people with their ability to try different ways of managing their feelings, building resilience and making new friends. Our staff and volunteers have risen to the challenges of change. We look to 2021 with optimism.

In the words of Captain Sir Tom 'the sun will shine on you again and the clouds will go away'.

*Sandra*

**Sandra Blacker: Lead Clinical Trustee**

## Group news

### Adversity brings unexpected opportunities



**'The wind does not break a tree that bends' (African Proverb)**

Covid-19 felt like a Category 5 hurricane descending on everything we knew, creating mass devastation in its path. We understood that now more than ever, all areas of our service would need to remain available. With the support of a passionate and dedicated team we worked tirelessly to transition our groupwork programme from face-to-face to being delivered remotely.

One of the biggest challenges to moving online was getting to grips with the technology. We were determined for it not to break us, so with perseverance; and sometimes the support of the children for whom it is now second nature, we completed our first two online pilot groups for both Primary and Teens. Two more groups quickly followed, then a brief window of opportunity prior to Christmas allowed us to resume a face-to-face group. However, this was short lived when a third lockdown happened.

If asked to describe the last year, I'm sure words such as 'overwhelming', 'heart-breaking' 'frustrating' and 'difficult' would all be up there; and quite rightly so. Yet the word 'hope' is often tucked away in there somewhere too. For us, we were always hopeful that we could continue to support the families when they would need us most. Admittedly, online support is not for every child and young person and we have continued telephone support for those families, nor has it been without obstacles. However, what it has shown us is that in the face of adversity we have been given an unexpected opportunity. In hindsight we would probably never have considered offering groups online in this way - not yet anyway, but having had our hand forced, we have unwittingly created a valuable branch to our service.

*Karen*

**Karen Stanton: Clinical Service Manager**

**With thanks to all our supporters includ-**

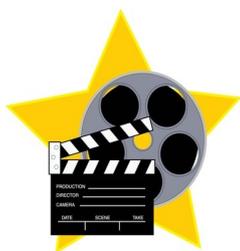


## YA News

# Lights, camera, action for YA team

**We don't grow when things are easy, we grow when we face challenges.**

The past year has definitely been a challenge for all of our Young Ambassadors. They have had to adjust to schools being closed and lessons becoming "virtual", not seeing close friends and relatives and spending a lot more time at home. Although children and young people are adaptable these changes have caused worry and concern about their future.



That said, they have been proactive and engaged in remote activities and at times, when we were allowed, face-to-face meetings to catch-up and tell us what they have been up to and their plans and ideas for the future.

Our next Young Ambassador project: Clinical and Promotional Videos, is already in the planning stage and we look forward to meeting with them all, virtually at first, to discuss their ideas so that later in the year we can meet in person to record, edit, and produce the videos that will be used within our groups and as a fundraising aide.

*Helen*

**Helen Watson:**  
**Young Ambassadors Project Lead**

**For fundraising enquiries  
contact:**

**fundraising@stand-by-me.org.uk**

## Uniting families

# Working together to build resilient families

The Uniting Families project continues to go from strength to strength providing a link between bereaved young people, their families, and the schools they attend.



Families tell us that grief is a lonely and isolating experience. The pandemic has presented further challenges with lockdown and being socially distanced from friends and family. The Uniting Families project aims to bring families together to ease the feelings of loneliness and isolation. Our families have shown their resilience and strength in these times and have embraced the new technology to access groups. Parents have logged onto Zoom to join the new parent group which has provided a safe space for them to share their experiences and support each other through their grief. Creating these networks of support can be a lifeline for some in these socially distanced times.

We continue to work closely with schools to ensure that the Contact-me model of support is used to support bereaved children and young people. Our Zoom Network Meetings have been well attended and provide staff with the opportunity to discuss cases, share best practice and gain support and advice for their bereaved students.

I am immensely proud of the hard work, dedication, and commitment that Stand-by-me has shown to ensure that we continue to support bereaved children, young people and their families.

*Lisa*

**Lisa Lowe: Family Bereavement Support Worker  
and Contact-me Lead**

## How to get in touch

 07469 255163 — helpline

 [Info@stand-by-me.org.uk](mailto:Info@stand-by-me.org.uk)

 [www.stand-by-me.org.uk](http://www.stand-by-me.org.uk)

 @SBM\_North\_Hert

 @standbymeberavementsupport