

FEBRUARY 2008

# YOUR VOICE

NEWSLETTER OF THE BLACK & MINORITY ETHNIC FORUM PROJECT

NORTH SOMERSET

## POPP LAUNCH

SREC has a new Community Development Worker with the Partnerships for Older People's Project. Miriam Robertson has now taken over, and she was involved in organising a launch for the project at a Community Café at Corpus Christi Parish Hall on 9th January. The event was well-attended, and Miriam added a multicultural theme with food-tasting from around the world and coffee from her native Guatemala. Miriam will be attending more Community Cafés in the coming months and adding a multicultural flavour to them. For more information about the project or the Cafés contact Miriam at our office, on her mobile 07894 586752 or at [popp@srec.org.uk](mailto:popp@srec.org.uk)



## NEW COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORKER

A NEW Community Development Worker, Jay Akerele, has been appointed by North Somerset Primary Care Trust to help Black and Minority Ethnic people with mental health issues have better access to health services. In his new role Jay will be working with a range of agencies, voluntary organisations, local authorities, schools and residents to help improve people's experiences of the services they receive.

For further information contact Jay Akerele, BME Community Development Worker, Waverley House, Old Church Road, Clevedon, North Somerset BS21 6NN. Call 01275 546770, fax 01275 546769, mobile 07527015828 or email: [Jay.Akerele@nsomerset-pct.nhs.uk](mailto:Jay.Akerele@nsomerset-pct.nhs.uk)



# A DAY TO REMEMBER

On Sunday 4th November 2007 the Forum celebrated its first anniversary with an event at the United Reformed Church Hall in Waterloo Road, Weston. The event was a great success with over 150 people attending and a total of 27 different nationalities represented.

A range of delicious food was provided by Fuds restaurant and there was entertainment from representatives of different communities: a Martial Arts demonstration by the Gypsy and Traveller Community, dancing from the Cameroonian Association, Poetry reading and Indian dancing. The North Somerset Play Forum provided children's entertainment and activities throughout the day. Information about various countries was on show and a beautiful photographic display about Bangladesh. Other activities included hair braiding, eyebrow threading, henna tattooing and Chinese writing.

However the day was not all fun and games; it was also an opportunity for the Forum to become fully constituted: copies of the constitution had been sent to members prior to the meeting and this was officially adopted and a Management Committee of 15 elected.

The day was thought to be a huge success by all who attended and we would like to thank everyone for their help and support.

## NEW FORUM OFFICERS IN PLACE

The Forum now has an official Management Committee in place. Prior to the AGM the Forum received guidance from a steering committee and many of the members have stayed as part of the Management Committee; we would like to thank them for their constant support and guidance.

The Management committee met for the first time at the beginning of December and elected its key officers: the Forum now has an official Chair, Treasurer and Secretary all of whom will hopefully be introduced at the next Forum meeting which is currently being arranged. We will be in touch with all of the details; we do hope to see you all there.

## FANCY TRYING SOMETHING NEW?

Capoeira was originated among African slaves in Brazil in the 16th Century, as a form of self defence. Disguised as a dance to escape their masters' prohibition, the capoeira developed through the centuries as a complex art that involves a combination of martial arts, dance and acrobatics to music. If you think you would like to have a go you are welcome to go along to the campus in Locking on a Wednesday evening 5pm – 6:45pm and a Sunday morning 10:30 – 12:30, beginners are welcome.

Below: Capoeira demonstration at Your North Somerset event



# ARE YOU INTERESTED IN GAINING A LEVEL 2 IT QUALIFICATION?

The Forum is currently working in partnership with the Fire Brigade Union (FBU), the union learning fund and Avon Fire & Rescue Service to offer the BME community in North Somerset free I.T. training, with the view of helping them to achieve an ITQ level 2 in I.T. which will be free to attend.

The course will be held at Weston Fire Station where they have offered to let us use their

computers. We are hoping that this course will enable people to gain knowledge of computers in an environment that they feel comfortable in with their friends and family. We will also try to hold the course that is convenient to you offering you the best chance of completing the course.

If you are interested in taking part please contact the SREC office on 01934 414455.

## YOUR NORTH SOMERSET

North Somerset Council held the 3rd annual Your North Somerset event on Sunday 20th January 2008 at the Winter Gardens. The event's aim was particularly to reach people from BME communities and help them to see what services are available to them and how they can make use of them – the main reason for this is that research shows that BME communities are less likely to use public services than the general population. There were over 40 information stands on the day, as well as food tasting from Weston College. There was also an assortment of different entertainment acts throughout the day, with many members of the Forum taking part. Despite the bad weather on the day the event was well attended and enjoyed by all.

## CHANGES TO SERVICES FOR THE POLISH COMMUNITY

For the past 7 months the Project has been working with the Citizens Advice Bureau to provide a drop-in advice clinic for the Polish community on a Thursday afternoon. To date this clinic has helped over 70 people, although we found the time was not necessarily convenient to everyone. After reviewing this service and with the help of 2 new Polish volunteers we have now changed the time to a Monday morning 9am till 1pm. We understand that this time still may not be convenient to everyone; however the volunteers are happy to make appointments meaning people in need of help are able to call the SREC office between these hours and talk to the volunteers to arrange a time that may be convenient to all concerned.



# READING GROUP AND CITIZENSHIP STUDY GROUP

The Forum Reading group has taken off and is into its second book. It meets once a month on a Tuesday and combines reading and discussion with food and socialising. Why not get in touch and find out more?

Also a self-help group has been set up by Luiza to look at what is needed to pass the Citizenship test. This will be meeting on a Monday morning. For more details ring or email the office.



## MESSAGE FROM AVON FIRE AND RESCUE

PEOPLE living in North Somerset are being offered the chance to have smoke alarms fitted in their homes by Avon Fire & Rescue Service (AF&RS) completely free of charge. Local firefighters visit homes to provide safety advice and install the lifesaving devices free of charge to anyone in the community.

A spokesperson for Avon Fire & Rescue Service said: "Fires can be devastating, not just to life, but also to property and possessions. They can spread so quickly if they are left unnoticed. However, a smoke alarm can give you and your family an early warning sign that you could be in trouble."

This is some of the advice given during a visit to help you stay safe in your home:

- Make sure candles are placed in the correct holders and away from materials, such as curtains.
- Do not leave food cooking in kitchen while you go into another room.

- Make sure everyone in your home knows how to get out of your home if there is a fire. For example knowing where keys for windows and doors are kept.

Home Fire Safety Visits can be booked by calling freephone 0800 1693 999

NB The Forum is planning to have its next meeting at the Fire Station in Weston. Details will follow shortly.



To contact us phone 01934 414455, email: [bmeproject@srec.org.uk](mailto:bmeproject@srec.org.uk) or write to us at Badger Centre, 3-6 Wadham Street, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 1JY

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