

# Annual Review

2009—2010



star  
project

The last year at STAR has been a year for celebration in many ways: from marking the project's 10th Birthday to the development of a whole new programme of Families Support Work and a shiny new counselling room to the continuing and inspiring life-changes our project users make in often very difficult circumstances. What follows are just a few strands of a very full twelve months as, through the combined efforts of local people from the churches and wider neighbourhood, we strive towards a future where people value themselves and others in a more connected and resilient community.

# 2009 to 2010



At our AGM a parent from Wee STARs spoke on behalf of project users and suggested that STAR should have 'a big sign outside saying "You are not alone!"'



**429 named individuals got involved in 25 different ways.**  
**In total there were nearly 7,000 engagements over the year.**

# Building Better Futures

Thanks to the support of The National Lottery through the Big Lottery Fund the first year of this programme has seen very pleasing progress and a broad and significant impact in the lives of project users.

We were delighted in September to appoint Karen Montgomery to develop a brand new programme of Families Support Work. Within just six months Karen brought a lively new dynamic to our staff team and developed a balanced spread of Individual Support and Groupwork which has:

- effectively built up parents' confidence in their abilities to be good parents.
- begun to really improve parenting skills especially around teenage issues, including use of the internet, and around toddler challenges such as weaning, positive discipline and communication.
- begun to help build up stronger and healthier relationships between parents and children through plentiful opportunities to play, share new experiences and enjoy natural calm and intimacy together.



Sharon McAulay, previously our Women's Support Worker, took up the role of Adults Support Worker and brought with her the vibrancy, perseverance and sensitivity which had already made her so valuable to the users of the project. She quickly developed a broad range of groups to appeal to different interests and meet different needs as well as getting alongside people to give individual support. In particular we have seen especially valuable outcomes from the counselling work she has done. To be able to offer skilful counselling in an informal and easily accessible context like STAR is a tremendous resource and we have seen it make a huge difference in the lives of our project users. Sharon has helped people struggling with often deeply distressing circumstances to persevere and find ways through to a much more positive and confident future.

# Family Support Work

In 6 months 37 (named) adults and 35 (named) children have engaged in FSW groupwork programmes.



50 adults and 49 children have registered with the **Wee STARS Parent/Toddler group** over the year enjoying support from peers and staff, play and developmental support for the children and warm and welcoming company for all.

*"Wee Stars has been a life saver for me and my daughter, it's provided us with routine, new friends and a great support in all areas of our lives".*

Two monthly **lunchclubs** (one for young mums) give a 'safe space' for parents to be honest about their struggles and joys, and discuss and learn together. **Happy Harminis** is a weekly music group using rhymes, songs, instruments and props to learn and grow.

**Getting to know your teen** was a support course for parents of teens delivered in partnership with Steph Mayo, a local facilitator with Parenting Network Scotland, and engaged 6 women.

*"The course helped me to understand me and helped me to see a way through my depression"*

**Getting switched on to Internet Safety** is a parents' workshop, first delivered on National Internet Safety Day but which continues to be offered in various settings with other parents. **Play @ Home** was a 6 week course engaging 12 parents and 11 children in a variety of play activities specifically designed to be "taken home".

*"It's lovely, productive, enjoyable, family time – just what [my son] and I needed".*

*"I only started coming into STAR a few weeks ago but I see a big difference in myself and in my daughter, I know that STAR looks out for people - it's not just about passing you on to other places"*

15 families have received **Individual Support**: Common issues are depression, anxiety, post natal depression, low self-confidence, low confidence in parenting skills, lack of familial support, domestic abuse, isolation, benefits advice, housing advice, relationship breakdown (partners or children) and being new to the area.

# Adults Support Work

111 adults engaged in 12 different groups and 197 people used the Drop In while 41 Adults received individual support.



**Mossvale Nursery Parent group** is a facilitated peer support group for parents whose children attend the additional needs wing. The group runs throughout the year and aims to increase confidence and reduce isolation, creating a supportive environment where members can share and discuss issues dealing with their child's additional needs.

**Stepping Up** is confidence building course with a 'readiness for work' focus. It helps participants build a well evidenced picture of the real abilities and achievements they have and encourages them to expand their comfort zones. It has transformed confidence levels, reduced isolation, increased reflectiveness, and improved motivation.

*"I really enjoyed this course. I feel more confident and feel I have a right to be happy when before I didn't. I feel my life has the future of colour"*

*"Until I came here I felt really alone...I thought I was the only one struggling as much".*

*"I hoped that engaging would provide me with emotional support and also help build on my confidence...the Star Project has provided me with so much more..."*

**Health and Fitness group** was 10 weeks of fun exercise sessions with a healthy lunch. The aim was to raise activity levels, raise awareness of healthy eating habits and highlight the associated feelings of wellbeing from leading a healthier lifestyle.

**STEPS (Steps to Excellence for Personal Success)** is a self image psychology course which helps people realise their full potential, increase their self-esteem, and grow in confidence by facilitating self exploration and understanding using a positivity model of psychology.

**Individual support** issues in long term interventions (counselling, befriending, coaching, practical support or a combination) included depression, self harm, anger issues, issues around gender abuse, bereavement, and isolation. Short term interventions included advocacy, gender based abuse, debt issues, and crisis interventions.

# Adults Support Work

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**Fat Girl's Allowed** is a facilitated peer support group (run with Renfrewshire Community Health Initiative) which increases confidence and encourages healthier lifestyles through health monitoring, food diaries, group exercise, weight management, and smoking cessation. One member now co-leads the group, quit smoking and encouraged 5 other members to run the Women's 10k with her.

*"I never realised just how many things I've achieved... I'm really quite bright".*

*"I'm a lot more understanding and patient with other people in my life...and I know it's a result of being in this group and my understanding being developed".*

*"This is the best course I've been on... and I've been on loads."*

**Coaching Skills** was an externally organised course sponsored by the Church of Scotland Priority Areas Committee and delivered within STAR Project by Word In Action. The course identified and developed existing skills to support other people who may be experiencing a lack of drive/motivation to move forward or make changes in their lives.

The **Drop In** is an invaluable way to engage people and provides a foundation and ongoing 'wraparound community' to support both individual support and groupwork. It embraces one-off events like the **Alcohol Awareness Workshop**, during national alcohol awareness week with discussions, quiz, unit calculators, case studies, and 'give-aways'.

**OUTRAGE Gender abuse art workshop** aims to increase self-esteem and confidence in adults who have survived gender abuse and develop reflectiveness and creativity. The process of the group bonding in their shared experiences went a long way to help the members develop healthier relationships out-with as well as within the group.

**Save Xmas** was a financial education workshop run with Advice Works (Renfrewshire Council) and consisted of discussions, activities, 'give aways' and information. **The Xmas Workshop** increased confidence and self-esteem at a time of year when many project users experience increased levels of stress and feelings of low self worth.

# Wider activities



## Fountain Gardens Gala Day

STAR led the steering committee of community groups and agencies which organized our 4th annual Gala Day and it was without doubt the most successful so far. Around 3,500 people enjoyed an exciting range of events, stalls and entertainment, bathed in glorious sunshine. The planning group itself is the most dynamic of local networks and the impact of the day itself on the harmony and self-image of the local community is growing every year.

## Poverty Truth Commission

A STAR project user was a testifier at Scotland's first Poverty Truth Commission. With our Adults Support Worker and Richard Weekes of Renfrewshire Arts and Museums she created a deeply moving animated film *Put yourself in my shoes* portraying both the painful realities of abusive families and the strength and hope which makes surviving them possible. The film was subsequently shown, to considerable acclaim, at the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland also.

## Quiet Room

The most noticeable physical change in STAR this year was the conversion of a (pretty scabby) storage room into a warm and comfortable Quiet Room, perfect for counseling and meetings with individuals. This was made possible by a grant from Paisley North Local Area Committee (Renfrewshire Council) and has been invaluable both in giving us the flexibility an increased programme of work demands and in providing a safe and edifying environment for our individual support work.

## 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

We were delighted to celebrate 10 years of making a difference in our community and to do so looking forward to such a bright and encouraging future. We marked the anniversary with a belter of a family BBQ in the grounds of Wallneuk North church and then a gala dinner for 120 people hosted by Wendy Alexander MSP.

# Wider activities



## STAR Interpersonal Framework

One of the most exciting areas of development has been in creating The STAR Interpersonal Framework, an innovative practice model for supporting people to make change. Blending our grass-roots experience with insights from psychology, theology and clinical and social work practice we explore factors determining the quality of the relationships we form with project users and how that quality affects our effectiveness in support and their capacity to make positive progress in life. We will now develop training units from the Framework for volunteers and professional workers to disseminate the benefits of this approach. "Congratulations on the work that you are doing. So crucial to begin with the person and the relationship and go from there!" Dr Daniel Hughes

## Wider connections

We have been very encouraged this year by the affirmation of several different organizations: Our partnership work with Mossvale Nursery, a peer support group for parents of children in the Snowdrop special needs unit, received a Bronze Award from CoSLA (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities). Soroptimists International:Paisley, a voluntary organisation aiming to inspire action and create opportunities to transform the lives of women and girls, chose the STAR Project as its 'President's Charity' for 2009-2010. We also welcomed visitors from more than 10 churches and voluntary sector projects around Scotland to hear about how our work has developed and for mutual learning.

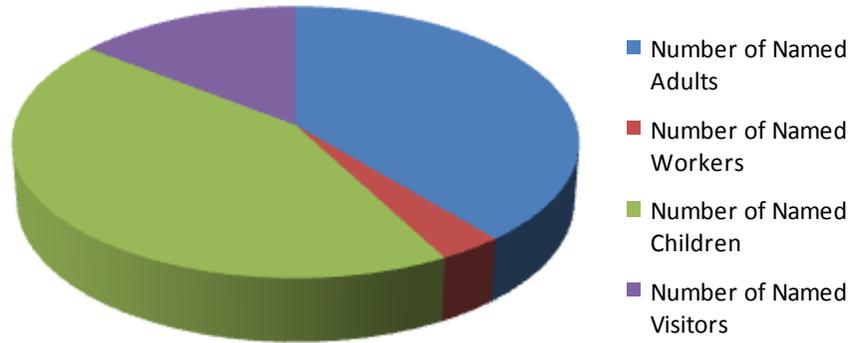
## Community Worship

With the four local churches STAR led a fabulous evening of Carol Singing in the Fountain Gardens again with around 60 people braving the cold. Easter saw us leading the traditional Good Friday Walk from Springbank Sheltered Housing complex through the North End to Mossvale Community Church, reflecting with 50-60 people on the grief, hope, healing and sacrifice in the crucifixion and in our community.

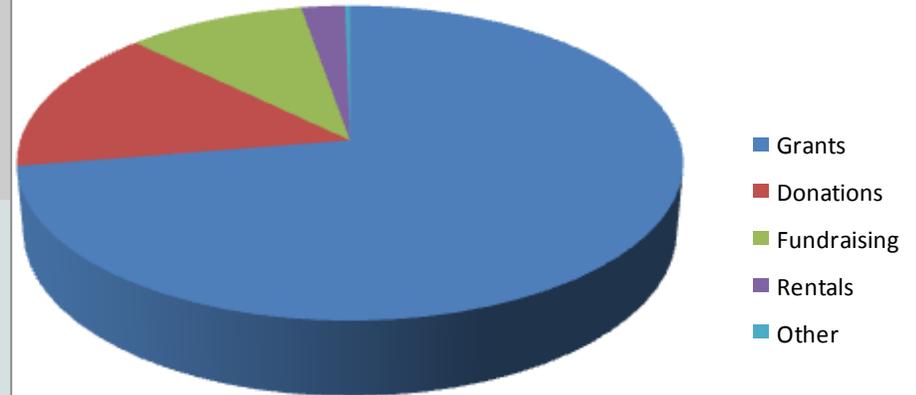
With the churches of Network Paisley we also worked with classes from Mossvale and Glencoates Primary Schools through a fantastic day of Christmas story-telling, puppet shows, discussion, crafts and singing known as *Bubblegum & Fluff*.

We were pleased also to lead a special service at Wallneuk North Church celebrating STAR's work.

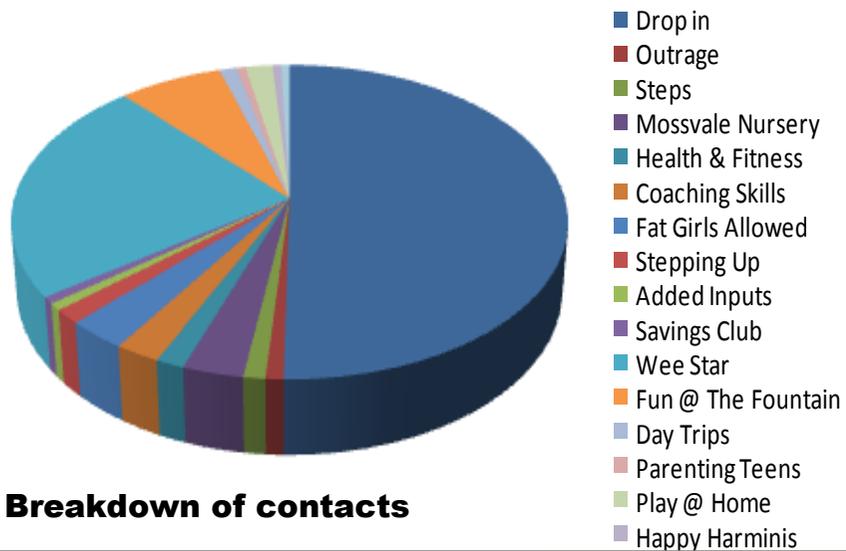
# Facts and Figures



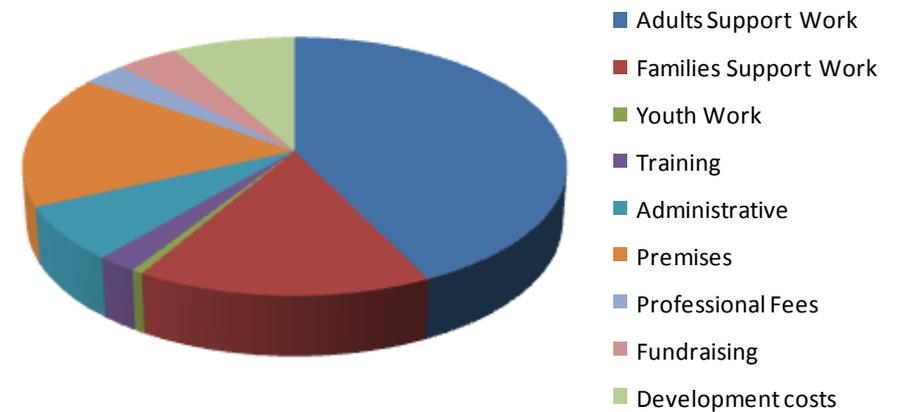
**Breakdown of Project Users**



**Breakdown of Income**



**Breakdown of contacts**



**Breakdown of Expenditure**