A Word From Our Chief Executive

Dear Supporters,

Welcome to the Christmas newsletter! I hope you are all looking forward to the festive period!

It’s been a busy few months for SPEAR but I would like to start by thanking all of you for your contribution to making this year’s Snooze event a huge success. We raised a significant amount of money and this will go a long way to helping homeless people in and around the community. I hope you enjoyed the sleep out as much as I did and you can read more about the Snooze and what our MP Vince Cable thinks about SPEAR’s work, on the back page.

As we all move into the festive period, I would like you to spare a thought for those less fortunate and if possible, get on board our Christmas Appeal. For some time now rough sleeping numbers have and are continuing to rise (read more about this in our centre section on SPEAR services) and we now, more than ever, need you to continue supporting this great cause. In this newsletter, you will find our 12 facts of Christmas, I hope this provides you all with a deeper insight to what SPEAR work for and the difference we make with your help.

I would like to thank you again for your continuous support and look forward to moving into the New Year together!

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas for us all here at SPEAR,

Stuart Nevill

Service update

The need for our services is greater than ever over the festive period and below you can read more about SPEAR’s amazing Rough Sleeper Outreach Service.

Who are the Rough Sleeper Outreach Team?
The outreach team work around the clock with people who are rough sleeping by approaching them whilst they are still on the street and making sure they are aware of our services, brokering housing solutions so they have access to temporary and permanent accommodation and providing ongoing support to move away from a life on the streets.

Each year SPEAR undertake a Street Count. With a team of staff and dedicated volunteers we search the streets of Richmond to try to find all of the rough sleepers we currently know about as well as any we don’t. This allows us to accurately report on the extent of the rough sleeping problem, but more importantly we are able to offer a service to any new rough sleepers we find. We then start working closely with the individual to resettle them off the streets and into accommodation.

How have they made a difference this year?
The Rough Sleeper Outreach Team has performed exceptionally over the last year in very trying circumstances. There has been a large increase in rough sleeper numbers (100% increase over the last two years) in Richmond Borough which has placed an additional strain on the service. We have responded by increasing the number of staff and volunteers in the rough sleeper outreach team, and by increasing the amount of street outreach work we undertake.

Thanks to the hard work of the outreach team the number of homeless people in accommodation has increased in step with the increase in rough sleepers. Greater co-operation and co-ordination across SPEAR has resulted in increased efficiency across all SPEAR services, resulting in a reduction in the amount of time a person spends rough sleeping, from over 3 months (two years ago) to about two weeks now.

The reduction in waiting times and the increase in resettlement outcomes has also been aided by the opening of new emergency assessment accommodation for rough sleepers. The latest of these will open next month and will be specifically for female rough sleepers. This service is being opened in response to a fourfold increase in the number of female rough sleepers compared to two years ago. Many of these women have complex needs and are particularly vulnerable when rough sleeping, so this service will be an important new resource.

A further reason for our current success is a significant improvement in our ability to recruit private landlords who are willing to work with us by accommodating rough sleepers and ex-rough sleepers. We have resettled over 30 people into private rented accommodation so far this year.

This year has seen big changes at SPEAR, particularly in how we work with clients. We are particularly keen on working in ways which promote responsibility and long term self-sufficiency for the people we work with. Part of this has involved a fresh look at how we deliver skills development and progression to employment services. We believe the importance of this aspect of our work, which bolsters our client’s confidence and is perhaps the best way of preventing a relapse. These services are now much more integrated with the key working process. These changes have resulted in a large increase in the number of clients engaged with the skills development service, and a subsequent increase in the number of clients gaining employment, in voluntary placements or in training.
The 12 facts of Christmas

Did you know…
Homelessness could happen to anyone?

Did you know…
Homelessness is more than just a housing problem?

Did you know…
The average homeless person won’t live beyond 47 years old?

Did you know…
Every 15 minutes, a family becomes homeless in the UK?

Did you know…
Relationship breakdown is the main cause of homelessness?

Did you know…
SPEAR have identified over 100 new rough sleepers in Richmond across the year so far.

Did you know…
In the last 3 months, there has been a 150% increase in the number of female rough sleepers in Richmond compared to the previous quarter.

Did you know…
We have 12 bedrooms across 2 hostels that cater solely for homeless young people aged between 16 and 21 years old?

Did you know…
The SPEAR homeless helpline provides information, advice and guidance to people facing homelessness? In the last year alone, the service dealt with 431 callers with 270 of those referred to one or more SPEAR service.

Did you know…
In 2013, our volunteers provided more than 6,000 hours of support to people who are homeless.

Did you know…
Since April 2013, the average wait time for a rough sleeper to find accommodation with SPEAR’s help is down from 3 months to only 17 days!

Did you know…
In 2013 with the help of SPEAR, 50 homeless people have been helped off the street and resettled into housing.

Did you know…
You can continue to help all of these by donating £10 this Christmas!

Please visit our website or use the donation envelope for a quick and easy way to donate. Thank you!

Forthcoming Event

The New Year brings some great (new!) events for SPEAR and we would really appreciate your support!

Richmond Half-Marathon
There are still spaces available for the half marathon on Sunday 23 March. The event, organised by Perseverance Events, is a fantastic challenge for those who are keen runners and those who would like to be!

By signing up in January you will have plenty of time to train and be totally ready for race day. The SPEAR fundraising team will also help you reach your sponsorship target by distributing fundraising ideas and supporting you through your journey.

You can register with family, friends and colleagues and not only will it be a great personal achievement, you will also be raising money for a really important cause.

For more information on the event, please visit www.perseverance-events.com

Volunteering
• Do you have an interest in helping people who are struggling with homelessness?
• Do you have some time you wish to give?
• Do you have skills you would like to share?

At SPEAR, we know the value volunteers can bring. Without your support, we would not be able to deliver the benefits in the lives of homeless people to the extent that we do. Volunteers form a vital part of many of our services; from working with our Outreach team to locate rough sleepers to providing hands on support at our Hub and Hostel and raising much needed funds.

We are currently looking for:
• Outreach Volunteers to support our Rough Sleeper Outreach team verify rough sleepers in Richmond
• Tenancy Support Volunteers to support people who have been homeless to sustain their tenancies and work towards other life goals

For more information on volunteering within the community, please contact Katherine Mathers on Katherine@spearlondon.org or 0207 036 9764

Christmas Fundraising

With friends and family all gathering for winter festivities, it’s a great time to get involved and do a spot of fundraising for SPEAR

The proof is in the pudding!
Do any of your friends or family fancy themselves as bakeoff champions? Assemble a team of lucky judges for a mince pie bake off and find out whose pies are really the best. £5 to enter or sell each pie for a pound!

Christmas sing off!
Delight your friends, family, neighbours or pets by singing Christmas carols to raise money this Christmas.

See if you can use your local church or pub to hold a mini concert. £5 entry fee

Unwanted Christmas presents?
Sell them on an online auction site such as e-bay or have a post-Christmas car boot sale. Donate all proceeds to SPEAR. Alternatively, donate any gifts directly to us and we will make sure they reach our hostel residents

Wrapping up this Christmas
Offer a present wrapping service to your friends and family in exchange for a donation.

If you are able to get on board and require more information or support, or if you are in search of other Christmas fundraising ideas, please contact Dipika on Dipika@spearlondon.org or 0207 036 9773
SPEAR's work would not be possible without the support from our funders and partners. We would like to say a special thanks to:

- London Borough of Richmond upon Thames
- Berkeley Foundation
- Richmond Parish Lands Charity
- Hampton Fuel Allotment Charity
- Royal British Legion
- Oak Foundation
- Barnes Workhouse Fund
- Streetsmart
- Monument Trust
- Lift
- Clare King Foundation
- Richmond & Twickenham Times
- Lemboss

Get involved

Fundraising News

St George 5s Football Tournament
St George have been a fantastic corporate partner for SPEAR and over the past six months the relationship has gone from strength to strength.

Aside from the incredible support we receive from all London offices, we had the team from St George South London host a football tournament in aid of SPEAR.

On a (very rainy!) day in September 32 teams took part in a five a side football tournament. The event was supported mainly by St George’s corporate clients and suppliers, and it raised an unbelievable amount of money that will go towards helping homeless people into employment.

Briggs and Forrester were the winning team for the day, and SPEAR also had the opportunity to enter a team, which included both staff and clients. Our journey ended after the quarters, which was impressive for a team with limited training time!

However, the day was not only about the football.

With thanks to the committed support from the Berkeley Foundation and St George’s employment programme ‘Back to Work’, we announce that we will be working together to secure up to 50 SPEAR clients into work over the year.

Employment and work experience opportunities can be incredibly difficult to secure, so we are extremely grateful for the support from our corporate partners.

The Big SPEAR Snooze 2013
Now in its fourth year, The Big SPEAR Snooze was quite simply a triumph!

Sponsored (and co-ordinated!) by St George West London, the event was supported by over 80 people who slept outside on a very chilly night in November to raise money and awareness for SPEAR. We were very fortunate this year to have our local MP, and supporter of SPEAR, Dr Vince Cable, attend the supper, and his thoughts on homelessness was much appreciated.

“I have long been an admirer of SPEAR’s work for the local homeless. The charity helps people to turn their lives around, doing it with compassion and professionalism. With the worrying increase in numbers facing homelessness, their work is absolutely essential.”

We had a great variety of participants this year, including employees from Thames Valley Housing, volunteers, church leaders, trustees, donors and ex-SPEAR clients. Every single person worked really hard to raise their sponsorship target, and helped SPEAR to reach an incredible amount of funding - A Snooze World Record!

We would like to say special thanks to St George, Thames Valley Housing, Fresh, Clive Busby, Julie Davies, Cornelia Fey, Jane Anthony and David Wright.

And congratulations to Gavin Hubrich for being highest St George fundraisier AND Robert and Caroline Titley for actually raising the most!

Special Mentions

A huge thank you to everyone who has supported us throughout 2013! Whether that was at an individual level or through their church, school, or community group, your support means the absolute world to us!

In particular we would like to take this opportunity to say a massive thank you to two very generous individuals who kindly donated an amazing £10,000 to SPEAR this winter. When asked why they chose SPEAR specifically, the reply was:

“We became aware of SPEAR when a representative from the charity came to speak at our church in Teddington, St Mary with St Alban. We were very impressed with the work that the charity is doing in our local area, and a look at the SPEAR website convinced us that SPEAR’s work is much needed and very effective. We felt that this was an excellent opportunity to support an important local charity that is making a real difference to people’s lives in our community.”

This money will go a long was to help our clients in many ways as they take the journey to independence and also moving on into employment. Without support like this, SPEAR wouldn’t be able to help the many people facing or experiencing homelessness, it does. Again, a huge thank you to you all!