



SPRING EDITION

NEWSLETTER

FOR THE ORGANISATION OF BLIND AFRICAN CARIBBEANS

JULY 2003

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INFORMATION

OBAC's frontline team are:

Management & Administration

Ibukun Olashore

Director

John Gakpe

Resources Coordinator

Bintu Barley

Information Advice Coordinator

Grace Foster

Membership Coordinator

Supported Services

Henry Nicholson

Development Coordinator

Amal Jama

Support Services Coordinator

Francisca Akanya

Support Services Worker

Transcription Service

Alywn Stephenson

Volunteer

Training & Employment

Pius Aigbogun

Basic Skills & Guidance Tutor

Petrit Jaka

Key Skills Tutor

Welcome to the spring edition. Information and updates on issues, activities local and regional.

EUROPEAN YEAR FOR THE DISABLED

You may be aware that this year has been declared the European Year for the Disabled.

OBAC has been involved, offering members training in Community Involvement and Participation, which is training in self-development and how to engage and participate.

The aim of the project is to ensure we have a say in policy and service provision development for blind and partially sighted African and Caribbean people in order to improve the quality of life and of basic public services.

We have raised additional money for the project through the South East London Foundation. Neighbourhood Renewal (Southwark)

If you are interested in attending the training sessions, please contact the office and register your name with the administration team. The next intake will start in September 2003.

Constitution Review

Staff and Management Committee members recently went for an Away Day to review the current constitution, which is OBAC's governing document. We also did the annual review of our current strategic development plan focusing on our core areas of work and identifying needs of members. It proved to be a very interesting day.

To complete the process we will be consulting with members during the next two months for their views and suggestions on the constitution. A draft will be presented to the annual general meeting in November.

Annual General Meeting

This year's annual general meeting will be held on Friday the 28th November 2003. Please take note the change of day. We will be celebrating the European Year for the Disabled with a Conference inviting guest speakers, the agm business will follow immediately after, which will end with a social/cultural activities.

Further information will be communicated to members in October 2003.

Forthcoming activities at OBAC

Health Promotion Seminars

Over the past few months we have organised a number of Health Promotion seminars; Diabetes, Stress management and Stroke, which have been well attended by members. We will be holding health seminars on the following dates.

29th August – Sickle Cell/Cancer

26th September - Glaucoma

31st October – Fitness/Health

Further information will be sent out to members nearer the date or you can call the office and book your attendance with the admin. team on 020 7735 3400.

**Community Fund Grant –
Befriending & Reader Service**

We are pleased to announce a grant award from the Community Fund £240,934 over three years for a Befriending and Reader Service project, this has been the discussion at two of our agm's which members expressed a need. The project will commence in September.

Events

No Limits Disability Rights Festival
7th September 2003 in Trafalgar Square.
A festival, which will feature Besta Vista Social Club, Susan Hedges, Caroline Parker, Bill Shannon and Compare: Mat Fraser.
For further details contact Alison Julal at GLAD on 020 7346 5800 Ext. 26

**Metropolitan society for the
Blind**

Annual Church Service and Tea for the blind
Sunday 28th September 2003 at 3pm. Venue: St George's Cathedral Southwark (At the junction of Lambeth Road and St George's Road). If you are interested in attending the service, please contact OBAC offices.

The Celestial Church of Christ, North London Parish is celebrating its Silver Jubilee and to mark the occasion the church will be visiting OBAC and also making a donation on 8th August 2003 between 11.30am – 3.00pm.

Anglo-Nigerian Welfare Association for the Blind - The Director, Danlami Basharu visited OBAC recently. He is appealing for financial support from Nigerians for the organisation. The organisation produces a newsletter, which will be transcribed and circulated to members.

Access and Legislation

London Transport update

A new report has shown that efforts to improve access to public transport are only having a limited impact on the lives of disabled Londoners. The report by the London Transport Users Committee (LTUC) shows that where improvements have been achieved they are under-used because disabled people are unaware of the changes or lack confidence to use the services.

People who took part in the research had a range of ideas about how to address these issues, with the key suggestions being that a journey planning service and an escort scheme could be set up to assist people.

Another important issue to address was bus driver training. Buses have seen some of the best improvements in access but use could be increased by better knowledge of the equipment by drivers and more awareness of the needs of disabled passengers.

People remain keen on Dial-a-Ride and the Taxicard scheme when they work, but reported that they were generally unreliable.

Employment

When most people think of a disabled person they think of a person using a wheelchair or a guide dog – someone with a visible physical impairment. You don't see that many people using wheelchairs or guide dogs, so you presume there aren't many disabled people. In fact nearly one in five people of working age is disabled and you can't tell by looking at most of these seven million people. If this sounds implausible, take a look at the cabinet; at least three ministers are disabled but you can probably only tell one; David Blunkett, the others are Gordon Brown, who is partially sighted and Jack Straw, who is hearing impaired.

Other information on employment

Fewer than 50 per cent of disabled people work. Given the important impact that being in work has on reducing poverty and social exclusion, this is not good for disabled people or for the wider community. There are well over one million disabled people out of work in the UK who want to work.

Welcome Signs

Disabled people may have more need of the NHS than non-disabled people, but that does not mean the NHS has always gone out of its way to make itself accessible to them. Dental surgeries up steep flights of stairs, information about general practice that is incomprehensible to people with learning difficulties, and hospitals with signage that can't be read by people with visual impairments, are just some of the barriers disabled people face when using the NHS.

Talking lampposts for the blind

Talking lampposts are being introduced in a north London borough in an unusual project to help blind and partially sighted people get around. 26 units have been put up on walls and lampposts around Golders Green, which broadcast messages telling people with sight problems their location. Those carrying or wearing special cards trigger the messages when they get within eight metres of the units. The Royal National Institute for the Blind hopes it will be an extra help for people negotiating busy streets.

A Focus on Change

The views of disabled people will play a crucial role in shaping the future priorities of the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) said Chairman Bert Massie. Mr Massie announced the launch of a three-month nationwide consultation to determine key issues that the DRC should focus attention on over the next three years. Six big questions form the basis of the consultation document – called A Focus on Change – With a new combined equalities commission looming heavily on the horizon, the DRC sees the next three years as critical ones to establish a solid platform for disabled rights to build on in future years. The consultation will play an important part in the process.

(Access & Legislation compiled from Glad)

OBAC NEWSLETTER

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OBAC exists to ensure blind and partially sighted African and Caribbeans access relevant services, influence decision and policy makers, to enable them to overcome barriers that prevent them becoming active members of the community.

Staff Team:

Management & Administration
Ibukun Olashore-Director
John Gakpe- Resources Coordinator
Bintu Barley-Information Advice Coordinator
Grace Foster – Membership Officer

Volunteers

Alywn Stephenson
Alfred Bowen
Joseph Gay
Elizabeth Kiama
Verna Hill
Fatmata Dumbaya
Emmanuel Yadaar

Supported Services

Henry Nicholson – Development Coordinator
Amal Jama – Support Services Coordinator
Francisca Akanya – Support Service Worker

Training

Pius Aigbogun – Basic Skills & Guidance Tutor
Petrit Jaka – Key Skills Tutor

Office hours 9.30 am – 5.30 pm

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Should any member/user wish to make a complaint concerning any aspect of the organisation work, she/he should approach a member of staff. If the complainant remains unsatisfied the matter should be raised with the Operations Manager. Or if this is not appropriate she/he may raise this matter with the Chair of the Management Committee. A full copy of the Complaints Procedure can be obtained from OBAC.

OBAC is funded by Association of London Government, Community Fund, European Social Fund (Objective 3), London Borough Southwark and other charitable Trusts.



Community
Legal Service

