

Anyone care to taste some of our YAC PIES?

(Made in Powys from the finest organic ingredients)

No I'm not referring to a new gastronomic delicacy but to the title of a group of young carers who got together during a series of residential weekends at Staylitttle Outdoor Education Centre in February and March. The YAC refers to Young Adult Carers aged between 16 and 19 years who have outgrown the kinds of activities and trips enjoyed by the younger children but who still need support of a different kind, especially as their lives are likely to be reaching a point of change and they need guidance and support in making decisions about the future. Some of the most crucial of these decisions may be about whether to carry on being carers. For want of a better name the group started its life as the 'transitional group' but by the end of the project they had become YACS. The PIES refers to the main areas of support they identified: Practical, Intellectual, Emotional and Social. (Thanks to Roni for the inspired acronym!)



By the end of Saturday evening on the first weekend the ten young people from across Powys had really gelled as a group with their own distinct identity. Everyone had something to contribute and we were struck by the amount of creative energy in the group. One of the principal needs we identified became immediately obvious - the need for older young carers to have the opportunity to get together on a regular basis. This may sound fairly straightforward but there are various hurdles to negotiate, ie. issues of funding and transport. The group is applying to the Big Lottery 'Make it Happen' fund to enable the group to continue and hopefully to increase its membership.

All three weekends were a lively mix of structured discussion and exploration of ideas focusing on the young people's experiences, needs and wishes; combined with a selection of the varied (always fun and often challenging) activities that Staylitttle and its staff has to offer. These included abseiling, orienteering, archery, problem-solving, walking and sledging. It was great to see the young people having the chance to try out new skills and gain in confidence as a result. Although the second weekend nearly had to be cancelled because of snow - and quite a lot of it - it actually produced possibly the most abiding memory of the project: a fantastic walk in the snow-covered hills under a bright blue sky, stopping for sledging sessions and sips of hot chocolate. We could have been in the



Alps (of Montgomeryshire)!

The weekends were by no means all play - a great deal of hard work went into designing and producing a resource in the form of a guide for professionals from different agencies who may come into contact with young carers. This highlights the main issues of concern for these young people and will be launched by them on June 26th at Staylitttle. We will be inviting representatives from various relevant agencies in the statutory and voluntary sectors to attend the launch, which will give the YACS the chance to talk to the people who may well make decisions about things which directly influence their lives.

Many thanks to everyone who has been involved with the group so far, especially to our superb facilitator Janet, and to Gwyn without whose IT expertise the final resource would not have become a reality. We will all remember the blood, sweat and tears expended during the session in Llanidloes Resource Centre on that particular Saturday afternoon!

Celia

