

‘MEET THE FUNDER’ REALISES DREAM FOR YOGA CENTRE

On October 26th 2005, a FREE event will take place at St Aidan’s C of E School, Oatlands Drive, Harrogate, which will give voluntary and community organisations the chance to meet the people who provide the financial help needed to turn dreams of a better world into reality.

In 2003 and 2004, the ‘Meet the Funder’ events for Harrogate District attracted hundreds of representatives from voluntary and community groups, and resulted in thousands of pounds in funding being secured for projects. One such successful project was the Yorkshire Yoga and Therapy Centre. Director of the centre Laura Bissell explains "We started going to the Meet the Funder events in 2003 before our not-for-profit organisation was formed, before we even had premises. It is fantastic to meet the potential funders and have a chance to chat with them about what their priorities are. It was great to realise that there were people out there who wanted to help us achieve our dream."

The Yorkshire Yoga Centre, based at 9-10 Halfpenny Close, Knaresborough, is about to celebrate its first anniversary after being hugely successful in obtaining funding for various projects to help carry out its aim of bringing the benefit of yoga to the whole community.

The centre has recently been successful in receiving four grants from funders:

- Sport Relief (a branch of Comic Relief) has granted funding for a one-year pilot programme of "Able and Enabled Yoga" which brings free classes on Thursday afternoons to 'able' bodied people not in full-time employment and to disabled people in wheelchairs.
- Local Network Fund money will allow a one-year pilot programme of free school-holiday yoga workshops for disadvantaged children and special needs children, the first ones to take place next week on 27-28 October.
- Awards for All is part-funding the research costs of the 'Yoga For Weight Control' pilot research study being conducted by a research team from Leeds University.
- UnLtd (in partnership with Yorkshire Forward and North Yorkshire Rural Community Council) has awarded an UnLtd 2 award for the research, development and expansion of the 'Yoga for Weight Control' project which started last month. The UnLtd 2 award follows on from the UnLtd 1 award that was given last November to help develop the Baby Yoga and Children’s After-School Programme at the centre.

Awards for All, UnLtd and the Local Network Fund are just some of the funders that will be present at the Meet the Funder Event on October 26th.

Laura emphasises, "I believe we would not have been successful with our funding applications if we had not gone to the Meet the Funder seminars. Getting to know the people who read the application forms and make the decisions was immensely helpful. It taught us to avoid the common mistakes that can easily be made when writing grant applications. It was also very helpful to meet the organisers of Meet the Funder -- the people from the Councils for Voluntary Service, the Harrogate Borough Council and Yorkshire

Rural Community Council have given us a tremendous amount of advice and support. All in all, it is a terrific bonus to meet such nice people and to know they truly do want to help you succeed!"

Meet the Funder 2005 will be opened at 12 noon by the Mayor of Harrogate, Cllr Caroline Bayliss. The funding 'marketplace' will be open from noon until 6pm, with staff and exhibitions from over 20 different funding organisations. In addition, some of these funders will be holding short seminars. Workshop sessions will also be running covering every aspect of running a project from setting up a group to marketing it.

The marketplace is open to all, the seminars require booking in advance. For a programme and booking form, please ring (01423) 504074, or pop into Harrogate and Area Council for Voluntary Service, Community House, East Parade, Harrogate.

This event is run by Harrogate Borough Council, Ripon and Harrogate Councils for Voluntary Service, and the Yorkshire Rural Community Council.