

Essex Respite & Care Association Spring Newsletter

Providers of Mental Health Support and Respite



Service News

The start of this year has been very busy at ERCA. We have been implementing a scheduling system allowing our support staff access to their rota via a mobile App. This also provides easier access for communications and recording vital information. As you can imagine for a small charity like ours, this is a real help and will save on valuable time and resources. We hope this will be fully implemented by the end of April.

I'm sure many of our supporters know that we have been working hard on raising our profile. Over recent weeks we have made some changes to our website and endeavored to raise our social media presence.

We have recently signed up to 'Just Giving', meaning our supporters can now raise much needed funds on our behalf.

JustGiving

We are also looking forward to welcoming on board new clients and staff and aim to keep growing our service over the coming months and years, to be more self sufficient.

Volunteering and what it means to me

The piece below was written by one of our dedicated volunteers, who wishes to remain anonymous

I joined ERCA as a volunteer in November 2022. I generally work three days a week, from 9.30am – 2.00pm. I became a volunteer as my employer suggested that volunteering would aid me in the process of returning to working practices after having been off long-term sick. The reason for my long-term absence was related to my mental health, during this period I was severely unwell and was not functioning as a member of society and did not believe I would recover. I was delighted to be considered for a volunteering role at ERCA and during correspondence leading up to and during the interview process I felt that the co-managers really understood and were sympathetic to what I had been through and could clearly see that giving me the chance to volunteer with them would benefit my recovery.

During my time at ERCA I have assisted in many different tasks including filing, calculating payroll, expenses, invoicing, scheduling, spreadsheets, minute taking. I have also been part of reviewing and implementing new processes and procedures.

I have also attended two staff training days, from which I received social care related vocational certificates. I can honestly say that I have really enjoyed my time with ERCA. I have a friendly working relationship with all of the office-based staff and now consider them as friends. I have also enjoyed getting to know the support workers and the Trustees.

Featured in this issue:

- Service News
- Volunteering & what it means to me.
- Get Involved
- Fundraising
- Chairman's Message

There has been a marked improvement in my confidence, competence and overall wellbeing since I started volunteering at ERCA and I am incredibly grateful for the experience. I now consider myself to be fully recovered and would like to thank ERCA for the huge part they have played in my recovery process.

I believe the Charity provides a unique, wonderfully caring and much needed service that I hope will continue long into the future for the sake of those who are suffering in a way that I have suffered myself.

Get Involved

ERCA are looking for Trustees to join our board. Ideally you will have a keen interest in mental health, or possibly lived experience.

As a small charity we rely on receiving funding from voluntary donations made by Trusts, Foundations, companies and individuals. We also rely on the voluntary time and commitment from our Board of Trustees.

We need individuals who may have experience in fundraising,

generating income, digital marketing and relationship management with ties to the NHS or local authority. Previous trustee experience is not necessary and we welcome applications from all ages and backgrounds.

If this is you, we want to hear from you. Please contact Jemma Pollack or Gemma Baines for more information, either by telephone 01245 353855 or email office@essexrespite.org.uk.



Fundraising

We have been working hard to secure more funds for secure the future of the Charity and we are pleased to announce that we have recently secured the following funds:



We have recently been awarded £500 from Tesco, Stronger starts. This will help fund our activities budget in west Essex, allowing clients to partake in meaningful activities.



Thanks to The Fore for their continued support and their recent donation of £10,000, of unrestricted funds.



We give a special thanks to The Edward Gostling Foundation, who have recently become a legacy partner.



Chairman's message

Spring – the season of hope and new beginnings – is here. In the Christmas Newsletter, I mentioned that The Edward Gostling Foundation were considering providing ERCA with medium-term financial support. I am pleased to be able to advise that this has now been agreed and we are to receive an Endowment Fund, which can be drawn down upon, if necessary, to maintain ERCA's Reserves at an acceptable level.

As I am sure you can imagine, this money means a lot to the ERCA Team and Trustees bringing some certainty, in a very uncertain world. It will allow us to plan for the future so that we can continue supporting existing and new clients over the next few years, at least. I would like to say a big Thank You to The Edward Gostling Foundation for this generous gift.

We have also been fortunate in welcoming Kerry Mead-Farmer on to the Board of Trustees. However, our search for more trustees to strengthen our Board continues. So, if you are, or you know someone that is, looking for a new challenge and would be interested in becoming a trustee, please consider ERCA and make contact with us. We would be happy to have an informal chat to let you know what is involved, before you make a final decision to apply.

