



MENDIP ALL DRUMMERS

Mendip All Drummers (MAD) is a community drumming group run by a group of volunteers dedicated to providing opportunities for all. They meet weekly in Shepton Mallet and Frome and everyone gives their time freely. The group was awarded a £1000 grant from the Somerset Giving Fund (SGF) to run a 16 week course during 2008.

The participants gain skills in drumming but also share and discuss issues and devise coping strategies. Two of their members have learning difficulties and there are also several women who have young children with disabilities who rely on the support and friendship of the group. Free childcare is provided in Frome to enable parents of pre-school children to participate.



On reporting back on their SGF award, the group submitted several case studies to show how the activity had made a real difference to individual's lives. Chris's story is a classic example of how a small grant can make a big difference.

"Chris had been homeless before living for 3 years in a Christian Community, before finding himself a home in Shepton Mallet. Chris had never been on a course since leaving school at 15 and was very suspicious of authority and organisations. A friend suggested he come along to one of Mendip All Drummers courses as there were lots of people with varied backgrounds and it was a really friendly group. When Chris first arrived he stood at the door for the first week, then over a few weeks he was tempted in with tea and chocolate biscuits and by week four he was sitting in the circle playing a drum.

Chris is a great character and before long he was taking an active role in the group, by storing drums and even joining the committee! What he liked about the group was the diversity of its members. He would be sitting next to a retired teacher, a single isolated parent and a recovering drug addict. He used to say how funny it was that all these different people were friends, and usually in life their paths probably would not cross.

*During the Frome course, Chris was a key volunteer and buddy, he would make people feel welcome and reassure new participants. Since the course, Chris has gone on to New Deal Plus, found employment and moved to Devon. He said "**I thought I was past my sell-by-date, I wish I'd done this years ago**".*

Chris is missed by all of MAD's members, but we all wish him luck in his new life"

The Somerset Giving Fund is made available by the pooling of small donations from our Friends and other sources. It enables us to target organisations that may not otherwise secure funding. This story from MAD is a great example of how the Foundation provides a link between local donors and those who are most in need of help at the grassroots level.

Somerset Community Foundation has awarded over £2million in grants, supporting local voluntary groups in Somerset. It's the only charity in Somerset for Somerset. If you would like to know more please contact us directly or visit our website.