

September 2008

Over the summer there have been announcements about benefit changes. What impact does this have on our clients? What can we do to help our clients find employment or productive activities?

For an opportunity to hear what other people are doing, book your place at the Karten Network Conference now!

October 14th at Queen Alexander College, Birmingham. More details follow on the next page

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HELLO FROM CERI



I joined the Karten Network at the beginning of July, so have already met a few of you. I have been made to feel very welcome, so thank you all very much. For the previous 8 years I was in the Senior Management Team at Treloar College, so may have met some of you through the Specialist Colleges network. In the past I have taught Maths and IT in schools and colleges, worked for ICL, and for many years was a civil servant, working in IT and Marketing. I have also chaired the LSC group looking at the ILT needs of Specialist Colleges. A strange route to bring me to where I am now, but I am very glad to be here!

So if you think I may be able to help, or if you have news or successes to share, please get in touch. I'm looking forward to meeting you all.

More about our Keynote Speaker

Caroline Ellis is Joint Deputy Chief Executive of RADAR the UK's leading pan-disability charity working to represent the needs and expectations of over 11 million disabled people in the UK. Caroline previously worked at Sense and RNIB before leading the Disability Rights Commission's parliamentary work, where she was instrumental in securing some of the legislative gains in what became the Disability Discrimination Act 2005.

She has personal experience of mental health problems and is a trustee of her local disability association.

In July the Government published its Welfare Reform Green Paper "No one written off: Reforming welfare to reform responsibility" - heralding more support for disabled people to access employment along with greater obligations to seek and find work. Caroline will give an overview of and response to the Government's welfare reform plans, highlighting the positives and gaps. She'll also outline the implications of the next phase of reform for disabled people and Karten Network members. I'm sure you won't want to miss this.

CONGRATULATIONS TO KATE!

When Kate Naish commenced her study at the Karten CTEC Centre at Portland College she pursued the Business Administration programme although her initial interests were in installation and networking. Despite having hemiplegia, she studied very hard and achieved "Microsoft Office Specialist Master" status gaining knowledge and skills at expert level.

With determination, whilst paying attention to a high level of accuracy and using only a one-handed keyboard, she carefully prepared for and gained competence in Text Processing of business documentation, which led to achievement of the distinction grade at Level 2 with no extra time granted.

During her training at Portland College Kate also developed personal experience and practical skills in administration and customer service when helping with tasks and duties on main reception. Kate's increasing confidence has driven her to provide voluntarily the main reception's cover on many occasions. At the same time she was able to demonstrate the ability for working independently.



A very happy Kate Naish!

Kate's very good organisation skills had also a significant impact on providing live work to other members of staff across many departments at Portland College. Her mature and responsible approach has been evident each time she had to leave the training room. Kate made sure her desk looked tidy and that things were always left in a neat manner at the end of each college day.

During the training period at Portland College Kate became a self-motivated person, who set herself high personal standards of performance and achievement. She has completed her training with two external work placements, where even further she has grown in confidence personally and professionally. As well as being able to demonstrate her commitment she has proven to be a conscientious and talented young woman, who continually strives for more and as the effect of this Kate has secured herself a place to study towards degree level in Social Sciences in September.

We all wish Kate every success in her new venture.

Equipment Upgrade in Karten Room, Fife Society for the Blind

FSB is proud to announce the arrival of six new hi-spec PCs with 24" high-resolution LCD monitors in their IT room. The new PCs are each accompanied with the latest 19" LCD CCTVs from various companies such as Optelec, Humanware and VisualEyes. In addition, clients are able to utilise the latest access software such as Jaws, Thunder, Zoomtext, and Supernova. Clients currently attending IT classes are enjoying the new equipment.

"I wish I could take the equipment home" said Jane Lindsay who is currently learning to use Microsoft Word with Zoomtext. "The larger monitors make the screen so much more accessible".

The IT room also has a wide assortment of video magnifiers for clients to "try before buying". This equipment ranges from low-cost magnifiers which work in combination with standard televisions to high-tech colour LCD standalone modules with incorporated sliding XY tables.

For further information please contact Hazel White, Access Technology Trainer, on 01592 583272.

NETWORK COMPETITION

Apologies for writing this in September.....



Advance notice: we would like to send an electronic card to the network and its partners to celebrate the festive season. Do you have any budding artists in your centre? Get your entries to Ceri by 25th November. The Trustees will judge the best entry.

HAVE YOUR SAY!

For the first time the newsletter has been sent out by email. This was decided not only to save resources but also to encourage you to share the newsletter with your colleagues.

But has it worked for you? Please let me know if it has given you any problems.

And if you have any articles for the next newsletter, please let me know.

REMEMBER: Book your place at the conference by emailing ceri@karten-network.org.uk as soon as possible, with any car park spaces needed and your dietary requirements. Please extend the invitation to anyone else in your organisation who would find it valuable.