

## WELCOME...

...to the third edition of the Aurora Equinox. The issue is shorter than usual but still contains information we hope you will enjoy and find useful. Newsletters now include short "reviews" from clients on books, films, music or even places they enjoy and find inspiring. This issue contains a review from a visit to a "Cat Cafe". In fact, cats are featured quite a lot in this issue!

Please be advised that Aurora will be closed for two weeks during the festive break from Friday, 19 December to re-open on Monday, 5 January 2015

Aurora wishes everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

### *Aurora Newsletter Team*

You can follow Aurora on various social media platforms at the following links:



[www.facebook.com/AuroraHealthFoundationUK](http://www.facebook.com/AuroraHealthFoundationUK)



[www.twitter.com/AuroraHealthUK](http://www.twitter.com/AuroraHealthUK)



[www.linkedin.com/company/aurora-health-foundation](http://www.linkedin.com/company/aurora-health-foundation)



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*Thank you for taking time to read our Newsletter.*

*If you know of a person abused in childhood that could benefit from our help or could benefit from the content of this Newsletter please feel free to pass it on.*

*If you would like to donate to the Aurora service, raise funds on our behalf (by running, cycling etc) and/or you feel drawn to work at Aurora please visit our website for further details.*

**Disclaimer:** Please note that the content of this Newsletter reflect the views of individuals and are not necessarily the views of the Aurora Health Foundation.

## MESSAGE FROM SUSANNAH

Hi Everyone

I hope you are well and keeping warm.

### THANK YOU!

Thank you all for your continued support of Aurora over the past months – whether you are clients, Team, Trustees or supporters – do know that your contributions help to keep the service going. It really is so very heartening for us all to see how the Centre is developing and expanding to provide more clients the opportunity to benefit from Aurora's services and with consistent core funding we could do so much more!

### AURORA'S TIMETABLE IN 2015

However, despite some setbacks, Aurora continues to steadily grow and already 2015 promises to be a productive year with monthly Aurora Meet-Ups for clients which will provide an opportunity for socialising alongside group activities, external social events and a workshop timetable to follow. The recent introduction of Aurora's Anger Release in therapy sessions has proved popular and fast becoming an integral part of recovery. I truly believe that 'Anger is the Backbone of Healing' when it is safely channelled in therapy sessions. The release of old rage, fury and anger can help us as 'survivors' to move through our pain and regain our true selves moving from Victims-to-Survivors-to-Thrivers.

### AU REVOIRS

It is truly my honour to be part of such a wonderful energy, meeting so many lovely people both clients and Team members who together work so hard on recovery alongside our valued Trustees and supporters who continue to provide their expertise and donations to help us to further develop the Aurora service. Although we say goodbye to some of our clients who have moved on in their recovery and a member of the Team who leaves us in early January – we have the memory of their time with us and the knowledge that they'll come visit us again whenever / if ever they can.

### AURORA CATS

Apologies from the Aurora cats who have been largely absent from the Centre recently. Ziggy and Zoe tend to use winter as a time for them to spend nights out on the cat town and their winter days sleeping off the excesses of their hunting trips. When the springtime comes again no doubt their furry faces will be seen again at Aurora.



Ziggy



Zoe

### CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR

Aurora closes for the festive season this Friday 19th January at 430pm and re-open on Monday 5th January 2015. Please use the support you have around you – the Samaritans provide a 24/7 service on 08457 90 90 90 and/or [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

In the meantime wherever you are and whatever you are doing know that all of us from Aurora wish you all a very happy Christmas and a positive, fulfilling New Year!

Take the very best of care of yourselves and with all good wishes

Susannah x

## LATEST NEWS

### New Aurora Members

We are pleased to welcome new team members and new Trustees to Aurora. These are:

- Julie (counsellor)
- Maggie (counsellor)
- Megan (Volunteer)
- Connie (Volunteer)
- Chris (Trustee)

### New monthly workshops

Monthly workshops were made available in early 2014 for Aurora clients. Workshops included self-care, photography and relaxation and were well attended. There are plans to increase the workshops to two a month in 2015.

### Strategy Committee

A Strategy Committee has been set up to monitor and facilitate strategic development of Aurora against the Business Plan. It consists of two senior management personnel (Susannah and Nick) and the Chair and Vice Chair of Trustees (John and Brian). Meetings are held regularly (initially every month but now bi-monthly).

### Susannah on BBC Radio 5 Live and BBC Radio Wales

In late 2014, Susannah Faithfull (Aurora's CEO) was invited by BBC Radio to discuss two abuse issues. More details on these broadcasts are available on the Aurora website.

## HELLO FROM THE NEW CHAIR

I took over as Chair of Aurora in April 2013 since when we have worked on finalising a 5 year business plan and introducing 2 new Trustees who bring with them a legal and strategic background. It is a difficult time for Aurora as we move to improve our funding to meet the ever required treatment for our clients in the current atmosphere where abuse in childhood hits the headlines nearly every day. We have a dedicated executive team and a team of therapists and volunteers who do a tremendous job and in the New Year the Trustees and the executive team will hold a strategic away day to ensure the viability of Aurora going forward and I will report more fully on this in the next newsletter scheduled for April 2015. In the meantime on behalf of the trustees I wish you well over the coming festive period and a happy and healthy 2015.

John Berg (Chair of Trustees)

## STORY OF THE DEAD LETTER

Did you know that if you sent a letter through the post which the postman was unable to deliver then it is sent to the post-office where someone has been employed to read these letters?

Isn't it amazing that the post-office have this kind of service? The great thing about this is say (If you want to maybe write a letter venting your feelings about a personal issue you might have about something or maybe want to write a letter of healing –perhaps someone in your past has hurt you and you never got the chance to say how you really felt) posting it could be part of the healing ritual and of the letting go.

JH

### **Please Note**

*Aurora is run mainly on a volunteer basis and although we do our very best to answer phone calls there are times when we have to rely on our confidential answer machine. If a message is left we reply as soon as we possibly can.*

*We treat all enquiries by phone and email with the utmost care and respect as we recognise how very difficult it can be as to ask for help. We look forward to hearing from you.*

## FINDING THE ARTIST WITHIN

One of the many discoveries that I made upon my healing journey a few years ago was my ability to create my own inner artist and draw from real life. I was one of those people who often looked on in envy, and frustration at other's people's artwork, often wishing that I could create my own masterpieces for others to see. Although I tried of I was often bitterly disappointed with my amateurish attempts to create something beautiful and real out of what I saw in my own visual world. However I was also aware that even in those unsuccessful attempts there was also a great deal of learning about some of my many qualities and I discovered that although impatient and frustrated at times I harnessed a great deal of determination, desire , self – belief and willingness to carry on. I remember how often I used to let my own judgments against myself get in the way of my creativity and by listening to myself I would often catch myself saying the following statement," this is hopeless" "I can't do this, its impossible" frequently. Things did not change overnight, but eventually I learned to set myself some small goals after discovering what my media was.

My beautiful inner child showed me how I could make clouds just by using my fingers. It was like I had stumbled upon a new and wonderful world that day curious and excited by what I could see and do. As I grew in confidence I began to practice first from photographs then eventually real life and although the images that I presented were different to what I saw, I came to realize and accept that this was my artist interpretation of what and how I see things in my visual world. This was about me. I am so very proud and delighted with my pictures that I don't mind sharing them with others and also congratulating myself with "Well done, you mastered it and you did it".

My advice to anyone is that if you really want to do something, is to stay focused, don't be put off by what others say, don't listen to your inner critic because whatever it says it is not true and follow what heart desires and you will get there whatever the journey, whatever the challenge. Good luck with yours.

JH

## CAT CAFE

Lady Dinah's Cat Café (<http://ladydinahs.com>) is situated in Shoreditch, East London and is the first London-based Cat Café of its kind. Since its opening the café has proved so popular that people often have to book weeks in advance to experience a lunch date with the moggies.



There are two floors; the upper floor which can be seen from the entrance window and the basement floor which has a larger seating area. Health, safety and hygiene is a paramount part of the visiting experience as there are up to 12 cats that live in the building, all of whom are deeply cared for.

The Cat Café is a wonderful place with a warm, welcoming atmosphere and friendly staff always at hand if ever you need to ask them a question about the cats. The cats themselves are peaceful and settled and can be found snoozing, resting by themselves or playing with the visitors.

The food - a variety of sweet treats and savoury snacks with vegetarian or gluten free options –is inspired by or named after the cats and are fairly priced.

Anyone who loved cats would find themselves in their element at Lady Dinah's, and there is even a little souvenir shop full of badges, clothing, cat treats and merchandise for you to buy and take home as mementos of the day.



The Aurora members thoroughly enjoyed their experience and have already recommended to friends. The Cat Café is a great idea, especially if you are a cat enthusiast but are unable to keep cats at home. Lady Dinah's will be like a temporary home away from home for you to visit furry friends while you sit with a drink by yourself or with your companions.

A great experience!

CB



## FUNDING AURORA

As with many, if not most, small to medium charities finding the finance to keep our service going is an ongoing process. We need funds to pay the rent for our premises (we don't own a property); for utilities such as electricity, gas and telephone/internet, and to pay therapists for providing counselling services. We also need the finance to pay executive team members who actually maintain and develop the service. They are usually "behind the scenes" but are an essential part of Aurora which just would not run at all without them.

Many smaller charities are run by volunteers so the financial overheads can be really low, and although Aurora has much needed volunteers we also have personnel who are just unable to give their time without some kind of financial reimbursement.

Unlike many charities Aurora is largely self-funded through the contributions clients make for their therapy. In fact, on average 95% of our annual income is generated this way. This allows a level of independence and security not often possible with organisations totally reliant on external funding, but it also creates a moral dilemma for when clients cannot afford therapy. In an ideal world, we would be offering counselling services at a much reduced cost or even free but if we were to do that then Aurora just would not exist as we would be financially unsustainable.

The answer is of course to try and find a balance; to try and generate income from external and diverse sources so we bring the proportion of self-funding down from 95% to around 50%. In this way we can make our services available to a lot more people in need. There are too many people who Aurora currently cannot help as we just can't afford it.

We have been trying to find this balance for long time so we can ensure we get the external funding needed to open our doors wider to more people. However, the level of competition from other charities, presenting hard evidence of need and the diverse range of priority areas from funders makes this an enormously difficult task. Larger charities have teams of people dedicated to fundraising via various means. Aurora has.....well me mostly, and as this responsibility goes along with many others it makes the task somewhat challenging.

However, the Aurora team is growing as is our capacity to fundraise and we look ahead to 2015 with increased optimism. We want to make our services available to as many people as we can. We also want to expand our services, develop a residential provision, provide outreach services; so many things we think will make a huge difference to the lives of people abused in childhood, but to do this we need a significant injection of hard cash. If you can help in any way, please contact us now.

Finally, a very heartfelt thank you to those individuals and funders who, in a variety of ways, have made a financial contribution to Aurora during 2014. They are:

- Royal Borough of Kingston – grant funding
- Rachel, Nathan and Louise – running on behalf of Aurora
- Anna and Andy – always so very generous
- Jane and Phil – for continually making regular donations
- All our clients

Nick Gauntlett (Deputy CEO and integrative counsellor)

## USEFUL WEBSITES

### **Aurora Health Foundation ([www.aurorahealthfoundation.org.uk](http://www.aurorahealthfoundation.org.uk))**

Aurora is a unique therapy centre exclusively for people abused in childhood. We are a survivor-led therapeutic community situated in a peaceful and respectful homely setting where you are warmly welcomed and accepted just as you are. If you were abused in childhood and it is negatively affecting your adult life and you feel we could possibly help take a look at our website, email us at [info@aurorafoundation.org.uk](mailto:info@aurorafoundation.org.uk) or ring us on 0208 541 1951. Whatever path you choose we send you our very best wishes for your recovery journey. Take good care.

### **dabsbooks ([www.dabsbooks.co.uk](http://www.dabsbooks.co.uk))**

The specialist book and information service for people who are overcoming childhood abuse, sexual abuse, or domestic violence, and for those who live or work with us.

### **Heal For Life Foundation ([www.healforlife.org.uk/](http://www.healforlife.org.uk/))**

The Heal For Life Foundation provides residential healing programmes for survivors of childhood trauma and abuse. These take place in a remote, safe and peaceful setting in the south of England.

### **I'm Just a Little Girl in the Rain ([littlegirlintherain.wordpress.com](http://littlegirlintherain.wordpress.com))**

Blog from a survivor on "Healing from Childhood Sexual Abuse".

### **Let Go...Let Peace Come in ([www.letgoletpeacecomein.org](http://www.letgoletpeacecomein.org))**

Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse (CSA) Working Together To Heal, Recover, and Enact Change and Understanding to Confront the Effects of CSA Throughout An Adult's Life.

### **National Association for People Abused in Childhood ([www.napac.org.uk](http://www.napac.org.uk))**

NAPAC is a registered charity that provides support and information for people abused in childhood.

### **One in Four ([www.oneinfour.org.uk](http://www.oneinfour.org.uk))**

One in Four is a charity providing support and services to adults who've been sexually abused as children. We provide one to one counselling, groups and workshops, a helpline and an advocacy service based in London UK.

### **Stop in Now ([www.stopitnow.org.uk](http://www.stopitnow.org.uk))**

Their aim is to stop child sexual abuse by encouraging abusers and potential abusers to seek help. They provide adults with the information they need to recognise worrying behaviour in themselves or others, and with the confidence to take responsible action when they suspect that something is wrong.

### **Survivors UK ([www.survivorsuk.org](http://www.survivorsuk.org))**

For over twenty years, they have been providing information, support and counselling for men who have been raped or sexually abused. Thousands of men contact them each year.

### **This Tangled Web ([www.thistangledweb.co.uk](http://www.thistangledweb.co.uk))**

This Tangled Web was established in February 2010 when one survivor of childhood sexual abuse made it her mission to let others know that you are not alone. More so that there is help, support and understanding available to them. The website offers a wide selection of information, links and support on many topics which surround CSA.

### **Unity & Hope ([www.unityhope.co.uk/](http://www.unityhope.co.uk/))**

This grass roots project seeks to address the lack of appropriate long term, specialist support services for adult survivors.