



Guernsey Adolescent Smoke-free Project

To: All Media
From: Alun Williams, Chairperson GASP
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MEDIA RELEASE

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GASP'S message goes global

ALL MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND A SPECIAL ASSEMBLY AT BEECHWOOD SCHOOL ON THURSDAY 11 DECEMBER AT 10.30 TO CELEBRATE THE STAFF CHANGEOVER AT GASP.

Two new faces will be communicating Guernsey's smokefree message to the island's young people. Vidya Amey and Sarah Brown have taken over from Di Lawrence and Karen Le Marchant who over the past four years, have been delivering GASP's lessons to the youth of the island. Vidya and Sarah will bring a range of skills, qualities and experiences to GASP. Vidya explains,

When I first saw GASP while surfing online on my little island, Mauritius, I couldn't help thinking how lucky the young people of Guernsey were to have easy access to information about the dangers of smoking. I sincerely believe that Alun, Di and Karen have done a great job in educating the young people and I feel honoured to be part of the team today. I have taught both at University and Secondary level and I intend to use that experience to build on the fantastic work that has already been achieved. I am also hoping that the various people and cultures that I have come across while travelling the world will bring innovative ideas to GASP. I'll be focusing on giving an international dimension to GASP. I intend to help the young people of Guernsey to keep on cultivating a smokefree attitude but I would also like to go one step further by encouraging them to be the harbingers of a smokefree environment in different countries of the world. It's not only about developing the need in young people to lead healthy lives but it's also about nurturing their sense of pride in what they could represent in the world and about what they could do to achieve such recognition for a right cause.

Sarah has already worked in Youth Centres and is glad to be building on that experience:

As a local person I have for many years been aware of GASP's position as a world leader in smoking cessation education. I am, therefore, delighted to have been given an opportunity to work with our youngsters. Our education programme is a wonderful mixture of sound, up-to-date, scientific evidence delivered in a fun, relevant and informal manner

As a parent of a child with a learning disability I am particularly looking forward to enhancing our teaching methods to reach those individuals who find the classroom environment challenging. In addition, to my GASP work, I am also a Youth Worker at the North Youth Centre. This extends my understanding and experience of working with Guernsey's young people. Being smoke-free is the most effective way to improve the health (and wealth!) of our population and I am honoured to be part of GASP'S work in this campaign.

Di has thoroughly enjoyed her work with GASP:

GASP is a very special Guernsey institution and it has been a real pleasure to be involved in such a successful organisation. In my four years I have been privileged to witness a sea change in the community's attitude to smoking. Amongst young people in particular it has been great that so many have made up their own mind to turn away from smoking. There are still all sorts of challenges, not least to help even more young people not take up smoking but I'm sure Guernsey's young people will continue to respond positively to our message.

Di Lawrence, the former GASP's Manager will be continuing her work as she is moving on to the Health Promotion Unit in a cancer prevention role. She remains aware that there is one particular development that would make a big difference to GASP's smokefree message.

We really want to see Guernsey be the first jurisdiction to introduce a smoking ban in cars where children are passengers. What a great message that would give to our young people that Guernsey really means business about going smoke-free.

Alun Williams, Chairperson, is pleased to see that GASP will continue to have such high quality staff presenting its message.

We have always had really great people work for us at GASP. They have been passionate about getting their message across, but more importantly, they make sure that the message is delivered in a way that is well-received by young people. Vidya and Sarah have only been with us a short while but they have already demonstrated that they have all the qualities that we need to carry on being effective in making Guernsey smokefree.

All members of the media are welcome to attend a special assembly at Beechwood school on Thursday 11 December at 10.30 to celebrate the staff changeover at GASP.

For more information please contact Alun Williams at awilliams@education.gov.gg or telephone 710821