



## Christmas 2014 Newsletter

Hello lovely members!

It's that time of year again: the days are getting shorter and colder, the queues are getting longer and your bank account has probably taken a bit of a bashing! One thing we're sure hasn't changed though is your constant busyness. And while others are looking forward to a break, you're no doubt working a great deal over the next few weeks. We hope your rota allows for some rest and festivity amidst this busy time and the ward is starting to feel lovely and christmasy. And we hope you're building up a healthy collection of Quality Streets, Celebrations, Roses, Heroes and other sweet gifts from patients and their visitors!

We think you're amazing! Heroic, caring staff like you make all the difference to patients' experience of the ward, especially when they're particularly missing being at home with friends and family. We'd like to add to the thanks we hope you're already receiving with a huge thank you from us: **THANK YOU!**



# Star Wardsy Publications

Star Wards has had a really productive and exciting year. Here are a few resources and publications we've developed for you:

- **Ward Stars** – A validation and professional development scheme for Healthcare Assistants. Ward Stars helps make explicit those aspects of HCAs' work particularly valued by mental health inpatients. The process is structured around seven 'Stars' which are each focused on key themes of therapeutic inpatient care. [www.wardstars.org](http://www.wardstars.org)
- **Brief Encounters** – We did a big rewrite of TalkWell to make it more relevant for staff in general hospitals supporting patients who are also in emotional crisis. We've heard that Brief Encounters is also being used by new-starters, students, support staff and anyone else who would like an accessible summary of the main mental health conditions and some top tips on having supportive, empathetic conversations with the people you care for. [www.brief-encounters.org](http://www.brief-encounters.org)
- **A new Star Wards site!** We've given our internet home a massive makeover. It's a lot more colourful, accessible, navigable and in addition to lots and lots of practical and inspiring resources, there's loads more pics of Marion's support dog Buddy! We hope you find the new site both easy on the eye and ultra-useful.
- **Wardipedia.org** – Not exactly brand-spanking-new now but we're always adding new stuff to this online, collaborative compendium. The website is a huge collection of ideas and great ward examples of providing imaginative, therapeutic inpatient mental health care. It's structured around seven domains, represented by the acronym IMAGINE: Imagination, Mindfulness, Activities, Generosity, Involvement, Neighbours, Empathy. [www.wardipedia.org](http://www.wardipedia.org)

# The Guardian Christmas Appeal



We're thrilled and deeply grateful to have been chosen as one of The Guardian's Christmas Appeal 2014 charities! We're even more thrilled that mental health wards have been given this positive national recognition. As you know, we promote small changes which have a massive impact on patients, staff and visitors. We're simply the catalyst. Heroic, creative, caring staff like you adopt and adapt these ideas to everyone's benefit.

This year the appeal is raising money for nine amazing UK charities in the field of mental health, including Star Wards! There was a gorgeous opening piece in the Guardian a couple of weeks back about Star Wards and one of our members – the outstanding Harrison House in Grimsby. Buddy is the star of the article!! Read all about [“The Buddy Effect” here](#). There has been a really enthusiastic response about animals on (and off) wards and CQC and the Department of Health have confirmed that pets are indeed allowed on wards, provided this is in line with Trust policies and meets patients' needs. Our [Wardipedia feature on animals](#) is bursting with practical ideas for helping patients have contact with animals. As ever, we'd love to have your examples, and also photos for our [Animal Magic page](#).

The other Guardian Christmas Appeal charities are: Centre for Mental Health, CoolTan Arts, Kidstime Foundation, MAC-UK, Mind, Rethink Mental Illness, Samaritans and Gardening Leave. You can read all about this year's charities [here](#).

## A Message from the Star Wards Team

[Click here to view the video](#)

“Seeing the Guardian Christmas Appeal has Star Wards on the same page as the wonderful Gardening Leave has a particular resonance for me. I am a former “army brat” - my dad was a soldier for 26 years. I am delighted that Star Wards stands shoulder to shoulder with this brilliant charity.” ~ *Geoff Brennan, Inpatient Care Project Manager*

“I’m so pleased to see that Samaritans are a Guardian Christmas Appeal charity. It is awe-inspiring how they attract and keep 17,000 amazing volunteers as empathetic, non-judgemental, good-humoured, kind listeners, enabling us to contact them 24/7. And not just by phone! I think I’ve used every permutation of their services (phone, text, email, visit) apart from their groovy festival branch!” ~ *Marion Janner, CEO*

“As a teenager I spent most of my free time hanging around on streets aimlessly with a bunch of friends. We didn’t call ourselves a gang or consider ourselves excluded but that’s how we felt. Luckily I had enough self-motivation and good role models around me to help get me on a constructive path. MAC-UK are an awesome that recognise that this kind of behaviour is complex and very refreshingly put mental health at the heart of solutions.” ~ *Nic Higham, Inpatient Care Project Manager*

[Please donate](#)

Many thanks to Guardian readers, and to everyone who has donated already or thinking about donating, enabling us to continue supporting the brilliant work of inpatient staff. Of course, it’s not just about money: the appeal is sending a package of hope and recognition. And the response to the issue of animals on wards has been so strong.

Please please send us your examples of great ward practices so that we can celebrate and share these with the Star Wards community. In particular, we’d be really grateful for examples of therapeutic practice on CAMHS wards as we’re developing some lovely new resources for everyone involved with the wards – young patients, staff, family and friends. We’re keen to present the experience of being on a CAMHS ward as one that is certainly tough but full of positive, even unique opportunities.

Members help make Star Wards what it is. So if you’re not already a member, please sign up here. Whatever you’re working over the next few weeks and whatever you’re doing to celebrate Christmas (or not), have a wonderful one as well as a very happy New Year.

***Love Marion, Buddy, Nic and Geoff***