

Chairman's Introduction to the Annual Report 2002-2003

The Watford African Caribbean Association has been in existence for the past twenty-seven years providing services to the African Caribbean people of Watford and surrounding areas. During the period many semi-autonomous groups were established each providing a specific service to the community and pursuing their own goals. Together much had been achieved but much, much more is needed if we are able to be a really vibrant community achieving, if not all then most, of our aims and objectives.

Many of the structures put in place years ago in an attempt to meet the needs of the community have been changed. For example, the community Development officer provides advice on many issues that had previously not been addressed. Agencies such as Watford Council for Voluntary Services (WCVS) and Watford Race Equality Council (WREC) provide training and advice in law, racial discrimination and equality issues.

The limited funding received from Watford Council, members yearly subscriptions and the Associations fundraising efforts all put together do not effectively provide the necessary resources to do the work needed in the community, for example, providing financial help to the supplementary school, the Under Fives club, TACEP and others.

Many members of the Association have attended training courses run by WCVS and other agencies geared to provide skills to meet future needs. To keep in line with the present Service Level agreement (SLA) between Watford Council and the Association, a Bespoke Training programme on Employment Law has been arranged for all trustees on June 11th to 18th this year, other interested members of the association are also asked to join in.

As a result of the SLA, it is now envisaged that very soon all members of the management group, presently known as the Executive committee, will be responsible for the staff we employ.

The many agencies providing help and support over the years will still be essential to the future of the Association and a closer working relationship should be fostered. An important event noteworthy of reporting was the visit of Avani Modasia, Chief Executive of the NCVS, to one of our general meetings last year. We talked about the Watford Compact, which is a local agreement between Watford Council and the voluntary service sector. This is a real partnership which we have signed up to.

The Resource Centre Project, initiated by the Executive Committee some years ago to find a suitable venue from which to operate all our projects, seems to be on stream. Work is now in process with Watford Council, the Peace Project, Holywell Tenants and Residents Association, ourselves and others in establishing and launching the Holywell Community Centre Programme which will either be a new or refurbished building.

Many of the services to the public have been functioning at a low key for many months. This was as a result of the unfortunate long-term illness of two members of staff at the office. One has now returned to work.

Many thanks to the other full-time office staff Enid Saunders and the vice Chair Althea McLean without whose help our work would probably have suffered badly. Thanks also to Watford Council for funding and other support.

In conclusion I would like to acknowledge the patience and understanding of everyone who stood by us in difficult times. Can I also draw attention to the future of our Association which will need commitment from all our members, agencies and individuals who seek to promote our worthy cause.

Arthur McLean

The Watford African Caribbean Association Secretary's Report

One of the aims of the Watford African Caribbean Association is to represent the interests of the African and Caribbean Community of Watford.

It endeavors to fulfil this role through the delivery of services in areas that affect the lives of the Community. This includes educational and social issues and working in partnership with statutory and voluntary agencies to promote and address the concerns of our Community.

The past year has seen the Association experiencing operational changes. The main change is the introduction of the **Service Level Agreement (SLA)** with our main funder - **Watford Council**. This new funding structure will have a profound effect on our future operations.

The Association must wholeheartedly embrace these inevitable changes, as they will further move the Association to higher levels of accountability and professionalism on behalf of the Community and the funders.

Recently, due to ill health, staffing levels at our Office in Clarendon Road has presented the Association with many challenges. However, we would like to thank **Enid Saunders** and **Clara Nugent (Volunteer)** for their unstinting service in keeping the Office functioning through these difficult times. We are pleased to welcome back David Lake (Development Worker) and wish Bernie Harewood (Admin Support) a quick return.

We extend thanks to Mr & Mrs McLean and Mrs. Pearlene McPharlene for their dedication in providing support and encouragement to all Staff and Members of the Association. In particular, for continuing to foster good working relationships with all agencies and organisations that work in partnership with our Association.

Socially, we have had a very busy and successful year. Events include:

- **Jamaica's 40th Independence.** This was a highly successful occasion with some 180 people in attendance including **Mayor Dorothy Thornhill**, Tracey Blackwood, **the First Secretary at the Jamaican High Commission**. The Day featured a packed programme that kept to the script – particularly the Drama Group!!! The Thanksgiving Service with the Gospel Choir. The Jamaican Exhibition played a large part in the success of the day and generated memories, heated discussion and pride. A Very BIG **'Thank you'** to everyone who worked tirelessly in designing, building and displaying the room and its contents. **See Appendix 1**
- **Black History Month.** Although activities were muted in Watford, small-scale events were scheduled, culminating in the Quiz Night at the Holywell Community Centre. A good evening was had by all and thanks to the Staff of the Supplementary School for organising the evening.

- **End of Year Celebrations.** For the first time, this annual fundraising event took place at the Bill Everett Centre. Overall, the evening was well attended and the venue and staff contributed to making the evening very enjoyable. Thanks to everyone whose contributed to make this event successful and as usual, the catering was of a very high standard.
- **Men's Health Day.** Through an under-spend in the *Single Regeneration Budget*, the Association worked in partnership with The West Watford Information Shop to stage this event at the Holywell Community Centre. The day was very informative and highlighted issues around Men's Health. Special thanks are extended to **Dr Chris Hiley (Director, Prostate Cancer Charity)** for her openness and enthusiasm in addressing the audience on this most serious condition. Thanks also to the **Mrs A McLean OBE** for excellent Chairing of the day, the **Civic Mayor - Sheila Jones** and her **Consort**, to **Patricia Maunder (Health Visitor-PCT)**, **Enid Saunders (Co-ordinator)**, **Comfort Tetsola (Exercise Tutor)**, **Steve Price (Tai Chi Instructor)**, and **Amanda Copstick (Volunteer)** for their expertise and hard work in the organising and managing the day. Special Thanks for the support to all whom attended. **See Appendix 2**
- **Courses.** We were very fortunate to have the **Community Development Agency (CDA) HARVEST** run free courses in the summer and autumn, at Westfield Technological College for Black & Ethnic Minorities. These were well attended and extremely beneficial to all those who participated. Other courses attended included the CVS and Herts County.

As we move to an era of Service Level Agreements and complexities around new funding, we must continue to maintain our high standard of service that we provide to our Community.

The future holds anxieties around our present usage of the Holywell Community Centre. New arrangements and discussions are being held to decide the future of the building from which we deliver many of our services. It is imperative that we as a Community engage in those discussions so as to secure our use in the future or through the Resource Centre Project acquire our own building.

As Secretary of the Association, I take this opportunity to thank all Members of the **Executive Committee** for their sterling work throughout the year.

On behalf of the Association, I also take this opportunity to thank all our Members and friends of the Association, who have supported both our work and our events throughout the year. Many thanks to Pearline McFarlane, Madeleine Lake and Althea McLean, who deputised in '*minute taking*' in my absence at meetings.

Finally, we thank all at **Watford Council** for their support and advice and look forward to continuing a good working relationship.

Sandra Fullerton

African Caribbean Association Treasurer's Report

Once again we have come to the end of another year. Looking back as a Treasurer I can say we have just about broken even when we compare with last year. For me, that is not good enough. I had hoped that the year 2002-2003 would have seen us in a much better place than we are in now.

The membership has remained steady at thirty strong, however, we all know that the goodwill towards our organisation extends far beyond that.

With twelve fully paid-up fees and eighteen juniors or seniors, we collected £120 and £90 which equals £210.

Once again, my thanks to the members of the Travel Club and the interest from their savings will be added to our account. However, that sum will not be recorded this year because the interest is calculated in June, after the date of the publishing of this report.

The highlight of our fundraising year was Jamaica's Fortieth Independence Celebrations which took place on August the 10th 2002. This wonderful event, for which many helped to make it possible and which was enjoyed by all, produced a profit of just over £2300.

As agreed by the Executive, two charities in Jamaica would share half of whatever profit was made. Thus, £550 was sent to the Home of Charlotte Children's Foundation in Montego Bay and an equal amount went to the Jamaica Voluntary Group representing the Spanish Town hospital. Once again, my heartfelt thanks to all members who made that event possible.

On December the 28th we held our end of year celebrations at the Bill Everett Centre. Again, this was another enjoyable occasion and one we hope to repeat this December. However, because of the location and other circumstances we found our outlay much greater. Nevertheless, we made £426 profit which we shared with the Supplementary School (£213 each).

Our main task as members is still to increase our membership and maintain our operating cash flow. This point I hope to build on at the Annual General meeting on June the 29th.

I would like to add that the year 2003-2004 membership fee is now due and the AGM on the 29th is as good a time as any to pay up.

To be part of the team had been a pleasure and if members think they would like me to carry on in this capacity I would be pleased to do so.

Tom Jackson

Development Worker's Annual Report

I have just used my fingers to do a “finger year” count and have established beyond a shadow of doubt that this report is my 9th annual report in my capacity as the African and Caribbean Development Worker. I find that hard to believe! For someone who suffers from a chronic and almost manic dislike of anything having to do with administration, this is an achievement - that is if I have the ‘stick-to-it-iveness’ to complete this. If I do, I will definitely give myself a pat on the back!

This report I hope will be my last such report. Right now I sincerely hope that it will be the last report I will have to produce as a fully employed person. I daresay, to the chagrin of my family, that it may not be the final-final report I produce because I still hope to be actively engaged in community work.

You may therefore deduce by now that I hope to retire - finally - at the end of this year. My family is hoping that this will be “third time lucky” for me. I hope I do not disappoint them. My children hope that this will mean that I will have more time to visit with them and my grandchildren. Although I love them to distraction, do I have the patience? Time will tell.

In the past when faced with imminent retirement from a job, I found myself looking back on my time in that particular job as objectively as I could to identify or recognise the ghosts that I may be leaving behind and facing up to them. In the past I found this very important if I wished to have peace of mind. By facing up to them I can only then exorcise them.

This report will differ from the previous eight. I therefore crave your indulgence in having to take you on a journey through the past nine years - almost.

It was in October 1994 when I took on the job as African and Caribbean Development Worker, based in a very pokey room at 15 Harwoods Road, West Watford. My job description was extremely vague to put it mildly. There was no ‘tradition’ in the post apart from compulsory attendance at meetings called by Watford Council, my employer. Although at my interview issues and challenges facing or affecting the African and Caribbean Community were explored, I was given almost carte blanche the task of developing strategies to address these needs and challenges. In other words I had a great degree of autonomy in determining my work programme as long as I kept my management group and Town Hall informed.

In the early years, in my capacity as Development Worker I was extremely fortunate to have as close associates a number of extremely proactive colleagues both in the Community and at the Council, whose support and encouragement was and in some ways still is, priceless. Any success I may have achieved in this job I owe in no small measure to their support. I would like here to give especial thanks to Albert Tucker - my earliest point of contact at the Town Hall. His style of management engendered confidence, purpose and constructive engagement and dialogue. I was also fortunate in being able to draw on wider contacts in Watford and Hertfordshire, whom I could depend upon for

support in the implementation of the strategies we at the African Caribbean Association Project employed or developed to address the needs of the African and Caribbean Community. My predecessor and others in the African Caribbean Association had already, or before my time, made very useful contacts with most of the statutory bodies. These were of immense importance. However, there was a severe price to pay. This was a price that the Management Group needs to bear in mind, that is, the degree to which the Development Worker, if he/she is not good at time management, can become terribly over stretched. Unfortunately I did. I found myself attending two to three meetings a day and almost every evening to the detriment of the administration aspect of the job. All this coincided with a very proactive approach to issues around race by the then Chief Executive of Watford, supported by the then ruling Party which resulted in a systematic challenge to racism and homophobic behaviour. This challenge, which was in theoretical and sociological terms revolutionary for Watford, influenced developments in bodies tangential to the Council such as the police, education and social services. This was a time when the relationship with the Council and Development Workers was clear and unequivocal.

In today's speak our responsibility directly to the Council was to:

--promote the development of Watford Council's vision within the African and Caribbean Communities.

--feedback to the Council the views of the Communities.

It would be fair to say that this period of time was very challenging. A number of crucial initiatives were developed, notably the Supplementary School initiative and The African and Caribbean Elders Project both of which owed much to the Council for their development. The positive relationship between the Project the Council and myself was a defining factor. But time changes. From an open and transparent Council, Watford degenerated with changes in personnel at the highest level to the point where structured engagement in a supportive framework with the Black and Ethnic Minority Voluntary sector and Associated Groups within that Sector almost disappeared.

It is refreshing to note that after a significant period in the wilderness, the new administration, coupled with the appointment of some new officers in crucial areas, sees partnership working as once again a priority. I sincerely hope that the legislative will and vision is matched by the executive's will and competence. Perhaps I may yet look back and envy my successor! I sincerely hope so.

When I eventually leave this post, there will inevitably be conflicting views about my stewardship. I really hope there will be an in depth analysis of how I carried out my role of Development Worker, hopefully learning from both my mistakes and successes - if any. The Project has developed extensively from the original humble beginnings at Harwoods Road. There have developed a cadre of people whose commitment to the needs of the African and Caribbean Community is fantastic. In the running of the various projects and interest groups, volunteers abound with justifiable pride in their achievements. I feel proud to have been part of this development and consciousness and can leave with the realisation that there are individuals with the vision and commitment to support developments targeting our community. Let us not be complacent, however.

There will always be challenges to be faced, support to be given to both the young and the not so young. However, I feel confident that there exists a framework in which this can take place. At the same time, I hope that my successor will have greater success in encouraging younger folk to become actively engaged in the various projects and interest groups.

I sincerely believe that over the years The African and Caribbean Community Services has touched, for the better, the lives of a tremendous number of people both young and not so young. I know for a fact that the various projects that have and are targeting young people have been tremendously successful. One of the things that brings a smile to my face at times is the images of the young people I have worked with over the past nine years, knowing that a significant number of them have made and are making tremendous strides in life. For that we should be very proud.

One of the extremely encouraging developments over the years is the increasing numbers of people that have continued to use our various services. The membership of TACEP continues to increase. The pupils attending our Supplementary School continue to be at a level that makes it very viable. Over the past two years I have consciously been disengaging myself from the day to day management of this project. This has been extremely painless in that the three key players that have been with me from the outset have a sense of ownership which is refreshing, with the confidence to be proactive in encouraging others to become actively engaged in its running.

As I said at the very beginning of this report it was going to be different. I hope to expand on this at the AGM. I have deliberately only touched on a few of the initiatives targeting our community. The annual report will further show an extent of what we do. What it will not show, however, is the positive role that the African Caribbean Association and The African and Caribbean Community Services play in engaging in debate and dialogue with Watford Council, Hertfordshire County Council and the various Statutory Bodies in respect of the quality of service delivery to our community. Officers of The African and Caribbean Community Services and volunteers from the African Caribbean Association are members of various committees and interest groups outside the community, but whose deliberations affect our community. These meetings although time consuming, play a vital role in influencing and determining policy both locally and regionally.

I look forward to further expanding on the above at the Annual General Meeting.

David Lake

The African Caribbean Resource Centre Project Chair's Report

The concluding section of the report to last years Annual General meeting set out the steps necessary to make the Resource Centre a reality.

- A feasibility study looking at the state of the building.
- A business plan looking at
- Capacity building
- Strategy

We reaffirmed our commitment to working with Watford Council and the local community to develop a Centre that would be jointly managed, economically viable, meet our long term needs and would address local needs and aspirations.

A year has passed and there is the need to report on progress, if any, and to see whether objectives have been met.

The African Caribbean Association has entered into structural and meaningful discussions with Watford Council, Holywell Tenants and Residents Association and the peace Centre Committee. Several meetings have been held and a feasibility study has been commissioned by Quartet Architects. The task for the architects is to look at the Centre with two options in mind:

- Refurbishment of the existing building.
- Building a new Centre.

As a first stage all current users were asked to complete a proforma setting out both current and possible future needs.

To date drawings are being prepared and it is envisaged these will be completed by the end of May; a business plan looking at finance management will follow. A steering group made up of members from the four partnership groups has been set up and a Memorandum of Intent signed and confirming our commitment to work together is to follow.

I can almost hear you say – How much is this all going to cost? Where is the money coming from? The cost of the feasibility study and subsequent consultation with local residents is being met with a grant from the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB).

I am unable at this point to provide more details but all will be revealed when the Business Plan is completed. However, rest assured you will be kept informed and updated at regular intervals.

On another level a group of members have been meeting socially each Saturday night at the Holywell Centre where we talk, listen to music and play games in a friendly atmosphere. Why don't you join us? You might find that you actually enjoy it!

With fingers crossed I am writing that, after years of meeting, talking and hoping, it appears that there might be a shaft of light at the end of the tunnel. We continue to meet regularly and to work towards our stated objective, and at long last I can report some progress.

We remain focussed, we remain positive.

Althea McLean OBE

African Caribbean Community Services Management Group

The Management Group continues to function, however, due to circumstances beyond our control, we have not met as frequently as envisaged.

The focus for the next Management Group is to prepare to be employers of the staff engaged in providing services to our communities. This will be a huge undertaking with special responsibilities for managing staff among others. We are currently looking at the issues that this departure will mean for us:

- Putting required processes and practices in place.
- Developing a strategy for managing staff.
- Formulating relevant policies.
- Widening our funding base.
- Partnership working.
- Training.

The tasks ahead are wide-ranging but not beyond our capabilities or abilities. We aim to continue the thrust to widen our influence and provide quality services in a culturally sensitive and challenging way.

Althea McLean OBE

Sickle Cell and Thalassaemia Support Group Report

The Sickle Cell and Thalassaemia Support Group are as dedicated as ever to keeping the community focused on the problems involved for sicklers and their families.

We are now on a trial period to change our meeting times from the last Thursday in the month to Wednesdays and have made them bi-monthly, which seems to be working well.

The 2002 Annual General Meeting and Awareness Day was very informative and included members participation in questions and answers.

We continue to be involved with the United Charity Bazaar in October and we are seeking help and items for the coming event.

Our main focus this year will be on the Awareness Day on July the 4th. We will meet at 12:30pm for refreshments and the meeting will begin at 1pm. Speakers will include: Dr. Boret, consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist from Watford General Hospital, and Ms. Glynis Thornton, Lupus representative, a speaker from the Sickle Cell Society and our own counsellor Mrs. Delores Smith.

Clara Nugent

The African Caribbean Elders Project Report

Background

This project provides weekly activities for the over fifties at the Holywell Community Centre. Younger people are welcome to participate irrespective of colour, race or gender. The Luncheon Club is now in its eighth year and has progressed very well with an average of thirty people attending on Tuesdays. There is regular attendance of clients from one of the Care Homes in Watford.

Social Events

Frequent shopping trips are organised to numerous markets in London to buy cultural food. This is enjoyed by everyone. Visits also occur to the Theatre, other Luncheon Clubs and places of interest. We aim to organised at least three fundraising events for the year. Friends from other Luncheon Clubs, relatives and friends from the community are also invited. Our Christmas dinner is a yearly event when people from Social Services, the M.P for Watford, Councillors, the Civic Mayor and other dignitaries are invited. The elected Mayor of Watford, Mrs. Dorothy Thornhill was our guest speaker last year.

Mental Alertness

We run: weekly Keep Fit classes, weekly Tai Chi classes provided by Steve Price, weekly Swimming classes at Watford Swimming Baths and Computer Technology Word Processing. Members are encouraged to do regular exercises to keep their limbs mobilised, especially Arthritis sufferers.

Talks from Health Professionals

On: Diabetes, Arthritis, Healthy Eating, High Blood Pressure, Care of the Feet which includes checks by a Chiropodist once monthly which is funded by clients and Prostate Cancer which was covered by a recent Mans Health Day Seminar.

Safety in the Home

Crime prevention regarding security in the home and the importance of fire alarms.

Transport

The WREC Community Care mini bus was officially handed-down to Round About Transport. This provides transportation from door-to-door, which allows members to attend, especially the less able-bodied. Our sincere thanks to Mr. Paisley, our driver.

Bereavement

During 2002-2003 three of our members have departed this life after long illnesses. Ms. Saunders, our co-ordinator and our members have supported their families unstintingly.

We encourage members and friends to continue their loyalty and support to the Luncheon Club if it is to progress and function, hoping that in the future, we will have premises of our own. In conclusion I would like to say a big thank you to Ms. Saunders, the Catering Staff, the Committee, the Members and the Friends who have supported us through the year and who have also nominated me Chair for TACEP.

Cynthia Dixon

Watford African/Caribbean Supplementary School Report

This Annual Report marks the 8th Anniversary of the African Caribbean Supplementary School (ACSS) in Watford. In Watford, as elsewhere, consideration had long been given to the need for a Supplementary School.

We were reminded at a recent conference on education of Black Children that way back in 1971, Bernard Coard produced his book *“How the West Indian Child is Made Educationally Subnormal in the British School System”*. This very much started a debate that was as relevant in Watford as elsewhere, as it related to the educational underachievement of black children in Britain.

Alas, in 1995 the position of our children had not changed and it is arguable that the position had gotten worse over the intervening years. However, in Watford, it was not until **David Lake** took on the role of *Community Development Worker* that meaningful action was taken and ACSS developed.

There are still significant challenges ahead; as was reported at the London Conference, Black children are still falling further behind over time. The Hertfordshire position is still in need of improvement.

In the context of what can be seen as gloom, it is equally true to say that Black children who have participated consistently over a period of time in the ACSS, have performed better in their examinations than they may have done without it's support. The feedback we have received from some of our past students is a testimony to the positive role played in our young people's development:

- ❖ *“Having attended the African Caribbean Supplementary School from its beginnings, I am one of the fortunate ones. Despite the fact that it meant going to school six days a week, I have benefited immensely in the form of lots of support, encouragement and building one's confidence. I feel that attending the School gave me the determination to achieve my goals and for that I will always be grateful.” Gemma Johnson (Past Student)*
- ❖ *“The African Caribbean Supplementary School has helped me a lot over the last couple of years doing my GCSEs in Maths, Science and English. The individual tuition helped as there were small teaching groups and more time to understand harder parts of the core subjects. Also learning about my culture was interesting and considered necessary to me because it wasn't taught at my school.” Leon Saunders (Past Student)*
- ❖ *“I started at the African Caribbean Supplementary School when it first opened in 1995. I found it useful when I had GCSE course work and homework that I didn't understand. It was also interesting to learn more about Black History and to meet other African Caribbean people of my own age.” Claudia Osborne (Past Student)*

Children still at the School are also seeing the value of its contribution:

- ❖ *“The African Caribbean Supplementary School (Saturday School), is a really good place to come too. What I really enjoy about it is that there are no bullies at the school and everyone is the same. Everyone are friends, even the teachers. Maths is easy and English is hard, but Ken my teacher is helping me with it and tells me all the time that I can do better. When I try hard, he says I can try harder and when I try even harder than that he says I can still try a lot harder because there is no limit to education. He must be right because my parents says my English work has improved.” Alex Elliott aged 10 (Current student)*

In the last year, we have seen the qualifications of the longest serving young person to participate in the School – **Gemma Johnson** - and we take this opportunity to salute her achievements. As Gemma has already stated above, she has attended the School from the very first day and on a regular basis until the completion of her GCSEs in summer 2002.

She achieved **11 A-C grades** including **2A***, **5A’s** **3B’s** and **1C**. Whilst her achievement is primarily a reflection of the hard work and dedication of Gemma, her participation in the School has been helpful.

Young people face a hostile environment that often categorises the African Caribbean person in very negative terms. What the **ACSS** does is to promote the personal, cultural and broader educational development of our young people, in a way that is consistent with what is taking place in mainstream schools.

We believe that with confidence in their own abilities, and greater levels of self-awareness, our children will develop academically in their mainstream schools. There is equal significance given to preparing young people for their long-term future and to become rounded members of our and the wider Community. We aim to support the development of our young people in a way that enables them to thrive even in a negative environment because they are self aware and confident.

After eight years, the **ACSS** is now well established but its future is by no means secure. In 1995 there were a number of people who came together and provided the energy and the drive to get the school going. Whilst a number of these people are still involved in the School, we are also very pleased to have been joined by **Grace West**, as a regular volunteer. Over the last year – we have appreciated enormously the contribution she has already made to the School. Overall, there has not been the continued flow of volunteers that we would anticipate for the long-term success of the School.

“We are now very much in need of new blood and this report is an appeal for further support”

We take this opportunity also to acknowledge the significant contribution that **David Lake** has made to the development and maintenance of the School since its existence. Due to ill health, **David** was away from work for an extended period of time. He has now returned to work, but we know he is not yet back to full fitness; we wish him well for a full recovery. **David** has also indicated that he his unlikely to continue in his present role after the end of the year, and we would therefore also like to extend our ‘Thanks’ whilst he is still with us.

The last year, despite its difficulties has been one of achievements. Some of our achievements are outlined below:

- More exam success - not only was Gemma successful last year, but **Nicky Agra** was also successful in his GCSE examinations and we equally congratulate him and wish him well for the future.
- We have consistently participated in the Watford Carnival and did so again last year. We had a stall in the park and raised valuable funding to support our activities. We propose again to participate in the Carnival this year. Volunteers needed.
- We organised two successful quiz nights last year - one in May and another in October to celebrate Black History Month. These have helped in our fundraising efforts, but more significantly, they brought us together as, families and as a community for great enjoyment. This type of event has indicated the level of fun and enjoyment that we can have together where music is not the centre of our world.
- For the second year running we have joined together with our umbrella body, the **African Caribbean Association**, to organise the Old Year's dance. The event was held at the Bill Everett Centre and was a great success. The event raised £213.00 for the School. This year we are already planning the next event, which will be on **27th December 2003** again at the Bill Everett Centre. Make sure that you put this date in your diaries and tell others too.
- Last year was the 40th Anniversary of Jamaica's Independence and our young people joined in the spirit of the occasion and wrote a number of poems and produced other works of art that contributed to a very positive event marking the occasion at the **Holywell Community Centre**.
- **Clive Saunders** and **David Lake** are now members of the *Watford Educational Support and Development Trust*, supporting the development of educational initiatives for young people in Watford.
- We organised a Drug Awareness event for our young people with Hertfordshire County Council. The young people were also involved in a film about drug awareness.
- We participated in a number of training events including, study skills, fundraising and classroom management organised through the SRB initiative.

This year we did not have our Christmas concert and a significant reason was the lack of help to organise the activities. We very much hope to be able to rectify this position next year as, in the past, this has been a very well supported community event which provides an outlet for the creative abilities of the young people involved in the School.

This leads us to urge any reader of this report to do **any or all** of the following:

- **Get involved** – help to teach, support, mentor our young people or just in the overall running of the school;
- **Tell others** about our existence;
- **Support** our activities such as our quiz nights;
- **Donate** funds we are always in need;
- **Encourage** parents to send their children and to participate themselves; and

- **Another Way?** If you feel that you can support us in some other way, we will greatly appreciate it.

In conclusion, the continued success of the School is dependent on, *the young people, our teachers, helpers, parents and our supporters in the community.*

We would like to extend our thanks to all those who have supported us over the last year – do continue to support us in any way that you can.

We need also to extend thanks to **Hertfordshire County Council**, the **WESD Trust** and to **Watford Council** for their support.

Thanks also to **Westfield School** who provide our accommodation.

Enid Saunders has celebrated achieving the not insignificant 60th year of existence this month. We congratulate her achievement and we salute the contribution she has and continues to make to the School.

Our teachers and regular classroom helpers at the School are:

- ❖ **Ken Agra**
- ❖ **Theo Cronje**
- ❖ **Grace West**
- ❖ **Marcia Johnson**

The Committee

Clive Saunders

The South Area Ethnic Minority Achievement Centre Head's Report

Members of the Association will know that over the years the work of the EMA Centre has been affected by a number of major reorganisations brought about by government changes to funding. The past year has been untroubled by such upheavals and we can report good progress in our work. Feed-back from schools about the work of staff supporting the achievement of African Caribbean pupils has been extremely positive (Learning Mentors, Teachers and Bicultural Teaching Assistants alike). It is clear that the work of ACAP staff is making a difference to the achievement of the pupils they support.

Having said that, there are major concerns nationally and locally about the attainment of some Black Caribbean students at secondary level, particularly boys. The following tables show the **results in Hertfordshire** for Black Caribbean pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2, and at GCSE level.

Summer 2002 Key Stage 1

% of pupils reaching Level 2+ Reading/Writing/Maths

	1 9 9 9	2 0 0 0	2 0 0 1	20 02	No. of Pup ils (200 2)
Blac k Cari bbe an	7 4 / 7 0 / 7 5	8 1 / 8 5 / 8 9	8 2 / 8 1 / 8 8	90 /8 4/ 84	93
L E A - all pu pil s	8 4 / 8 4 / 8 8	8 5 / 8 6 / 9 2	8 6 / 8 6 / 9 2	87 /8 6/ 92	12,6 25

Results at KS1 in the table show a continuing trend of overall improvement for African Caribbean heritage pupils. It should be noted that year to year variations are likely to be statistically unreliable particularly where the overall numbers are small.

Summer 2002 Key Stage 2

% Level 4+ English/Maths

	1999	2000	2001	2002 (CSF targets)	2002 (outcomes)	No. of Pupils 2002
Black Caribbean	62.58	74.5	80.71	83.2	74.2	68
LEA – all pupils	77.5	81.7	80.7		87.9	12726

Results for KS2 in the above table for African Caribbean heritage pupils are very disappointing for 2002 following the upward trend in previous years.

KEY STAGE 4 2002 – GCSE % 5+ A* - C
RESULTS BY ETHNICITY – 1999/2000/2001/2002

	1999	2000	2001	2002			No. of Pupils
				CSF targets	Girls	Overall	
Black Caribbean	36.9	29.9	30.0	46%	48%	43%	1225

rib bea n								
LE A – all pu pils						6 2 %	5 6 %	

Despite the improvement in 2002, the results for African Caribbean heritage pupils in secondary school remain a matter of concern.

The **African Caribbean Networking Group** was set up two years ago to enable several secondary schools, together with the EMA Centre, to share experience of raising the achievement of African Caribbean pupils. Partly as a result of this focus, MECSS held a **Conference** in January for headteachers of schools in Hertfordshire designed to raise awareness and explore strategies for improving achievement. In March the African Caribbean Networking Group invited an education consultant responsible for making a short video, **'Black Pupil Voices'**, to show the video and discuss its use and value. The group will be considering making a similar video with students from local schools in order to focus on the black pupils' experience of schooling.

Watford Minority Ethnic Education Forum has continued to hold regular meetings throughout the year. The Forum welcomes members of all minority ethnic communities. In January a meeting was held with headteachers of local secondary schools to discuss the implementation of schools' race equality policies following the statutory requirement of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. Chaired by Althea McLean, this was a successful meeting which enabled community members and schools to discuss race equality issues in a direct and constructive way. It is hoped that a meeting with headteachers of secondary schools can become a regular annual event. A similar meeting with headteachers of primary schools will be held in July.

To return to the theme of change in the EMA Centre's work, the DfES has recently published a consultation document, **'Aiming High: Raising The Attainment Of Minority Ethnic Pupils'**. (** see below). The intention is to establish a national strategy for raising the attainment of minority ethnic pupils. The document emphasises effective management and whole school policies and includes a section on strategies relating to reducing exclusions and raising African Caribbean pupil achievement. The document also has significant implications for the use of funding which may, once again, lead to a reorganisation of provision from April 2004. I think this is where I came in!

** Consultation is currently taking place and the deadline for responses is May 28th 2003. Here are some examples of the questions to which the DfES would like responses:

What more could the Department (DfES) do to raise the achievement of African Caribbean pupils?

What more could the Department do to reduce exclusions of African Caribbean pupils?

What more should be done to ensure that the school workforce as a whole is equipped with the support, knowledge and skills to close achievement gaps?

What should local authorities' roles be in supporting schools to narrow the achievement gaps?

How might the resource currently allocated through EMAG be used more effectively to underpin a national strategy to raise the achievement of minority ethnic pupils?

Hugh South

Report from the African Caribbean Achievement Project (ACAP) Team

Changes in the Team:

The ACAP team in Watford has seen some changes since last summer term. Sadly in July we said goodbye to **Dayle Johnson**, who left to take up a full time post. His work as a Learning Mentor at St Michael's Catholic High School had considerable impact on the students he mentored.

Amantha Edmead, who worked at Bushey Hall School and Westfield Community Technology College as a Learning Mentor also left us at the end of last term to concentrate on work for her qualification as a Drama Therapist.

Dayle's replacement is **Yemi Dede**, who began mentoring students at St Michael's in January this year. She is also working with a pupil at Chater Junior this term.

A replacement for Amantha will hopefully be recruited soon.

ACA Support Teacher **Adwoa Djan** has moved from Bushey Hall School, where she has supported African Caribbean origin students since 1995. She now supports students at St Michael's Catholic High (where there are increasing numbers of African Caribbean origin students), and at Mount Grace School in Potters Bar. She is also supporting a student at St Joan of Arc School (Rickmansworth) whose first language is French.

Dawn Mapp joined the team in November as a Bi-Cultural Teaching Assistant at Lea Farm Junior School, covering for **Judy Alexander** who is on adoptive leave. Dawn attended the four day Induction Course for new Teaching Assistants run by Herts C.C. last term.

Other team members:

Madeleine Lake - support teacher and co-ordinates the team in the South area : supports pupils at Holywell, Laurance Haines and Lea Farm Junior Schools.

Janet Dodds - support teacher at Westfield CTC and is also teaching a newly arrived Jamaican student at a secondary school in Hemel Hempstead.

Beverley Hughes – instructor supporting students at Bushey Hall School.

Michelle Penny – Bi-Cultural Teaching Assistant supporting pupils at Laurance Haines Primary School. As well as her full time work in school, Michelle has also been following a high level course for Teaching Assistants this year.

Some initiatives this year:

Jamaican 40th Independence Celebrations

The ACAP team were glad to support the excellent exhibition mounted by Sandra Fullerton and Association members during August at the Holywell Community Centre by lending a selection of books by Jamaican origin authors from the EMA Centre Library.

The ACAP Newsletter and Black History Month Quiz

To raise awareness about Black History Month we put together a newsletter for parents and students in the Autumn term but were disappointed in the response. We presented a prize to a student from St Michael's School who was the only person to enter the quiz. We hope that this was not an indication of a lack of interest in Black History Month!

Westfield CTC Year 7 Drama Group

A group of girls directed by sixth-former Mahlon Prince and our Learning Mentor, Amantha, presented their play, 'How Crab Got His Back' to the Infants at Holywell and Laurance Haines. As well as acting the play, the group sang and danced to entertain the children. Their efforts were very well received by the schools.

Visit of 'Mrs Mary Seacole'

Michelle once again took on her very successful role of Mrs Mary Seacole at Laurance Haines and brought to life this famous black Victorian woman for the children in Year 5. She used our excellent resource, the Mary Seacole Trunk, containing authentic Victorian objects that Mary Seacole would have taken with her to the Crimea. We hope that Michelle will be able to visit other schools as Mrs Seacole.

Performance Poetry at Lea Farm Junior School

As part of a series of 'diversity' visits, Madeleine arranged for Valerie Bloom to visit Lea Farm Junior School in November. She performed her poems and ran writing workshops with some classes. Prior to the visit some children took part in a lunchtime poetry club and learnt and practised some of Valerie's poems, which they performed to her and the rest of the school.

'Working Creatively with Conflict' run by LEAP Confronting Conflict (funded by the ACA Project/ MECSS)

Following a very successful training day last summer for all ACAP staff, a further day's training was arranged in January for 17 black male students from three Watford Secondary Schools. The evaluations filled in by the group indicated a high level of satisfaction with the day. For example they said "it opened my mind about conflict", "got me thinking about the alternatives when dealing with conflict", "allowed me to express my ideas and taught me how to react". The students (and staff) also appreciated the excellent lunch cooked by Mrs Enid Saunders and Mrs Pauline Stapleton and the team at TACEP.

Madeleine Lake

ACAP Co-ordinator (South Area)

STOP PRESS!

I am sure that members of the Association will want to know that we are having to say goodbye to Hugh South whose report appears above and who has been Head of the EMA Centre in Watford for over 20 years. He is going on secondment to be the Senior Adviser in MECSS, based at Wheathampstead and working alongside Shanaz Mirza who has just taken up his Adviser's post. This is because Jan Hardy, Head of MECSS, has been seconded to lead the CSF strategy on Behaviour and Achievement from June 1st and his deputy, Mrs Shahla Taheri-White, is taking over his role. Members will remember Hugh's attendance at many 'Education focus' meetings of the Association. Hugh is going to be greatly missed by the staff of the Centre – although we shall still see him from time to time, and I am sure he will maintain a keen interest in the work to raise the achievement of black pupils in Watford.

ACAP support at Westfield Community Technology College Support Teachers Report

There are currently 25 pupils of Caribbean or Mixed heritage at Westfield. Much of the work continues to be raising the profile of the work of ACAP and developing relationships with pupils, parents and teachers. This includes attending parent consultation evenings, faculty meetings and seeking opportunities to put forward issues concerning African Caribbean achievement.

The ACAP has worked very closely with the Ethnic Minority Achievement Support (EMAS) team at Westfield to target Year 11 GCSE pupils who have the potential to achieve 5 or more GCSE grade A*-C. This group included five pupils of African Caribbean origin.

As well as classroom support, weekly coursework and revision tutorials were held after school. Pupil uptake of these sessions was variable, however they did benefit greatly by the support given to complete and improve coursework. They were also encouraged to seek individual help and advice when necessary. Support has also been given to seven pupils in Years 7 to 10.

Our Learning Mentor Amantha Edmead made a very valuable contribution to the support offered to the young people. As you will have read in Madeleine's report, she has now left Watford, but in the Autumn and Spring Terms Amantha worked with a group of year 7 pupils to produce a Black History Month inspired drama presentation which they performed in two Primary schools. This was a great success and generated interest in possible future Black History Month events. Amantha will be greatly missed by staff and pupils.

The main focus of the final weeks of term will be Year 10 coursework and preparation for Science Module exams. Several staff have also indicated an interest in participating in this year's Black History Month.

In conclusion the ACAP team has been able to contribute significantly to the work carried out at Westfield.

Janet Dodds (ACAP Support Teacher)

ACAP support at Bushey Hall School Support Teachers Report

The number of African Caribbean origin pupils on roll went down this year. There are 51 pupils out of a total school population of approximately 1000. 7 children of African Caribbean origin were admitted in Year 7. 6 out of the 7 are of mixed heritage background. This has been the trend for the past three years.

In October 2002 to mark Black History Month there was a display of the life and works of the poet Benjamin Zephaniah in the Learning Resource Centre. This also coincided with National Poetry Week.

In December 2002 the school held its annual prize-giving and this year African Caribbean pupils were well represented. The school drama production "An Evening with Gary Liniker" included pupils of African Caribbean origin. One pupil went on to get a grade A* in GCSE drama and is now studying 'Performing Arts' at Hammersmith College.

In January 2003, seven of our Year 11 boys and one Year 10 boy attended the LEAP Confronting Conflict course organised by ACAP at the EMA centre in Watford. There were positive reviews of the course by the pupils (see also Madeleine's Report).

An analysis of the 2002 GCSE results showed once again that pupils' grades were badly affected by the lack and poor standard of coursework. Once again efforts were made, through the provision of lunch time and after school sessions to help pupils complete coursework.

African Caribbean pupils were actively involved in sporting activities and represented the school in various sports. They also excelled in the school's own Sports day.

Next year the Learning Resource Centre, working with ACAP, have invited the well-known black author Malorie Blackman to the school as part of their Black History Month celebrations. An article about a talk given by Malorie appeared in the ACAP Newsletter last Autumn.

I would like to thank David Lake for the mentoring work he did with the Year 11's this year.

Adwoa Djan (ACAP Support Teacher)