

## **Interview with Sure Start parent:**

### **Salime Akbulut**

1) How did you come into contact with WSA community consultants?

I got involved in the High Cross Parents' Forum and then started to meet other local parents. We went on a seaside trip and a group of Turkish women had an idea to start our own group for Turkish and Kurdish families. So then we got help from the WSA worker to develop a group.

2) What activities and projects were you involved in?

The High Cross Parents' Forum at first and then and after a lot of planning and outreach we set up our Turkish and Kurdish family group. We had a launch party last February and invited all the families we knew and from then we started our group.

I applied for a Millennium Award to set up a Turkish storytelling and writing group and used the money to set up a library of Turkish books for our children. We got a writing tutor to help the mothers write our own stories. Now I'm very busy with all the Sure Start activities I've become involved in the evaluation group and the storytelling.

3) What did you learn through your involvement in the project?

I learned a lot about the local area and what activities are going on which has meant that my children have had a lot more activities. I've got a lot more confident. I have learned how to apply for funding for a project, how to manage a budget, how to write a questionnaire. In the beginning I didn't even know what "evaluation" meant.

My English has got better too. I learned how to stand up for myself and my family.

I've been to workshops and learned about first aid, nutrition, how to play with my children and how to help them develop English and Turkish language.

4) What did the involvement of a WSA community consultant bring to the project?

I think that the WSA consultants gave me ideas I'd never had before and helped me set up my projects. I needed help to find money for my project, to fill in the application form and manage the budget because I'd never done any of that before and I didn't know what to do.

The WSA consultant helped me to complain about my housing and now I've been moved to a new house with two bedrooms.

It was good to be able to phone up the WSA consultant and ask for help. Now I can do more for myself and my friends ring me up for help.

5) How has your involvement in the project affected your personal development?

Best of all, I have made so many new friends and my kids have made more friends. I have a very busy social life now. I have more confidence. My English is much better so I feel brave to speak up in public. I have spoken at meetings and made presentations to councillors. I have been chosen to be a Parent Governor at my daughter's school. I am very proud of that. I think that I will be able to get a good job when my son starts school.

6) Have you got any ideas about how the WSA consultant could have worked with you more effectively?

No, I would like it if the WSA consultant stayed in touch to hear the news about our group and to read our books when they have been published.

**2<sup>nd</sup> August 2004**