

SOS for spring book sale in Paris

Secondhand book sales help fill the coffers of a charity that has been providing emotional help to expats since 1974.

SOS Help is gearing up for its big spring sale in Paris on Sunday March 20 and is looking for English books to put on the stands.

The charity, which provides a free emotional support line in English for expats struggling with life in France, has two sales a year to raise much needed funds.

They have kept their prices the same at €1 paperback, €2 hardback and now have 900+ clients on their mailing list and 200/300 customers who regularly attend.

Last year the two sales brought in just under €11,000 which along with personal, association and church donations, provide the budget to



English books support SOS Help

keep the line open. An e-bulletin, website, posters and Facebook page remind Anglophones of the service and raise awareness of the line.

Although the listening post is in Paris, SOS Help is available to Anglophone callers all over France.

While many people may be lucky enough to have close friends with whom they can discuss even the most personal of problems, there are others who do not have this support.

This is where the listening ear of SOS Help can be invaluable. Sympathetic, trained listeners hear from callers with problems ranging from where to obtain practical help to contemplation of suicide.

Some people call regularly - SOS Help is part of their support system. The call is confidential and their anonymity is respected.

SOS Help was set up in 1974 in response to a need by the hundreds of Britons who make the move to France. In February 2010, there were

135,000 of them living here, and many others from other English speaking countries.

Moving to France, one of the most attractive countries in the world, can be the fulfilment of a dream for many families. The beauty and diversity of the countryside, the fascination of its historic towns and villages and its rich and varied culture act as a magnet.

Yet, sadly, circumstances can change suddenly and dramatically. A bereavement, the breakdown of a relationship, a severe illness, a drug or alcohol problem, domestic violence or financial problems may shatter the dream. Often someone is left alone to pick up the pieces. Or it may simply be the case of feeling alone in a new country.

SOS listeners help by doing just that - listening. They do not offer magic solutions, but sometimes they find that just by talking about what's bugging them can help people gain

perspective and help solve the problem. Sometimes just knowing you are not alone is all you need. Amidst the bustling markets and chinking of wine glasses some may feel a little down. If that sounds like you, give them call - they would love to help.

Tel: 01 46 21 46 46

From 3pm to 11pm daily

www.soshelpline.org

■ **SOS Help could use helpers outside Paris. The next time you are organising a book sale, or a coffee morning, why not channel any profits to helping maintain the SOS Help service? Spread the word to help raise awareness - and reach those who may need confidential emotional support. SOS Help answers over a hundred calls a week, and although listeners all give freely of their time, training and administration costs are ongoing expenses and donations always welcome.**