

Spring 2004

cfc NEWS



● NVO training ● Group work at Manor Farm ● Charis tribute ● A new trustee

Editorial

As Christian Family Care has grown, the task of ensuring financial stability has become increasingly complex.

We depend on gifts, donations, Trust Fund grants, Local Authority contracts and Central Government funding to help offset some of our substantial running costs.

It can often be a tense time as we wait to hear whether our funding applications have been successful or whether our contracts have been renewed. But it can also be a time of immense encouragement, as unsolicited gifts arrive from the most unexpected and sometimes, most moving sources.

In recent months, we received a donation, which was part of the leaving service collection for one of our supporters as he retired at the end of his working life. Then a week or two later, gifts were donated by a family in memory of their child who had very tragically died.

Such generosity of spirit can be both humbling and challenging. Although Christian Family Care must continue to maintain its professional systems and practice, we must never lose sight of the true meaning of giving and at Easter time we can rejoice in the greatest gift of all.

Chris Ure
Director

Letter from the Executive Committee Chairman

IN MY FORMER WORKING LIFE, I have been involved in the provision of training and so I am particularly interested in promoting relevant training to our Christian Family Care staff. Therefore, last time I visited Manor Farm Family Centre, I was delighted to witness the excitement of a group of staff who had just heard from the NVQ assessor that they had successfully completed units of their NVQ in Care of Children and Young People. This NVQ, which is so relevant to the work they are doing, has been provided for them by Bedford College, who have brought the training to the Centre, so that staff are not required to attend college sessions. All training and assessment takes place in the work place.

Our aim is that all our staff should eventually be suitably qualified. Vanda Dray, the manager at Manor Farm Family Centre has successfully completed the second year of her Diploma in Social Work course and is now embarking on the third year. A group of four Refuge workers are about to begin work on an NVQ in Advice and Guidance. Having recently been involved in interviewing them to ensure they were motivated to commit to this level three qualification, I was impressed by the enthusiasm they showed. Congratulations should go to all our staff who are working on gaining qualifications while providing a service to users of Christian Family Care at the same time. We are proud of them all.

Lyn Sewell



A different way of learning

THE STAFF AT MANOR FARM FAMILY CENTRE provided an innovative response to the problems of young people when they provided daily drama workshops during half term, together with the Cragrats Theatre Group, a 'theatre in education' company.



The project was designed to address issues related to bullying, personal safety, self-esteem and alcohol and

catered for almost ninety young people from the Biggleswade and Sandy areas.

Each day started with a thirty-minute drama presentation, followed by activities and workshops for the young people. Ginny Redbond from Manor Farm Family Centre, said 'It was interesting to see how the young people grew in confidence and we were particularly pleased to receive such positive feedback afterwards'.

Working with young people in this way demonstrates how a creative environment can begin to tackle some of the very real problems that so many young people have to face.



'The young people grew in confidence and we were pleased to receive such positive feedback'

GINNY REDBOND
Deputy Manager
Manor Farm Family Centre

The essence of Charis

"I arrived at Charis Mother and Baby Care one golden September day almost eight years ago, feeling that I had hit rock bottom.

I had been working, but when I announced my pregnancy, my temporary contract was not renewed. When I told my landlord, I was given ten days notice to quit.

At seven months pregnant, I was homeless and jobless. My family lived at the other end of the country and were horrified at the concept of a 'grandchild born out of wedlock', so returning to them was not an option. I was lucky to have good friends, who allowed me to reside on their sofas for a while, but I had nowhere permanent to go, a terrifying situation when you are trying to prepare a future for yourself and your child.

A local vicar gave me a leaflet advertising Charis Mother and Baby Care and I saw a glimmer of hope. When I was offered a place at Charis, my first feeling was one of intense relief. I had a place to go. Although I felt something of a failure for ending up in a hostel, I realised that Charis offered me a haven, a chance to address the problems that had brought me there. To me, that is the essence of Charis, an opportunity, a chance to make a change. Charis certainly offers a physical solution: a roof and invaluable

"I'll always be grateful to Charis. The staff and friends I made there have helped me to start this journey."

support in mastering the minefields of the benefit system. Its main service to me, however, was the safety of a secure environment, where I could make the necessary changes to my life and develop my skills as a mother. Charis is a place where, if you are willing, you can make a new start and move into a positive future with your child.

I seized that chance with determination and I addressed and dealt with issues from the past. To credit Charis with responsibility for all the positive changes that have occurred in my life would be an exaggeration, but I truly believe that without the opportunities offered there, my life would not be what it is today.

So where am I now? Well, I've got two beautiful daughters, I'm halfway through a degree course and will soon be a qualified primary school teacher. I've rebuilt relationships with my family and we're closer than we've ever been. Most importantly I'm building the kind of future for my family that I've always hoped for. I'll always be grateful to Charis. The staff and friends I made there have helped me to start this journey."



'We are currently undertaking a review of the work at Charis and look forward to further developing these important services for pregnant young women in the months to come'.

*JO TESTER
Deputy Manager
Charis, Mother and
Baby Care*

Coping with change

A CHILDREN'S FUND GRANT has enabled staff at Manor Farm Family Centre to develop a programme of activities to help children cope with the sometimes difficult transition from middle to upper school.

The programme provides sessions for twelve and thirteen year olds, covering communication, self-esteem and change with the purpose of easing the transition process.

The children who moved to the upper school last year are currently helping to prepare literature for this year's new intake. The sixth formers at the same school will be given listening skills

training to enable them to undertake mentoring roles for this project.

Although the funding ends in 2006, the aim of the staff is to produce a detailed package so that the schools can continue with the work once the funding comes to an end.



Meet Celia Bennett



When I read about Christian Family Care I knew immediately it was a Charity that I wanted to get involved with. In my work as a public sector manager I had met a number of women who had suffered domestic violence and in supporting them at work I had discovered the wonderful work that Women's Refuges do.

I also believe in the importance of a happy family life, in whatever form it takes, and believe that in promoting family life society could alleviate a lot of its social problems.

I work part time as a Non Executive Director for Bedfordshire and Luton Community NHS Trust and I am married to Paul, who is the fund raising manager at Sue Ryder Care, St Johns,

Moggerhanger. We have lived in Bedfordshire for all our married life and have two wonderful sons Samuel and Joseph. We are all members of St Andrews Church in Ampthill.

Meet Ann Bolland



I have worked at Manor Farm Family Centre for six years. Since March last year, I have been employed as Family Support Co-ordinator. Working here is challenging, full of interest and there has never been a dull moment. My work involves co-ordinating the referrals from Social Services in Bedfordshire, as well as from other counties in the country.

This work involves befriending, family support and parenting. In my co-ordinator role, I continue to have hands-on experience working with families myself. My particular interest is providing parenting training for those whose

children are on the Child Protection Register. I also undertake assessments for parents who are subject to Court hearings and I hope shortly to design a parenting programme for people with severe learning difficulties.

Before joining Manor Farm Family Centre, I was originally a medical secretary. I then left to start a family and worked in voluntary work for ten years for MIND, a Mental Health Charity.

I was also a foster carer, fostering difficult teenagers for five years, as well as a childminder.

I have been married to my husband, Phil, for eighteen years. We have three sons aged fourteen, twelve and nine, all of whom love Rock music and play drums and electric guitar most evenings!

I have a busy work and home life, but I wouldn't want to change anything.

Join us in the Caribbean!



For his twenty-four hour volleyball marathon on 25th/26th June 2004, he will be converting the grounds of Hastingsbury Upper School, Kempston into a Caribbean Island, complete with sand, a bouncy castle and steel band with a disco and barbeque in the evening to complete the occasion.

This year's event will be an ideal opportunity for friends, family, staff, trustees and supporters to meet together to support Dennis in his attempt to secure a further £10,000 to aid the local work of



Christian Family Care.

If you are able to provide a team of four, or if you would like further information, please contact Dennis on 07885 472947. Everyone is welcome to join us for this great family day out.

Our grateful thanks to Dennis for his energy and enthusiasm and also to Hastingsbury Upper School for their commitment and support for this very special fundraising event.

CHALLENGED by Bedford's claim to be as far away from the sea than anywhere else in Britain, Dennis Tailor is hoping to create his own island paradise for this year's fundraising event for Christian Family Care.