

Summer 2005

cfc NEWS



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Editorial

Since Sue Henderson joined Christian Family Care in the role of Assistant Director earlier in the year, she has been very busy working with the managers to help develop their projects and to improve our organisational systems.

Together with the team at Sandy, she has helped establish the 'Bedfordshire Contact Partnership' and she is also working with the Bedford team to explore a number of new opportunities for the future, including the 'Freedom Project'. Both of these projects are featured elsewhere in this issue of our newsletter.

During this time, I have been working to diversify our funding base by applying for core funding grants to support a number of new and established projects. We have also been working closely with the Board of Trustees to begin the process of capacity building and strategic planning in the Autumn.

The larger national and international charities may be the key voluntary sector players but smaller organisations like Christian Family Care still have much to contribute to public service delivery.

We are an organisation that responds well to local need. As you will see from our Projects, our staff are consistently creative in their approach and their work with vulnerable people represents the very best in innovation and good practice.

Our aim is to be open to the new opportunities that are now becoming available and to embrace change in a positive and constructive way. By gaining new skills and expertise, we will be able to build a strong foundation on which to build for the future.

Your prayers and support continues to be an encouragement to us.

Chris Ure
Director

Letter from the Chair of Executive Committee

I HAVE CHAIRED the Executive Committee for almost six years now and although I will remain a trustee, my time in this position is almost at an end. Before I finish as Chair, there is work to be done reviewing the trustee role within Christian Family Care. I feel as if I have come round full circle as I remember that, when we were first in post, Gordon Stroud, Chairman of the Trustee Board, and I spent time devising selection procedures for trustees and creating job descriptions following training from Sandy Adirondack, an expert in the governance of charities. We are now deciding how best the trustees can provide for the needs of Christian Family Care in a changing world. We firmly believe in upholding our Christian roots and values in helping families in need. We also want to expand the work of Christian Family Care in the community and to provide even better services. This means reviewing our committee structure and ensuring the best use of our collective expertise. We aim to support the Director and his staff in further developing their valuable work.



Lyn Sewell
Chair of Executive Committee

Children's Project 2005 trip

IT'S GREAT OUTDOORS...

In May, seven children from the Bedford Refuge enjoyed a trip out to Maulden Woods where they had fun building dens, 'mini beast hunting' and making plaster cast prints.



An event like this not only provides a stimulating and exciting experience for the children but it also demonstrates how the creative use of the countryside can provide a great day out. Our thanks to the Emmaus Community for funding this event.



Diocesan visit

IN MAY, we were pleased to welcome Kemi Akinruli, the Social Responsibility Officer at the Diocese of St. Albans. Kemi, who works alongside the Reverend Canon Richard Wheeler, the Church and Society Officer, visited our two Bedford Projects where she met some of the residents, staff and trustees.



Kemi Akinruli

The Freedom Project

The staff team at Bedford Women's Refuge recently completed the 'Freedom Project Training'. Sue Henderson visited Jo Marks, Tricia Fairall and Jo Smyth to ask how they and the women at the Refuge will benefit from this new programme.

What is the Freedom Project?

"The FREEDOM project is a national 12-week rolling programme designed to be delivered locally. It focuses on three specially adapted programmes for women, children and male perpetrators. At the Refuge we are focusing on the part of programme aimed to help women.

The programme will enable women to understand the beliefs that are held by abusive men and to recognise these belief patterns from their own past experiences. This programme will also help women recognise potential future abusers and to gain confidence, which will ultimately improve the quality of their lives.

We will also help the mothers to see how domestic violence affects children."

What training did you complete?

"We attended an intensive two-day training event at St Neots Refuge which allowed us to experience the 12-week programme for ourselves. The trainer, Pat Craven, devised the Freedom Programme training when she was working as a Probation officer. Working with abusive men helped her gain an insight and understanding of this work.

The sessions are supported by a training programme, which equips us to deliver the training through structured weekly sessions with the women. We have already commenced the programme in the Refuge with our current residents."



What are the opportunities for future development?

"There is a real need for preventative work to be undertaken in the community with teenagers and women. This would enable them to recognise abusive behaviours in the men that they are having relationships with.

There are only two hundred Refuges in the whole country so there is a need for safe places where women can access information and advice on domestic violence. We would very much like to develop services in the community so that those experiencing domestic violence can be helped to make the right decisions concerning their own lives and the lives of their children.'

This is clearly essential frontline work to assist women in rebuilding their lives. It is a powerful example of what the Bedford Women's Refuge team is able to offer to vulnerable residents not only to address the present but also to affect the future.

Sue Henderson
Assistant Director

New partnership scheme

'BEDFORDSHIRE CONTACT PARTNERSHIP' was formed on 1st April 2005, following negotiations between Christian Family Care, Bedfordshire County Council and Spurgeon's Child Care. The contact service provides supervised contact sessions between children and their absent parents across the county of Bedfordshire. Like ourselves, Spurgeon's Child Care is a Christian-based charity, but this is the first time that the two organisations have worked together in partnership. The contact work is jointly administered from Manor Farm Family Centre in Sandy and Spurgeon's Family Centre in Bedford. Sue Williams administers the Manor Farm work, on behalf of Christian Family Care, much of which at present caters for families from Leighton Buzzard, Luton and Houghton

Regis. The sessions, between two and five hours, are often play-based and sometimes the children will help with the preparation of a simple meal. The trained contact staff observe the sessions and aim not to influence the session, other than for reasons of child safety. The contact team record each of the sessions and may sometimes be required to provide a report for court. At present, Saturdays are a very busy time as sessions are held for families whose school-aged children are unable to attend during the week. To reduce travel times for the children, extra outreach locations are also being used and there are plans to develop the service further in the months to come.



Back row: Sharon Griffiths (SCC), Sue Henderson (CFC), Front row: Sandra Rome (SCC), Warwick Tomsett (Beds CC), Ginny Redbond (CFC).

Right: Sue Williams, the contact administrator at Manor Farm Family Centre in Sandy.



Meet Dennis Taylor

I was born at Anawal, a small village in the state of Gujarat in India. I came to England when I was four years old and settled in Hampstead, London. My father worked in Fleet Street and I have two brothers both of whom were born in London. As an apprentice carpenter, I moved to Milton Keynes, where I became a Christian whilst attending an evangelical church in Stony Stratford.

I had a son and a daughter from my first marriage which sadly ended in divorce but in later years I met my second wife Lynda and we moved to Bedford, where my two other children, Rebekah and Esmé were born. We now attend Grace Community Church, in Kempston. I have an interest in marathon running, walking and hill climbing. In fact, the first time I ever ran a marathon was in 1996 to raise funds for Christian Family Care, something I started doing in 1992 and have been



doing ever since! Any why do I do it? Well, I know the importance of family life and I want to help families who have not had the best start in life.

What I do is not just fundraising, it is also awareness raising. There are some terrible abuses in our society and my purpose is to serve God by doing what I can do to make a difference.

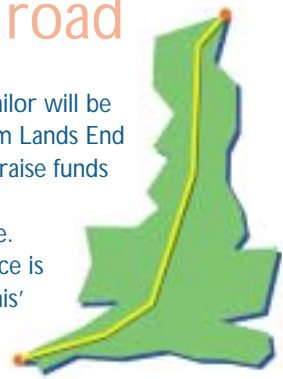
Although I love helping Christian Family Care in this way, it is also a tremendous privilege for me. I have met some amazing people over the years from all over the country, some of whom I am still in contact with.

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking the many readers of the CFC newsletter who have supported me over the years".

■ (Dennis begins his 15-day Marathon on Saturday 13th August).

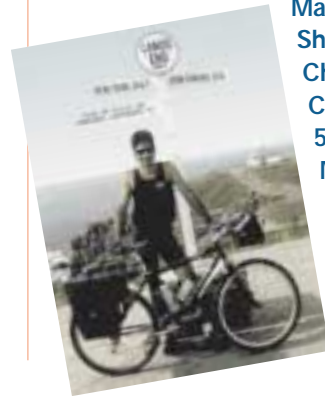
The long and winding road

THIS YEAR Dennis Taylor will be cycling in August from Lands End to John O Groats to raise funds for the vital work of Christian Family Care. The marathon distance is 1150 miles and Dennis' target is to raise £5,000.



Do please sponsor him if you can by sending a cheque marked '2005

Marathon' to Sheena Howe at Christian Family Care, PO Box 515, Bedford MK40 1YD.



Pastures new

DURING THE SUMMER WE will be saying goodbye to Gen Adam and Beverley Ross, two of our children's workers at Bedford Refuge. Gen will be retiring after a long career devoted to childcare both in Social Services and the voluntary sector. Bev is leaving to work in a Local Authority Children's Home. Both will be missed and we send our warmest wishes for the future.



Parliamentary visit

WE WILL BE PLEASED TO welcome Alistair Burt, MP when he visits Manor Farm Family Centre in Sandy in the Autumn. Sandy is part of Mr Burt's Bedfordshire North East constituency and during his visit he plans to meet the managers and staff and hear about our partnership work across the county of Bedfordshire.



* All welcome

Annual General Meeting, 12.30 p.m. Tuesday 11th October 2005 at the Howard Room, Corn Exchange, Bedford.