

Winter 2003

cfc NEWS


christian
family
care



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Editorial

RECENTLY, when I talked with some of the Refuge residents, I was reminded again how important it is to retain a spirit of survival.

Some of the residents had suffered horrific violence at the hands of the partners who had once claimed to love them. All had suffered abuse and others had been so intimidated and frightened that they knew beyond doubt that their lives were in danger.

And yet, it was often not the risk to themselves that became the turning point but the risk to their children. Once their children had also become targets of the abuse, they somehow gained the final strength that they needed to leave.

And what was particularly encouraging to me was the spontaneous way in which each of the residents paid tribute to our Refuge staff for the way in which they had cared for them and supported them during their stay.

In this work, we are privileged to meet people at various points of crises in their lives. We may each play a different part, but ultimately our purpose is the same, to provide care for people when others have stopped caring.

We thank you for your support for this important work during the past year and we look forward to your continued commitment in 2004.

With best wishes

Chris Ure
Director

Letter from the Chairman of Trustees



"THIS TIME LAST YEAR, eight-year-old Theo was starving in an Ethiopian village. Too weak even to open his eyes, he told a BBC journalist that he would rather die than stay the way he was. I heard on the radio today that Theo has not only survived but is well and back at school. Why? Because when his words were beamed around the world people responded to his unspoken cry for help.

At the Refuge and the Children's Project, we often meet despairing women and children who have little or no hope. We are so privileged to be the vehicle that gives them hope again. At Christmas we remember that God gave us his Son, whose death gives us hope, and we are so grateful to you, our supporters, who follow his example. You not only pray but also help those who feel hopeless, abused and forgotten to recover their self esteem and, like Theo, be able to face the future"

Dr Gordon Stroud, Chairman of Trustees

A firm foundation

I JOINED CHRISTIAN FAMILY CARE as Senior Church Social worker in 1979 (a post re-designated Director in 1984) and in 1988 left for a post with The Children's Society. Since then I've often wondered how the organisation was developing. Obtaining the odd bit of information only created a greater curiosity.



Recently, I attended in a party to celebrate twenty years of service by Margaret Wardale and this gave me the opportunity to explore how things have developed. I heard about the various projects and the diverse work they undertake. I am impressed and following an invitation from Chris Ure, look forward to making visits to all the projects soon. Talking with staff I heard of their passion and commitment to their work (it seemed not dissimilar to what we felt in the 80's). I also reflected that in 1988 there were four paid staff and twelve regular volunteers and a budget one tenth of today's! I'm proud to have helped lay the foundation for Christian Family Care to come of age.

Chris Haydon

Thanks from Dennis



DENNIS TAILOR has asked us to thank all the participants of his 'Triathlon' Fund Raising event last summer.

He was particularly pleased to include teams from each of the Christian Family Care projects and is now well

on course to raise his target of **£10,000**.

This fund raising will contribute towards the purchase and running costs of our new Variety Club Mini-bus.

“Being in here has made me strong”

Three of the residents explain how being at the Refuge has helped change their lives. Names have been omitted to protect their identities.

“ Having celebrated my fiftieth birthday whilst living at the Refuge, some of the older ones see me in a sort of mother role.

They are amazed that I left my partner after he beat me up only once. But, I tell them, if he's done it once, he'll do it again. You need to be strong and to get out before it's too late.

Since being at the Refuge my confidence has grown. Until I came here, I never knew that such places existed. ”

“ There are mornings when I wake up and I just can't believe that I'm here. I can't believe that I am safe and that when I go out, I don't have to look over my shoulder or watch out for cars.

Prior to moving to the Refuge, I was held hostage by my partner, who was not only addicted to crack cocaine, but who abused alcohol and other drugs and many times threatened to kill me. He is uncontrollably violent and I became terrified of him. Not only did he smash up our house, but my little son, still under two, picked up an ecstasy tablet from the floor and was seconds away from swallowing it.

Now, I am planning to be rehoused, and I will never return to the town I left. I honestly believe that if he ever sees me again, he will kill me. ”

“ I believe in marriage and I was totally committed to my husband. Leaving him was the hardest thing I have ever had to do. But, the man I married had changed beyond recognition. He had become controlling, jealous and violent. A first slap across the face developed into punches, kicks and a physical assault that resulted in me losing my second baby.

I am convinced that he has a mental health problem. He became worse after his father died and his drinking was no longer under control. One Christmas Eve, he broke my jaw and I ended up in hospital and I vowed that I would never return and I never did.

But, he was unable to accept the separation and continued to plague me, kicking the front door, vandalising my car and even kidnapping the children from school. Eventually, I moved to Bedford Refuge in order to escape him.

The staff here have been wonderful and without them I wouldn't have become so determined to start a new life. I have been accepted for housing and when I move, I am going to return to nursing and make a future for myself and the children. I no longer have feelings for my husband. I don't hate him, I just feel nothing at all for him. ”



A new group for women

UNDER THE HEALTHY LIVING INITIATIVE FUNDING, Manor Farm Family Centre has been running Women's Groups since June 2003. The first groups have been in Sandy and Biggleswade and in the New Year, will be extending to Shefford and some of the smaller villages where social isolation has a major impact on mums with young children. A group for women from traveller sites is also being planned, which we are very excited about.

The aim of the groups is to improve self-esteem and confidence and after each group has finished, a drop-in group remains, which the women maintain themselves. Each course is structured to meet the needs of the women attending and runs from six to eight weeks, covering such topics as assertiveness and stress management as well as sessions on relaxation and beauty. They encourage the active participation of all involved and the opinion of everyone is valued.

For some women, this is one of the very few chances they get to focus on themselves as individuals rather than as mothers, but an unexpected bonus has been the benefits for the children of playing in the CrÈche facility that is provided. The mums have reported increased social skills and independence in their toddlers and have been evaluating the groups in very positive terms.

Jo Norman

Family Support Worker, Manor Farm Family Centre



Meet Jennie Cappleman



When I first joined Christian Family Care as a trustee, I was a non-stipendiary curate at St Peter's Church in Bedford, working part time as a development worker for Bedfordshire Advocacy Alliance, who provide an advocacy service for adults with learning disabilities. Since April, I have been stipendiary curate at St Mary's Goldington and in addition, from June, Chaplain for adults with learning disabilities for the NHS Trust. Before becoming an employee of Advocacy Alliance, I was a volunteer

advocate and also a trustee, so I had experience of every aspect of the workings of a charity - useful experience in my present role with Christian Family Care. I also have experience of being a primary school teacher and a counsellor. I am married to Sam, who works in the IT industry and is a non-stipendiary priest and we have a daughter and son.

Meet Jo Smyth



I started working for Christian Family Care in July as a Refuge Worker. Although I had had fifteen years experience working in housing with the homeless, I was concerned because I had less knowledge of domestic violence. But, I need not have worried. The team support I have received has been terrific. I have learnt so much and my role continues to be both rewarding and challenging. I can honestly say that I enjoy coming to work each morning!

I have two children: Noeline, aged twenty four years, who has recently become engaged and Ciaran, aged nineteen years. I enjoy reading and socialising.

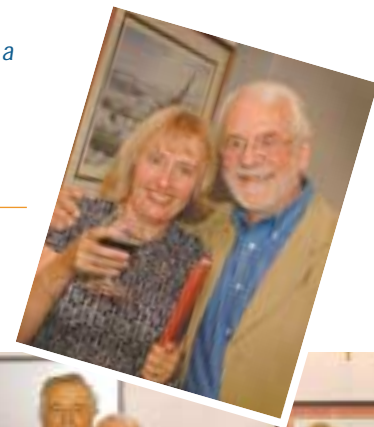


Meet Sue Williams

I joined the staff team at Manor Farm Family Centre in April this year in the role of Contact Co-ordinator/Administrator. The challenge of the job keeps me fully occupied and I enjoy being part of such an enthusiastic team. The Family Centre is always buzzing and full of activity.

Before joining Manor Farm Family Centre, I worked as a Human Resources secretary for a large company and prior to that I worked in social housing. Both of these roles have equipped me well for the job that I now do.

I have been married to my husband, Dave, for thirty years and we have two grown up children and a four-year old grandson. We live in Sandy and I am able to walk to work, which is great for my waistline! Four years ago we purchased a cottage, which we are now in the process of renovating. I am a very keen gardener and we also enjoy caravanning.



Margaret - this is your life!

FORTUNATELY, when Margaret Wardale was presented with the 'Big Red Book' to commemorate her twenty years service with Christian Family Care, she decided against making a sharp exit and she stayed to enjoy the proceedings.

Over fifty people, including family, friends, trustees and colleagues past and present, gathered to celebrate Margaret's special occasion.

The event was a carefully hatched surprise and among the special guests were Margaret's sisters and her daughter Sophie, Chris Haydon, the Director who appointed her in 1983, Jim Thorpe, Gabby McAuley and Jane Chohan.

