



# insight

A LOOK AT OUR WORK AND AIMS

## READY, STEADY, COOK!

In April the Mayor of Reading Cllr Jenny Rynn joined homeless people from Hamble Court\* to celebrate the opening of a new skills and healthy eating Community Kitchen.

*“When a homeless person first comes to us they often need help with developing skills around things like healthy eating and cooking on a budget, so this new kitchen will be a lifeline to help them successfully manage when they eventually move on,”* said Riverside’s Team Leader at Hamble Court, Rachel Irons. *“Importantly, our Community Kitchen will also be a resource for the wider community and we are already working with community agencies across Reading”.*

One of Hamble Court’s residents has already benefited from the new kitchen and said:

*“While I was homeless I didn’t have the chance to cook for myself and plan out healthy meals. The training I’ve had has really helped me feel more confident.”*

Staff at Hamble Court are also a key part of the Community Kitchen and all have been trained



The mayor formally opens the kitchen



Staff and residents enjoy the kitchen



Residents cook up a storm!



Cake o'clock!

in basic food hygiene so that they can support their residents.

Communal homemade meals have started and proved extremely popular with weekly group cooking and food sharing now a regular feature at the scheme.

**Church Housing Trust raised nearly £22,000 to fund the Community Kitchen, allowing a once bare room to be turned into a communal hub for the Reading project.**

*\*Hamble Court is run by CHT’s partner Riverside ECHG and provides temporary housing, support and skills training for 35 homeless men and women.*

**THANK YOU!**

Thanks to your donations over the last six months we have been able to:

- provide resettlement grants to over 130 people ready to move on to their own accommodation to help them buy furniture and equipment
- give funding to 30 people wanting to take educational and training courses to help them gain employment

A big thank you to churches for their Christmas and Easter collections, and to those who sent in monies raised from donations instead of sending Christmas cards.

Your generosity and support has helped some of England’s most vulnerable and disadvantaged people turn their lives around.

## Celebrity Chef



## supports homeless veterans

I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here chef, Rosemary Shrager, has named Riverside ECHG's ground-breaking veterans' training bakery at The Beacon as her favoured charity. Rosemary visited the bakery last year and was impressed with the important role the bakery provides in rehabilitating veterans who have faced homelessness.

Rosemary said: *"I understand what it's like to hit total rock bottom and start again and I relate to people starting again. The bakery focuses them on a vocational subject, getting them to think, measure and use their hands. This is why I support them."*

The Beacon and bakery are located next to Catterick Garrison. It provides temporary housing, training and specialist support to ex-Servicemen and women who are at risk of homelessness. Its range of facilities are focused on providing veterans access to a wide range of support and skills development opportunities.

One of the residents, Charlie, who served in the Marines has been gaining skills by working in the bakery and is looking at a possible bakery career: *"When I was discharged everything got on top of me including my relationship breakdown. But coming into the bakery early each morning and making 300 rolls has got me back into a routine and takes my mind off things. It's good, really good."*

The Beacon offers a community café, where visitors are welcome to drop in and enjoy a tea or coffee and a selection of delicious breads and pastries produced by the bakery.

If you would like to support the work of the bakery please visit: [www.churchhousingtrust.org.uk/veteransbakery](http://www.churchhousingtrust.org.uk/veteransbakery)

## HELPING ROUGH SLEEPERS OUT OF THE COLD



Outreach workers visit a sleeper's site During severe cold weather such as we had last winter, many of the projects we support provided emergency overnight beds for rough sleepers. By the end of March over 500 people had been helped with food, clothing and health assessments.

One of the project managers in Bristol told us: *"The people we help in this way are extremely grateful for having somewhere safe and warm to stay, even if it's just for one night. Accommodating rough sleepers means that our specialist support workers can start to establish what support they need that could help them permanently off the street."*

*"We're providing specialist support which not only helps keep people alive in the short term but also helps them move off the streets long term,"* said Riverside ECHG's Director of Supported Housing, Mark Nightall.

*"In London, Leeds, Cambridge, Bristol, Brighton, Bolton, Reading, Hull, Derby, Barnsley, Wigan and Manchester our teams did their best to help ensure no one died on the streets from the cold weather this winter."*

Jack was one of the homeless people who was helped to get back on his feet by the hostel we support in Bristol. He initially used one of the emergency beds after being evicted from a 'dry house' for people with drink problems. He said:

*"I felt ashamed, humiliated and disappointed in myself. But since being at the hostel the staff and local church have helped me sort out my problems."*

Examples of the support the teams provided to homeless people this winter included:

- Support workers trained to help people with specific problems
- Health assessments to identify chronic health problems
- Working with vulnerable female rough sleepers
- Distribution of 'Keep Warm' packs including socks, blankets and thermos cups
- Funding to provide essential clothing and toiletry packs

**A** Thanks to Pam Norman of Bath who sent us a donation of £43.70 – the proceeds of a "Places People Sleep" quiz which she organised. **U** Pam kindly sent us a copy of the quiz and even those of us in the office who delight in regularly solving cryptic crosswords found some of the clues quite taxing, although fortunately we were also **I** sent the answers. If you are looking for an unusual fundraising idea and would like a copy of this quiz please contact: **Z** Pam Norman, Comfort Books, St Saviour's Rectory, Claremont Road, Bath BA1 6LX. Please include a SAE if you require the answers.

## Former rough sleepers helping others off the streets



Riverside staff and former rough sleepers

**A** group of former rough sleepers are being trained as outreach workers to help get homeless people off the streets.

The Street Buddies project, run by our partner Riverside ECHG, began in January this year. The group is being trained to deal with problems such as substance misuse, mental health, and knowledge of the range of care services available.

One of the group to be trained was former rough sleeper Mariusz. Mariusz began sleeping rough after his life spiralled out of control following the end of his marriage.

He became addicted to drugs and stole to feed his habit. He said:

*“Because we’ve all been there ourselves we know how to relate to people on the street. I really do want to connect with these people and tell them there is an alternative.”*

The group has a unique set of skills and experience which will help them to engage with rough sleepers and turn their lives around.

Natalie Lodge, Street Buddies co-ordinator, said: *“This is a very exciting project that has the potential to change the way services are delivered in the future. We are using the expertise and knowledge that already exists on the street. Homeless people are part of the solution not the problem.”*



### PLANTING SEEDS OF SUCCESS

Residents at Wilmslow Area Accommodation Project (WAAP)\* decided to build some raised beds in the hostel's garden as their entry in this year's Riverside ECHG 'Best Kept Garden' competition.

The scheme was given funding by CHT to build the beds and buy plants and soil. WAAP's residents invited the *Transitional Garden* and *Incredible Edible Wimslow* to help get the project going.

On the day, over 15 volunteers turned up to help, including staff members on their day off, local gardeners, tree surgeons and many more.

After just three hours of hard work the beds were up and ready for manure. By 3pm everything was done and ready for the soil, five tons worth! The next step is to get things planted once the seeds have started to rise.

The green fingered residents and staff now intend to build a vegetable plot so that they can continue to give back to the local community.

*\*WAAP provides a safe and welcoming environment for men and women aged 18 to 65 years who are homeless and may have a history of offending, dependency issues or other support needs.*

### NEW TRUSTEE

Church Housing Trust is pleased to welcome Leann Hearne who will be joining the Revd. Preb. Graham Earney representing Riverside ECHG on our Board. Leann is Riverside's new Group Director, Care and Support and has a background in sheltered housing, having been formerly Operations Director for ExtraCare Charitable Trust.



*“We are grateful for the continued support and funding that we receive from CHT. There are visible outcomes across Riverside ECHG projects, which have enabled Riverside ECHG to be recognised as a specialist provider who can deliver services successfully to those groups that other organisations fail.”*

### Veterans service wins UK Housing Awards

CHT's partner Riverside ECHG's pioneering work with homeless veterans was recognised when they won the Specialist Landlord of the Year at the national UK Housing Awards.

The award was for the

Single Persons Accommodation Centre for the ex-Services (SPACES). SPACES is run from the Catterick Garrison in North Yorkshire and has helped over 10,500 veterans overcome the hurdle of homelessness.

## ABOUT CHURCH HOUSING TRUST

Church Housing Trust raises charitable funds to support Riverside English Churches Housing Group's (ECHG) work with homeless and vulnerable people. Riverside ECHG runs a wide range of schemes in England, including hostels, women's refuges, young people's foyers, day centres, accommodation for homeless families, mother and baby units, projects for people with specific problems such as drug or alcohol dependency, temporary housing for ex-Service personnel and accommodation for people with learning disabilities.

The funds that we raise are used for a wide range of needs, including residents' welfare, therapeutic activities and outings, education and training,

counselling, residents' resettlement costs, IT and other training equipment, furnishing hostel accommodation and refurbishing older premises, covering volunteer costs, and also funding certain staff posts for which statutory monies are not available. During the past year we helped over 3,500 people of all ages in over 80 projects.

It is only through the generosity of our supporters that we are able to fund these activities and support some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people, helping them get their lives back on track and reintegrate into mainstream society.

Please donate using the form below.

## LETTERS

*I would just like to thank the staff at Cangle Foyer for all you have done in helping me move forwards, and my understanding of self and what I want to achieve in my life.*

*I have a job interview, it will be very healthy for me to get used to a working environment again and have every faith in myself that I won't fall down and not be able to get back up on my feet and carry on.*

*Thank you to CHT for my resettlement grant, I have purchased everything I needed and things would have been a lot harder without it.*

Paul, Cambridge

*I thought I would let you know about a client who received CHT funds. The money was for educational resources which enabled him to complete a training programme in the Manchester area and an online course. He recently contacted me to inform me that he has now secured employment with Riverside. I believe this was partly achieved due to the funds received by CHT.*

*Many thanks for your continuing support.*

Staff member, Manchester

*Thank you for my grant to get various essential items - such as shoes! I will get kitted out with some decent stuff in the next few days.*

*Thanks again for the help.*

Martin, Sittingbourne



Dave is 39 years old and lives at the Victoria Road hostel in Cambridge. After getting help at the hostel and rebuilding his life he wanted to give something back so he decided to hold "Dave's Charity Football Tournament".

Dave found a venue and negotiated free use, advertised it and arranged refreshments. A local company donated a trophy which he presented to the winning team on the day.

The tournament was made up of local teams from the police force, local charities and a Victoria Road staff/residents team. After a tough day of competitive play the tournament was won by the neighbourhood policing team.

The event was a huge success and raised £165. It gave many people a day of smiles and made the smallest of things a fantastic achievement for many. It has also helped to build stronger relationships with other local organisations.

### I should like to support Church Housing Trust.

Please accept my donation of £ \_\_\_\_\_ I enclose cheque postal order charity voucher  
(payable to **Church Housing Trust**)

or charge my Visa/Mastercard/Maestro/CAF card  
(please delete as applicable) Card No: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Maestro Issue No: \_\_\_\_\_ Security code: \_\_\_\_\_ *(the last 3 digits of the signature strip on the back of the card)*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

*giftaid it*  Gift Aid. Please tick if you are a tax payer and you would like us to reclaim the tax on your donation at no extra cost to yourself. Please note that in order for us to reclaim tax we need your address and you must pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax for each tax year at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities to which you donate will reclaim on your gifts for that tax year. Other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify.

Please send me the following:

Standing order form for regular giving  Payroll Giving information

Please return to: Church Housing Trust, PO Box 50296, London EC1P 1WF



Charity no. 802801

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