



insight

A LOOK AT OUR WORK AND AIMS

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

Church Housing Trust (CHT) supports the work of Riverside ECHG, a social housing association that provides accommodation and support for more than 3,800 homeless and vulnerable people each day of the year.

The hostels we work with up and down the country not only offer a roof and a bed. Residents are given health checks, help with their addictions, housing and employment advice and the opportunity to learn skills such as cooking, budgeting and use of IT, which will help them when they are able to resettle independently.

Our funding provides the added value that ensures that as many people as possible receive these opportunities and do not go back to their unsettled way of life on the streets or in temporary accommodation.

We are proud to tell you that 80 per cent of our income is used to support homeless people in the ways mentioned above. 14 per cent is spent on fundraising and six per cent on administration. If we did not spend anything on raising money we would not have any new donors or funds to give away – it's as simple as that.

Please support us in any way you can. Turn to the back page to find out how you can help.

GETTING BACK TO THE STREETS

Chris had spent half his life on the streets when he applied for a job at Riverside ECHG's King George's hostel.

He also hadn't worked for nearly 20 years. Hired in January 2014, Chris is one of five GROW (Giving Real Opportunities to Work) trainees on the Street Buddies team, which was launched in Westminster during January 2013.

The outreach team works specifically to help entrenched homeless people. King George's hostel team leader Natalie Lodge comments "Everyone on the team, apart from me, has lived experience of being street homeless."

A Street Buddy's day could begin at Victoria Station at 6am, checking on rough sleepers.

"We offer them our services and take them for breakfast," Chris explains, "In some cases we can get them emergency accommodation straight away."

But after a length of time on the streets, many homeless people struggle to settle elsewhere. "Maybe they didn't like the hostel; everyone else was too young, or there was violence there," he comments. "The point is to keep approaching, offering a cup of tea and asking if they want help. Sometimes you'll pass someone ten times before they'll even speak to you."

Chris's past only comes into it if someone becomes particularly defensive. "They might ask 'What do you know?' The thing is, I know exactly what it's like."

After many years of homelessness, Chris ended up in hospital with liver failure. "I was told I wouldn't live till Christmas, and it was November." It was the wake-up call he needed. He entered a detox centre

and, now that he lives independently, was able to join the Street Buddies.

As part of his training, Chris has been given a placement with Turning Point, a drug and alcohol outreach centre. His first-hand knowledge of life on the streets has proved invaluable, and fuelled his passion for the work. "I would gladly do this for



Chris out and about in Westminster

nothing," he comments.

Following three and a half years of abstinence, he is back in touch with his family, including an adult daughter and one-year-old grandson.

"Everyone benefits from Street Buddies," he concludes. "Once you're somewhere safe, then everything else follows."

THANK YOU

A special thanks to all of the churches that have donated so generously over the past few months. We hope you enjoy reading about the fantastic projects that your funds have gone towards most recently.



FINDING HIS VOICE

When a hostel resident discovers an unknown talent it can alter the course of their life forever.

For ex-Serviceman Joe Rafferty, that talent lay dormant for several years after he left the army. When he returned to his home in Ireland after travelling, he was attacked for having joined the British Army. With no family to fall back on, he moved to York and lived on the streets for two years. He had no connections except a couple of friends. "It was daunting. I like to take care of myself," he remarks, "I didn't know how I could get out of homelessness. I was in limbo."

"The army is quite a conditioned environment; some people have left their family and gone straight in to the military. You have no basic life skills. You're blind."

He was told about The Beacon, a supported housing scheme for ex-Services personnel near Catterick Garrison in Yorkshire.

While there he had the chance to visit the local station of the British

Forces Broadcasting Services. Resident DJ Chris helped him create two sample recordings of his speaking voice. "It's the most enjoyment I got out of anything in a few years," he admits.

Chris encouraged Joe to find out what experience he would need to become a voice-over artist.

He began a course that would get him on the road to commercial voice-over work. When it finishes he'll put together a CD that shows off his talents across a range of vocal styles. His new ambition has also had an impact on his wellbeing. "When you've lived on the streets you feel worthless. This boosts your confidence and gives you something to aim for."

His ultimate dream is to become the voice of a nature documentary, or an animated character. "I've started to think 'Why can't I?' Thanks to the funding, I can."

CHILL OUT IN BRIXTON

Acre Lane in Brixton has begun an innovative refurbishment project to improve the communal space for its residents, who have mental health issues.

Plans are to renovate the ground floor, open up the reception area and create a 'Chillout Zone' as a new space for residents to rest and relax. The communal room will include a breakfast bar style IT suite, as well as comfortable soft furnishings and new audio visual equipment. The transformation

aims to create a relaxed and educational environment that encourages responsibility in the 35 homeless men and women who live there. They will be able to improve computing skills and apply for jobs at a critical turning point in their lives, in a place where they can feel safe and at home. The space will be designed to give residents the personal responsibility, self-motivation and purposefulness they need to move on to independent living.

THANKS

We are hugely appreciative of recent legacies that enabled us to help more than 380 formerly homeless people buy essential furniture and equipment for themselves when they moved into independent accommodation – up from around 220 in the previous year.

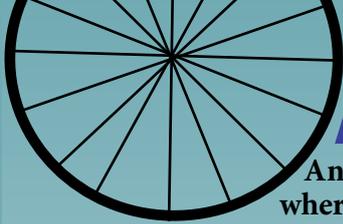
It is thanks to legacies that we have funded a programme of social media training to help hostel residents find work; a bicycle repair social enterprise for homeless and vulnerable people in Cambridge (*see next page*); a Street Buddies scheme for entrenched rough sleepers in Westminster (*see front page*); and a confidence building sailing weekend for vulnerable youth foyers residents.

Your legacies and donations helped provide training courses and equipment for more than 50 people, much-needed therapeutic outings, Christmas celebrations and emergency funds for clothing, shoes and other essentials. They also go towards Riverside ECHG's GOALS (Gaining Opportunities And Life Skills) programme. Riverside Learning and Development Manager Ben Cork comments "this programme is getting superb results for service users and your support is incredibly appreciated."

Leaving a gift in your will is a way to support our work and ensure we can continue to meet the ever-increasing demand for funding.



Newton House residents enjoy a sing-along



A WHEELY GOOD IDEA

An exciting project has launched in Cambridge, where roughly one in five journeys is made by bike.

Cycle shop Wondergears will sustainably connect local Riverside ECHG schemes with the community, as well as teaching residents the basics of cycle mechanics and construction. The enterprise opened its doors at Cambridge's Future Business Centre in early May.

CHT is proud to fund the new initiative, which aims to provide community support and an exciting learning experience for residents from the two hostels, youth foyer and recently opened adult foyer in Cambridge.

The project's workshop will repair and refurbish donated bicycles for resale or hire, as well as offering a repair service and private courses in bicycle maintenance and renovation to the general public, plus fleet maintenance to potential customers such as the Royal Mail.



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Workshop demonstration at Victoria House, Cambridge

GET IN TOUCH!

Want to hear more from Church Housing Trust? Connect with us on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter, visit our website, or sign up to our email newsletter. Our social media sites provide frequent updates on events and projects at hostels and schemes across England.

If you or your church plan to raise funds or awareness for homeless people, we're also happy to send you free materials about our work, including posters, leaflets and a DVD. We can also provide event speakers from projects local to you, who can tell first-hand stories of how donations really make a difference.

Get in touch!



TURNING OVER A NEW LEAF

At hostels nationwide, gardening has been shown not only to be a great outdoor activity, but a vital tool for rehabilitation. Residents have taken on projects wholeheartedly and shown that gardens are about making the best of the space you have, whatever shape it comes in.

Creating private spaces

Several hostels have been particularly inventive with their outdoor spaces. Vaughan House in Guildford has turned a small outside space into an oasis of calm with a variety of potted plants and garden furniture, while residents of The Beeches in Manchester have created an outdoor 'house' from old furniture, transforming drawers, broken TVs and baths into planters and plant displays.

A resident of Newbury House in Manchester is part of the team re-organising the hostel's large

outside space, including creating more disabled access. The innovative disabled gardening area will include ramps to some parts of the grounds and specially built raised beds. "If you have a happy garden, you're happy yourself," he adds.

Aiding rehabilitation

Two residents at the New Beginnings hostel in Doncaster have powerful memories of how the allotment project helped their personal development.

One says "When I came to New Beginnings to do my detox I realised I wanted more out of life. This gave me a sense of achieving something, as I was giving back to the community. I found that a simple thing such as gardening has helped with my recovery not only physically, but emotionally. Watching the garden grow helped me watch myself grow into the

person that I want to be."

Another resident comments "Working in the garden has been a fantastic help in my recovery. It has given me something to look forward to on a daily basis. It keeps me active and I get to meet new people, interact and make conversation again."

Fuelling personal growth

One success story comes from Holden House in Barnsley, which has two raised beds at a local church community garden.

Garden volunteer coordinator Andy Peel comments that it not only gives residents something to do, but works wonders for their confidence. Hostel tenants get great pleasure from looking after the beds, and the efforts of volunteer gardeners in the area have yielded enough fresh vegetables for several 'cook and eat' sessions at the scheme.



Vaughan House



Newbury House



The Beeches

GROWING IN CONFIDENCE

Elliot Holmes has secured a GROW traineeship position of a year's fixed term placement as Social Media Ambassador to Riverside ECHG. Church Housing Trust was pleased to fund the new role, which was created to help encourage the use of social media for hostel tenants.

Elliot, 22, was a resident at Cangle Youth Foyer and had been volunteering with Riverside's Get Connected scheme for over a year when he successfully applied for the role. Among other things, he will be supporting the Get Connected Facebook group and Twitter as a forum for discussion between hostel residents. He is passionate about the role of social media in supported housing. "It's a place [for residents] to get together, share stories and support one another, as well as letting staff address further issues with drugs, alcohol or even maintenance," he says. We look forward to seeing the project develop.



GOODBYE AND HELLO

With regret but many fond memories, Church Housing Trust is saying goodbye to its current Chief Executive, Sally Isaacs (*above left*). Sally has been with the Trust for 20 years and became CE in 2010, bringing a wealth of experience, unparalleled knowledge of the Trust's donors and well-honed fundraising skills to the role. We wish her all the best and a very happy retirement.

CHT also bade farewell to Alison Pernek (*above right*), who has returned to Australia after seven years with us. She has been ably replaced by Ruth Uwimana.

At the end of 2013 the team also welcomed new Communications Officer Nicole Holgate, who has rapidly made a real difference to our website, social media and fundraising campaigns.

We would finally like to welcome our new Director, Michael Ryan. Michael was formerly Director of Radicle, a charity offering day centres, lunch clubs, supported housing, and a nursery and crèche to vulnerable people. He brings a wide experience of charitable work with him.

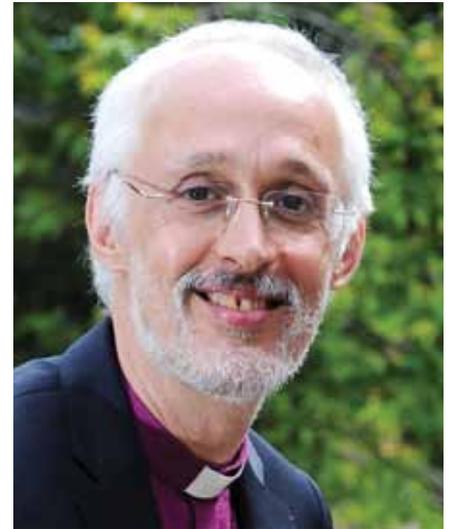
INTRODUCING OUR NEWEST PATRON

We were delighted that the Rt. Revd David Walker, enthroned Bishop of Manchester in November 2013, accepted our invitation to become a patron of Church Housing Trust.

Bishop David's connection with the Trust began nearly two decades ago and he has been instrumental in helping us obtain funding for projects we support in many different areas across England.

Church Housing Trust will value immensely his ongoing commitment and active role in promoting awareness of social and special needs housing.

Bishop David comments "I've worked with CHT over many years. I remain a great fan of how the Trust enables quality homes and services to reach the most needy among us."



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