



Rebuilding broken lives

NEWSLETTER

It gives you something to get up for

Sonya*, just 23 years old, is a **substance misuse coordinator** at **Leatherhead service Catch 22**. As a paid apprentice, she works with a number of young people who are trying to leave behind a past of drug or alcohol abuse. Not long ago, she was in the same position.

As with many substance users, her own childhood was chaotic. When she was 14, her mother committed suicide.

A few years passed and, still unhappy at home, Sonya moved into a squat with her boyfriend. But he became increasingly abusive, so she left, without any idea of where to go. She had already started experimenting with drugs and alcohol.



A vulnerable 18 year old, she had lost touch with her family, isolated herself from friends, and felt unable to trust anyone. She spent three years on the streets, getting 'off her face' to ignore her situation, before deciding to make a change and join a detox programme for young women.

After 14 months she was able to move into a shared house for formerly homeless people. While there, she began volunteering at Catch 22. 'It gave me a whole different focus – something to get up for in the mornings,' she explains enthusiastically.

In March, Sonya became a paid apprentice at the service and moved into her own flat. She took a Level 2 NVQ in health and social care, and will soon be able to begin Level 3 and expand her role at the service. She is ambitious, and clearly loves her work.

She wouldn't have been able to do it without your donations, which funded her travel to and from Leatherhead throughout her volunteering. Without the bus fare, she says, she couldn't have completed her qualification.

The other support workers at Catch 22 say that Sonya's advice really makes an impact. She is able to be frank with new service users about her past. It boosts her self-esteem to find that others listen to and respect her: 'It builds my confidence.'

She has also been able to reconnect with her family and become closer to her dad. Now she is optimistic about her future, and says: 'I can turn my bad experiences into something good.'

Name changed to protect identity. Image courtesy of Riverside Care and Support.

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Helping people in Manchester



The Bishop of Manchester, The Right Revd Dr David Walker, (pictured) has been a keen supporter of Church Housing Trust for many years, and is now one of our patrons.

In June the Bishop invited local supporters and church representatives

for supper in his home so that they could find out more about our work in Manchester.

At the event two members of Gate Buddies spoke about their work with inmates at Manchester Prison. Gate Buddies aims to stop the cycle of offending and homelessness by

supporting ex-offenders and their families. The team includes former offenders who understand what ex-prisoners face when trying to re-join society. They use their experience to support people throughout their journey leaving prison.

Jacqueline has volunteered with Gate Buddies for nearly a year. Her past helps her to support others affected by offending and substance misuse. 'For me, it's a two-way street. I get as much out of volunteering as I put in. It is incredibly rewarding to be part of a programme that helps people through the transition from prison to home from start to finish.'

To find out about hosting an event, or projects local to you, please call **020 7269 1630** or email **info@churchhousingtrust.org.uk**.

Developing life skills in Guildford

Homeless adults in Guildford have been very busy with a number of activities designed to build their self-esteem and develop life skills.

For example, some residents have had first aid training, which will be very useful when they apply for jobs or volunteering roles.

Alongside the day-to-day building of skills, we support individuals by funding exciting experiences they may never have had the chance to do before. Although it was still chilly out, 10 residents greatly enjoyed going on a swingbridge canal trip (pictured), learning a few nautical skills and getting through multiple cups of tea in the process.

They've also received new equipment for their IT training suite. IT skills are essential for everything from applying for jobs and benefits to getting in touch with friends and family.



It is vital for them to learn these skills and have continued access to the internet.

Even a small amount of funding can open doors for people to realise their aspirations. With his entrance fee paid for by Church Housing Trust, one intrepid resident is even taking part in a charity running event.



Helping homeless veterans

Many ex-Services personnel joined the forces at a young age, some straight from their family home.

This means they never have the opportunity to learn independent living skills, such as how to cook for themselves.

Because of this, homeless veterans at a scheme in North Yorkshire were pleased to receive funding for cookery courses. Held during March and April, course participants said that they loved getting the chance to socialise, learn new culinary skills, and of course, eat some delicious food.

Giving residents the benefits of gardening

Lots of people without homes are getting their gardening gloves on this summer thanks to your support.

Gardening is both physically and mentally therapeutic, and provides homeless people with a simple way to enjoy nature and socialise with one another. It's also the ideal activity for those that only have access to small outdoor spaces.

Residents at Vaughan House in Guildford have new plants and tools for their gardening club, as does the gardening group at Hamble Court in Reading, who have celebrated with a barbecue.

Residents at St Ambrose Court supported housing in Hull will soon see a lovely new shed being put up, while young adults at Cambridge Youth Foyer are hard at work creating an allotment from their garden space (*pictured*), and hope to cook and eat the results.



Building on young parents' confidence



Being a mother has always been hard work. Being a young, homeless mother can make you feel hopeless about you and your child's future. So we showed young mums how much they are appreciated and how well they are doing.

The young mothers at Marie House refuge, for women and children fleeing domestic violence, enjoyed fun-filled Easter activities and Mother's Day pamper sessions.

Young mums and their babies at the Teenage Parent Project in Wakefield also celebrated Mother's Day with cards, presents and a few chocolates (*pictured*). They got to spend

time with each other at a new breakfast club, and joined together for an Easter Egg hunt.

The mums and children at Judith House refuge also have a packed programme of social activities to look forward to, while Acorn House mother and baby project has a new child fence so that the kids can safely play in their garden and get some much-needed fresh air and sunshine.

This is all thanks to you

A special thanks to all our donors, regular and occasional. You are too many to list! But every single donation helps towards rebuilding a person's life.

Additional thanks to the churches that have donated so generously, including: St John the Baptist, Cookham Dean; St Mary the Virgin, Rickmansworth; New Malton PCC; St John the Baptist, Axbridge; The Parish of St Mary, Wexham; All Saints, Thurlstone; the Church of St James the Great; Whittington PCC; St Saviours Church, Guildford; and Christ Church, Eaton.

We are also very grateful to have been remembered in the wills of the late Miss Sybil Jeanette Howard, Miss Winifred Florence Calcutt, Mrs Frances Marguerite Alice Winter, and Mr Peter Bellamy. The money we receive from legacies enables us to plan ahead and commit funds to supporting people in response to growing needs.

Who we are and what we do

Church Housing Trust grew out of the Church Army, a multi-denominational group of Christians who began helping homeless people on the Thames Embankment in 1882.

We remain committed to supporting people who have been homeless or in crisis, and who need help to establish a home and re-join society. We also support people who need ongoing help due to disability or illness.

We fund support for individuals that is not provided by government services. We fund training, activities, and personal support; we pay for clothes and travel so that people are able to start volunteering or working; and we pay for basic household goods and furnishings when they move in to their own homes.

Miriam Morris (*pictured*) joined Church Housing Trust as Director in April. She was previously Marketing Director at Places for People and, before that, Action for Children.

Miriam's aim is to raise awareness of the work we do and the increasing need for it.

'Church Housing Trust plays a vital role in showing the love of Christ to the most isolated and weak people in society,' she says. 'I am honoured to be part of this work, and I pray that we will be able to help more people by inspiring Christians of all denominations to get involved.'



Get more involved

If you or your church plan to raise funds, or awareness, for homeless people, we're happy to send you free materials about our work, including posters, leaflets and a DVD.

We can also provide speakers, from schemes local to you, who can give first-hand stories of how every donation helps to rebuild a life. Please get in touch for more information.

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