

## NEVER GIVE UP ON ANYONE

**Kevin Scanlon's success story is a striking one. Once sleeping in a tent in the woods, he is now Area Manager of Riverside ECHG (RECHG)'s supported housing in Cambridge, based at the newly refurbished Victoria Road services. He tells us what turned his life around.**

**Kevin had a difficult childhood by anyone's standards. His father was a violent alcoholic, who eventually passed away in a psychiatric hospital. Uprooted from London to the north east, his relationship with his mother broke down entirely when he was 13. He got involved with crime and drugs, hated school, and left without qualifications. At 17 he joined the army, and after nine years had gained a solid education, but was disillusioned by the Services.**

He first worked with Riverside's Cambridge services in 1995, through an agency role at supported housing scheme Willow Walk, but he continued travelling and taking on temporary jobs. Several years later, redundancy meant he lost his home.

Returning to Cambridge, he slept rough before spending several months at Willow Walk. Having been an Arctic welfare instructor in the Army, he was happy to avoid the town centre and 'bivvy up' in the woods.

He had sofa surfed before, but now he experienced the extreme isolation of homelessness: "You're right at the bottom, and it's hard to get out of. You lose confidence and self-esteem. It takes a lot of courage to take opportunities." At the time, he had lost touch with his family; he felt it was necessary to make a change.

"I decided I had to stop messing around when I found myself on the street. It can be a chain of events; it can happen to anybody," he explains. One employment worker of RECHG's Missing Links initiative, Marion, made a huge difference: "She inspired me, put in a lot of time and effort, and went out of her way to help me."

Riverside has been a large presence in his life ever since. "It's given me a home, a job, a career, and confidence

through training." After a year's work placement, he decided to dedicate himself to Cambridge's homeless community, and in 2002 became a Supported Housing Officer at Willow Walk: "I realised it was something I wanted to stick with; something I was passionate about."

In 2011 he took over as Area Manager of Cambridge Service. His experiences gave him great insight into the needs of the homeless people he works with every day: "It's all about the clients getting the best service we can provide. People can only change when they're ready to change - you can never give up on anyone."

**Kevin is living proof that anyone can turn their life around with the right support. Please give someone a second chance and make a donation today.**



Kevin in his office at Victoria Road

**POSITIVE Action FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE**

## WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

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

Schemes up and down the country not only offer a roof and a bed. Residents are given health checks, help with substance misuse, housing and employment advice, and the opportunity to learn skills such as cooking and use of IT, which will help them when they are able to move on and resettle independently.

CHT funding provides the added value that ensures 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.

CHT is proud to tell you that 80% of our income is used for the homeless people we support as outlined above. 14% is spent on fundraising and 6% 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.**

## REACHING NEW HEIGHTS

Residents of Bracken Court in Leeds recently proved they have a head for heights. CHT funded nine residents on a visit to the City Bloc Indoor Climbing Wall for an activity day.

Those that attended had to complete team challenges, and several of them had to work hard to overcome their personal fears – especially of heights. The group worked together on activities such as walking as one on a giant plank, and building a tower of crates with one of the team supported, wobbling, on top.

The residents enjoyed the challenges, physical activity, and the chance to get to know one another and try something they'd never done before. The day was so successful that Bracken Court is planning similar activities in the future.



Happy Bracken Court climbers

# THANKS TO YOUR DONATIONS...

## ACRE LANE'S TRANSFORMATION



Before...

After two years of fundraising, Acre Lane in Brixton has revamped its ground floor, including renovating back offices for on-site staff, the reception area, a meeting room, new staff areas and an improved communal space, with a computer bank, for residents. The scheme provides 35 bed spaces for a variety of support needs, including residents with mental health and mobility problems.

The communal area is brightly painted, and has four computers, as well as a wide-screen TV and plenty of comfortable seating. It will be used for training, breakfast clubs and workshops, which had to be postponed when the work first began.

Scheme support staff commented that visitors used to be intimidated by the building's entrance. The renovations began last May and the communal area was ready for use by mid-July, with a few pieces of minor work left to add the final touches to the building.

A number of residents attended an inaugural meeting in the room in August, and the building will shortly hold an official opening to show off its improvements.

**Andrew, a resident, thinks that the scheme and its staff do amazing work regardless: "[They] bring people back to life, back to full colour."**



...and after! The new communal area

## SMART COOKIES

**A total of 12 residents at Riverside's Vaughan House in Guildford showed off their culinary prowess when they embarked on Jamie's six week Cookery Masterclass.**

Frederick Holt is one of the lucky residents who learnt basic food preparation skills from chefs of Jamie's Italian restaurant, and created delicious specialities including curries, lasagne and fruit pastry pizzas. He became homeless when his learning difficulties meant that he could no longer live with his family.

He received a certificate of completion at the end of the course, signed off by Jamie Oliver himself. "I can cook more food, and I'm eating better," he adds, although he admits to favouring some of the less healthy recipes: "The best thing was the chocolate cake."



Cllr Sarah Creedy, Lead Cllr for Housing and David Elms, Mayor of Guildford, with some of the successful cooks

## LIFE LESSONS

**48-year-old Troy Gasson moved into The Quays in Sittingbourne when his marriage broke down last year, and has made good use of his time there.**

Since arriving, he has attended several Canterbury College satellite courses, including a European Computer Driving Licence award, and Level 1 Maths and English.



Troy shows off his certificates

Church Housing Trust awarded Troy funding to complete a Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) course and achieve his lifelong ambition of becoming a teacher. He has also just finished a CISCO Engineering course, and was commended by Canterbury College, who gave him their prestigious Award for Outstanding Achievement.

**"Teaching is something I really enjoy doing," he affirms, "It's a totally different challenge." As he's proved, it's never too late to learn.**

## SAY AWWW....

It's been a busy year for the mums and babies at our young families' projects across England.

### THE ZOO THAT COMES TO YOU



Reggie with Ginger the guinea pig

The mothers and babies at Elizabeth Court were delighted recently when Abby Brindley of the Mobile Farm Experience brought a selection of small animals for the children to meet.

This included a Spaniel called Teasel, several guinea pigs, lop-eared rabbits, bantam chicks and a rather shy tortoise.

Everyone enjoyed the cute animals and the chance to eat some pizza and cake, including local Community Support Officers, visiting grandparents, and of course the mums and their children.

**"It was a really good day; the kids enjoyed it and the adults got about five minutes of peace!" said one happy mum.**

### TPP TURNS 10

The Teenage Parent Project (TPP) in Wakefield recently celebrated its 10 year anniversary, inviting previous residents to mingle with current mums and babies and enjoy some games, prizes and snacks.

The TPP first opened its doors in September 2004. Since then, the team has welcomed and supported 73 young women and 64 children.

Suzanne Prince has worked there for three years. "It makes a massive difference to the girls," she says, "They come in lacking any basic skills, and with no confidence or self-esteem. You can see them growing into young women, moving on into education and getting jobs.

**"Church Housing Trust are brilliant," she adds. "They allow us to provide fun activities as well as educational ones."**



TPP staff and residents, past and present

## WITH YOUR HELP



A themed meal at the Old Tea Warehouse

129 formerly homeless people moving into their own accommodation were awarded grants of up to £250 to help them to furnish and equip their new homes

Five schemes bought new furniture or tools so they can spruce up their gorgeous allotments and gardens

Two schemes held summer barbecues

A talented musical resident at Jamaica Street in Bristol will be blowing his own trumpet

A resident at Vaughan House in Guilford has a bicycle so he can get to work

The residents at the Old Tea Warehouse in High Wycombe got together for World Cup-themed activities

A keen angler at Jamaica Street in Bristol has his own fishing equipment

Two schemes have enjoyed sunny days out in Cleethorpes

Mums and children at Peppercorn Lodge in Ipswich had a fun-filled trip to Colchester Zoo

The art group at Hamble Court in Reading has new materials and equipment for its creative residents



Building a greenhouse in Barnsley

Two schemes have taken their residents on relaxing boat trips

There is more leisure and sports equipment at The Crossings in Hull

Young people at the Powerhouse Foyer in Liverpool had an exciting day at Boulder Adventures

The ever-popular cooking club at Willow Walk in Cambridge has funding for another tasty six months

Three schemes are running essential educational courses in cooking, living skills, and health and social care

The book club at the Old Tea Warehouse goes from strength to strength

Three schemes have new football equipment or training sessions running - GOAALLLL!

A musical resident at Jamaica Street in Bristol has a guitar to strum

The clients of the Domestic Abuse Service in Doncaster had a relaxing day out at the seaside

Residents from The Victoria Project in Cambridge went on a fantastic three-day adventure trip to Edale Youth Hostel Association

There was a residents' baking event at the Old Tea Warehouse in High Wycombe - scrumptious!

The Teenage Parent Project celebrated Independence Day with a party

Five residents across the country have successfully completed educational or vocational courses

Happy residents of Enfield Young People's Service took a thrilling trip to Thorpe Park



Partying at Elizabeth Court



Ladybeck House residents enjoy a boat trip



A summer BBQ at Lucy Faithfull House

# SPOTLIGHT ON MANCHESTER



The MPVC - a rare quiet moment!

The Manchester Prison Volunteers' Centre (MPVC) acts as a meeting point for prisoners and their families. Nicola has been volunteering there for roughly three years, nine hours a week, and is one of five regular volunteers among a team of about 10 support workers.

On long-term leave due to mental health issues, her occupational therapist suggested she start volunteering as a way back into work. She was initially reluctant, but now loves the support she can provide to visitors, even if it's just a cup of tea.

She gets a lot out of her sense of involvement, and knowing she makes a contribution to the wider community. One of her proudest moments was being given a smiley-face token by her manager, because she always has a friendly expression on her face: "I'm always smiling."

The Centre has also given Nicola the chance to take both mental health training and physical training, which involves a mixture of self-defence and fitness.

**"Volunteering has given my life structure," she adds. "It feels great."**

## BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

Another Manchester project supported by CHT is Gate Buddies, which aims to involve ex-offenders in the rehabilitation of those leaving the prison system, and take the stigma away from having a criminal record.

Church Housing Trust was able to fund the documentation needed by the Gate Buddies volunteers, such as DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks, while they attended training courses. 10 newly trained Gate Buddies are overjoyed at the positive impact they will have on others.

Alena is living proof; after her community service, she never thought she'd get another job. Finding Gate Buddies, something positive to focus on, turned her life around, and she knows that her story can be a powerful message of hope.

**"When I was in that situation I felt I had nobody," she comments, "Now I'm ready and armed with information for people. I can't wait to get my teeth in to the job."**



Riverside staff present awards to proud volunteers



Gate Buddy Alena

# REMEMBERING WW1

In the centenary year of the First World War, Riverside will provide housing and support to more than 1,000 ex-Servicemen and women. CHT trustee, retired Commander Bob Cribb, explains why he helped to found those services, and why they are still so vital today.

Veterans' schemes have recently been in the media spotlight as part of Britain's World War One commemoration activities. Personnel from The Beacon visited older sheltered housing tenants at Liverpool's Boxdale Court on 4 August to mark the Royal British Legion's Lights Out event.

"It is important to mark the centenary; to remember the conflict, the reasons behind the conflict, and to remember the individuals whose lives were lost," Bob comments.

Before his retirement, he was an Instructor Officer in the Royal Navy and worked in training, education and resettlement, taking on the role of trustee to CHT in 2008.

Throughout his 27 years of service, he became increasingly involved with helping veterans find housing when they left the Armed Forces.

He explains that every case is individual: "Some people are ready to rent, some can join a [supported] scheme, and some simply can't go back to where they came from." These diverse requirements weren't being catered for by standard accommodation. Bob was particularly worried about the needs of veterans that had left with mental or physical health issues.

His involvement with Riverside began when he met MoD Area Manager Trevor Morris, who was at the time running a Riverside scheme in Middlesbrough. Trevor was also concerned by the number of homeless veterans coming



Bob (standing second from right) at Mike Jackson House

through their doors, and wanted to find a way to provide them appropriate housing.

In September 2000, Bob and Trevor set up the Single Persons Accommodation Centre for Ex-Service Personnel (SPACES) to fill this need. Bob then became service representative for the creation of two purpose-built accommodation schemes near garrisons: Mike Jackson House in Aldershot, and The Beacon in Catterick.

Today, more and more veterans are getting the help they need. Bob encourages everyone, ex-Services or otherwise, to be honest if they are struggling: "Recognise those that are there to support you."

Although no longer directly involved, he is immensely proud of the schemes' achievements, and the growing array of support available; a fitting way to remember.

Residents from veterans' scheme Mike Jackson House visited the Imperial War Museum and the Tower of London to see 'Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red', an installation of 888,246 ceramic poppies, which represent each British fatality of WW1.

Mike Jackson House resident Dave commented: "I wrote a poem called 'The Field of Opium' about exactly this. It was in my mind then, but this is real."



Dave at the Tower of London

# THANK YOU

As always, a huge thank you to all of our donors, especially those who have set up a legacy or standing order. Your contributions make a huge difference to us.

We would like to thank all of the PCCs, churches and individuals who have held fundraising activities, or shown their support. We have also received the support of a number of trusts, without which many larger projects would not go forward. Finally, thank you to our anonymous donors, and to those people who have donated but asked us not to acknowledge their gifts.

## GIVE ONLINE

Recent changes to taxes and charity donation schemes are making it more and more expensive for us to process cheques. Please consider making your one-off donations online; it's quick and straightforward.



Simply visit [www.churchhousingtrust.org.uk](http://www.churchhousingtrust.org.uk) and click 'Make a Donation'.



You can also give a small amount via text. Send the message **CHTG14** followed by **£2, £4, £5** or **£10** to **70070**.

## WANT TO KNOW MORE?

To keep you more up to date with our activities, Church Housing Trust has launched a monthly email newsletter. To sign up and receive regular updates about the schemes and people your donations help, visit [www.churchhousingtrust.org.uk](http://www.churchhousingtrust.org.uk) and click 'Subscribe to our Newsletter', or choose to be contacted by email on your donation form.

You can also catch up with CHT news on Facebook and Twitter.  
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## Can you make a regular gift?

**Regular donations help us plan ahead with the knowledge that our income is secure. If you do not give to us on a regular basis, and would like to, please complete the Standing Order form below.**

### Standing Order Form

To the manager (*your bank's name and address*):

Please pay Barclays Bank plc, Millfield, Peterborough (20-67-37) for the credit of Church Housing Trust, account number 90305189

the sum of £ \_\_\_\_\_ each year/quarter/month (*delete as applicable*)  
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**If you have not already completed a Gift Aid Declaration on our behalf**, and you are a UK tax payer, please tick the box below so that we can reclaim the tax you have paid on the value of your donation for homeless people at no cost to yourself.

I confirm I am a UK taxpayer and would like CHT to reclaim the tax on this donation, all donations I have made in the past six years and any donations I might make to CHT in the future. I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of UK Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) to which I donate will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify.

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