



NEWSLETTER

EASTER - 2007

'The more things change the more they stay the same.' So the saying goes, and our ever changing world gives us ample opportunity to test it out. Here at Christian Family Concern we are proud of our history and heritage. Many of our supporters have stood with us over many years, through every different phase of the charity's work. Our particular field of family life, has, of course, changed beyond all recognition as the years have passed by and yet our focus, and our motivation, remains unchanged.

The latest change in the charity's work has been the expansion of the support of young single mums in the newly refurbished Wallis House. This edition of our newsletter focuses on this exciting and challenging new development.

Of course, it takes us right back to the beginning. Over 100 years ago it was the plight of unmarried mothers in Victorian England that moved Janet Wallis to found our organisation. A brave step which challenged opinions and attitudes of her day with an unswerving love and compassion that stepped straight from the gospel story.

And so today, in a vastly different world, that same story, of Jesus and his love, compels us to take similar risks and seek to meet ever present needs. Even over the last few years this work has called us to confront many of the major issues within society. Asylum seeking, homeless-

ness, substance abuse, violence – domestic and external, mental health issues, self image and all its repercussions, and many more. Just as 100 years ago, many of these issues are controversial and polarise opinion. Yet they are confronted here not through a leading article in a national newspaper, or even by a sermon proclaimed from a lofty pulpit, but via direct encounter with real people and their own moving stories. And in the midst of all of this, a new child, often bringing fear and anxiety, but also holding out the glorious possibility of a new hope.

And so, at the beginning of the 21st century, Wallis House continues to live up to its name, as does Christian Family Concern.

IAN HAMLIN
TRUSTEE



AN OPEN DOOR AND A LISTENING EAR

Just a year ago we began praying that on completion of the new bed-sits at Wallis House, they would not only be fully occupied but that God would bring those who really needed the support we could offer them. Whilst we cannot become complacent in our prayers, God has been faithful throughout the year, and there have only been spaces for a matter of days, and on occasions one mother and child moving out as another moves in.



We have recently met full capacity with ten mothers and ten babies in Wallis House; as you can imagine this has led to a very busy and at times noisy house. The washing machine has gone onto overdrive and the beautiful new kitchen is in constant use. It is wonderful to see the place alive and fully utilised.

The staff support the mothers during their stays at Wallis House in many different ways, offering guidance and support in caring for their children, helping to access benefits and local facilities, to name a few.

The support we provide can be very varied: often this will involve cooking skills, creating a pleasant aroma around the building. Learning to



budget wisely and assistance to find suitable educational opportunities are popular areas for support.

However, I feel the greatest support comes from providing an open door and listening ear to find out how they are feeling, the issues that concern them, and most importantly the opportunity just to chat and show interest in them as a person.

Many friendships have been formed by the mothers at Wallis House it is always encouraging to see them



Most of the social events have involved eating together such as at the Christmas meal or barbecue. There have also been trips out to a local children's farm and ten pin bowling which have helped to forge relationships between staff and residents.

God has provided us with a fantastic resource in Wallis House, which means we can in turn provide a safe, clean and compassionate environment for the mothers and babies living there. We are pleased to be able to offer encouragement and guidance to those who live here. This is aided by the valued support we receive from those who pray for and give to this work.

MARI WALTERS
HOUSING MANAGER



MOVING ON

'When I first moved into Wallis House I was 8 months pregnant and put into a single room upstairs, where I had to share a kitchen and bathroom with five other residents.

I didn't mind this very much, but I knew that once my baby arrived changes would have to be made, such as



space, and I knew I would feel uncomfortable washing my baby's bottles in a sink that everyone else was using and having to bath her in my room. So I was overjoyed when I was told I was being moved downstairs to their new bedsit facilities which consisted of my own bathroom and kitchen.

The bedsits downstairs are so refreshing. They allow the residents to control when they cook, there are no queues for the bathroom and the space is much greater. The bedsits are fully furnished with a

built in boiler to control your own heating and personal phone buzzer for when your guests arrive.

The kitchen is fully fitted with a fan assisted oven, fridge and lots of storage space. The bathroom has a large bath and shower, sink, toilet and electric fan. I do enjoy socialising, but there is no obligation to talk to everyone, unlike upstairs where I would bump into someone on my way to the bathroom or kitchen.

I love it here- the wooden floors make it easier to maintain and as we are provided with a mop and bucket there is never an excuse.

Living here feels like I own my own flat already.

I would like to compliment Wallis House on the new facilities which have made



my flat waiting days seem effortless and stress free.

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COMMENTS FROM RESIDENTS OF WALLIS HOUSE AND BERACAH

I have enjoyed my stay at Beracah Bedsits. All the staff are very friendly and we do interesting things at the house meetings like cooking Chinese food in an electric wok!

Sarah has been very helpful. I see her once a week for a cup of tea and a chat, and the residents also have trips out now and again. We went to Brighton and Madame Tussaud's which were both great. I remember eating fish and chips on the beach and having a stone throwing competition!

At Christmas we were all given a neat bundle of food and drink and invited to a delicious Christmas dinner cooked by Leslie. I have been very fortunate to have stayed at Beracah and would highly recommend it.

S.

'I have been living here for a while. The people are nice and it is fine living here, with no difficulties.'

'I like living here, all the staff are really supportive. They are here if I need a shoulder to cry on and I can talk to them about anything. I also enjoy the extra activities that happen at Wallis House.'

'The help of the Support Workers is good. They have helped me to organise myself and claim benefits.'

'I like living here and the support is good.'



A visit to Madam Tussaud's



FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

I hope you have enjoyed reading this edition and find the news about our work in Wallis House interesting, encouraging and perhaps even challenging in some ways.

Of course the rest of our work continues and across the charity there are big issues, and little tasks, to deal with week by week if we are going to do our best in serving the children, young people and parents who come to us. It is often in the 'little things' that we make the most difference, by our attitude, by

our manner, by our willingness to listen, by taking time. A supporter put it this way in a letter she sent with a donation recently...

If any of you are feeling low or that what you are doing is not worth much, think again...Zechariah 4v10: 'despise not the day of the little things'.

Your small pebble could have everlasting results, likening our actions to the effect of throwing a tiny pebble into a large lake, causing ripples in the water that go on and on.

I know we are all thinking about Easter now, but



I hope you will forgive the inclusion of one photo reminding us of Christmas; one of our Members, a past nursery parent, Sarah Stenning, works for the local Cooperative Funeralcare and was able

to arrange at her branch office a collection of toys, supplementing those that came to us from local churches after their toy services.

Some of the toys went to children and young people for Christmas, some we have held on to, as in previous years, to provide for birthday presents or particular needs as they arise later

in the year, and some we have been able to put to use in our family drop in, kids club and nursery.

Thank you for all the ways, big and small, in which you are able to continue supporting the work of Christian Family Concern. Please continue to uphold us in your prayers, perhaps particularly that we will reflect Christ's love in the way we go about the small things of each day.

LESLIE HILLIER
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

CAN YOU HELP MAKE A DIFFERENCE ?

The committed support you have given us over the past year is particularly important in sustaining our work.

This support has come from many of those who were involved with the adoption work at Christian Family Concern. But, from the continued support we receive, we are assured that Our Lord's work is being recognised in ever changing situations.

We have recently entered into a small recycling project with a company, Recycle 4 Charity Limited, who undertake to recycle used printer cartridges and old mobile phones, with Christian Family Concern receiving funding from their

efforts. If you currently use printer cartridges (except Epson) or have old mobiles please send them to us and we will forward them on.

If you would like further information check www.recycle4charity.co.uk

Additionally, we have now developed a facility through www.charitychoice.co.uk to enable our supporters to make donations on-line. These can include a 'Gift Aid' element if required.

If you would like further information on ways of supporting us please telephone the office on 020 8688 0251 or email info@christianfamilyconcern.org.uk.

prayer focus

Sunday

"The love of God is broad like beach and meadow."

We pray that all the children of CFC come to know and appreciate the unending love that our Lord gives to us.

Monday

We give thanks to God for the vision of our founders, and all who have developed and changed those concepts in order to meet the needs of our constantly changing society.

Tuesday

"For the beauty of the earth, for the beauty of the skies."

Lord God, we give you thanks for the beautiful planet that you have given for us to live on; may we treat it with respect and care. We thank you too, Lord, for our daily provision of food and water; may we appreciate these gifts and be able to share them with others so that no-one will be left wanting.

Wednesday

We pray today, Lord, for Leslie and all the staff at CFC and give thanks for all their dedication to make the life of the children and their parents more enjoyable and comfortable.

Thursday

We give thanks today, Lord, for all who support the work of CFC through their prayers; through their giving of their time and the talents that You have provided for them; and for their support through their giving of gifts, financial and material.

Friday

We thank you, Lord, for the inspiration that you gave to those who were instrumental in the abolition of slavery two hundred years ago. Inspire us too, Dear God, to learn how to eradicate people trafficking, Aids/HIV and the other scourges of modern society.

Saturday

As our week draws to its close, we pray, Lord, for your blessings on all the parents and mothers-to-be who use the services of CFC. May they realize that all the love they receive comes from You and is given in Your name.