



A History of Change

My first visit to Christian Family Concern was in 1966 when it was known as the Mission of Hope. I helped on a Saturday bathing the children and taking them out to play. A lot has changed since then!

Christian Family Concern has always been about caring for children and now encompasses a wide range of facilities for families.

I returned in 1995 after adopting our first child and came to the Drop-In. I found a warm friendly reception and a caring environment where my daughter flourished as she got to know other children. The Drop-In at that time was a place for parents and children to 'drop in' between the hours of 10.00 a.m. – 2.00 p.m. and was held on the first floor of Birdhurst – where Birdhurst Nursery Baby Unit now is.

Since that time the Drop-In has changed buildings and changed names – it is now known as Explorers and meets in Beracah.

Explorers still offers a warm caring environment to all who visit. They have the added advantage of different rooms for children to play in - an art room, reading room and a kitchen for parents

use. Over the years there have been different activities offered to parents - parenting groups, art classes, craft making, Indian Head massage - are but a few.

Explorers is open to any parent or parents wishing to find fun and fellowship with their children. Many different nationalities can be found here and the different backgrounds enrich our time spent together.

There have definitely been a lot of changes since my first visit in 1966, but all have been made for the benefit of families and children and I am sure Christian Family Concern will always be a big part of my life.

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Thoughts For The New Year

My name is Sharon McLean and I am one of the new Trustees at Christian Family Concern. I have been a user of the Nursery for 7 years during which time my two children attended before going to school.

We have just celebrated the festive season. Christmas means different things to different people. To some it may be the excitement of receiving presents, for others it may be an annual holiday, but the real meaning of Christmas lies with celebrating the birth of Jesus.

As we enter 2005 let us carry on the celebration as we celebrate all the families, children and adults that will come through the doors of Christian

Family Concern. As you enter the premises we would like you to feel our love in action by the time we spend nurturing and caring for the children and taking time for each other within the various activities that are being run here.

Just as God showed love to mankind by sending His Son, we too can express that love in the little things we do, so let's make 2005 a year of giving gifts, not just at Christmas but throughout each day in the little special things that we do and say.

Happy New Year

SHARON MCLEAN - TRUSTEE

prayer focus

Sunday

How great is the love the father has lavished on us that we should be called children of God.

1 John 3:1.

Thank God that we are all His children and that He provides for all our needs.

Monday

Let the children come to me.....for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.

Matthew 19:14.

Thank God for all the children who come to activities at Christian Family Concern and for the blessing they are to their families.

Tuesday

For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations. Psalm 100:5

Thank God for the initial vision of this charity and the faithful work of the Trustees and staff. Pray that God's love will always be reflected in the work and planning of the charity.

Wednesday

Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in Heaven. Matthew 5:16.

Thank God for the volunteers who give their time to enhance the work at Christian Family Concern and for the supporters valued prayer and financial gifts. Pray that there will be an increase in volunteers and supporters in the coming year.

Thursday

I call to the Lord who is worthy of praise.

Psalm 18:3

Thank God for all the opportunities there are to support families, particularly for the 'safe refuge' provided for young people fleeing persecution in their homelands. Pray that they always receive care and compassion as they seek to create a new life.

Friday

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. Philippians 4:5

Thank God for everyone working at Christian Family Concern. Pray that in all the work they do, God's love and gentleness will shine out and the Christian ethos of the charity will always be apparent.

Saturday – Christian Witness

God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit whom he has given us.

Romans 5:5

Pray for the ongoing work of Christian Family Concern that there will be further outreach to all sections of the community and that uptake of the services provided will increase in the year 2005.



NEW YEAR 2005

FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

As you can see from our photos the children, parents, and indeed the staff, enjoyed our Christmas celebrations which included a Christingle Service, various parties and meals. We thought that a New Year newsletter might be good this year as we only sent out the Annual Review in October.

I want to thank our supporters for all the interest you have taken in the work of the charity this last year, and indeed in previous years, by your prayers, practical help and donations – many we know given sacrificially. It has been great to get letters from some of you over the last twelve months.

***'Then Jesus said to his disciples:
"Therefore I tell you, do not worry"
Luke 12.22***

Some of the families we have been working with this year have had difficult situations to deal with – life threatening illness, chronic poor health, serious safety concerns, homelessness, violent situations and more.

Paler by comparison, the charity has, as in previous years, had some very 'sticky' months financially during 2004. I know too that amongst such a large



staff team there are always those who have had personal difficulties to deal with.

Jesus' command "not to worry" can sometimes be quite challenging. Throughout the year we apply all of our resources, our staff skills and knowledge, advice from other professionals, practical hard work, etc. etc., but we continue to pray into all situations and attempt to abide in Him.

Somebody said recently that we had not lost the 'Christian' out of Christian Family Concern, but we also had not lost the 'Family'.

A Social Worker Manager from a local authority outside Croydon after visiting a young person staying with us said to me that 'We have nothing like this his outcome is so much better for being with you'. I know that the same youngster had said to the Manager that it was 'a bit like

being in a familyeveryone.... the people in the office all care.'

In our Easter newsletter we will be featuring our Kids Club work which has recently included children with disabilities – so until then Happy New Year on behalf of all the staff.

**LESLIE HILLIER
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**



THANK YOU

To all the churches and individuals who kindly gave us donations of harvest produce and Christmas toys. Your generous donations were wonderful and gratefully received.