

Events

Annualcelebration

Saturday 14 April, 2.30pm -4pm
St Cuthbert's Church, Lothian Road

Speaker: Fred Drummond of Evangelical Alliance
Please come and join us as we celebrate what
God has been doing through Bethany over the
last year.

Bethany Big Sleepout:

Friday 27 April, High St, Edinburgh

Get involved in our sponsored sleepout. It's a great way to make
a difference for homeless people by doing something practical and fun.
Call 0131 625 5320 or email sleepout@bethanychristiantrust.com for
an info pack.



www.bethanychristiantrust.com

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News Update

02/07

Bethany
Christian
Trust

Education Education **Education**

Managing **Debts**

One Step At A Time

Let no debt remain outstanding...

Have you ever received an unexpected item of official mail through your door that made you gasp in horror or groan in disbelief?

It might have been your Electricity or Council Tax bill, or a letter from the TV Licensing Authority. Perhaps it was a letter from your Bank or Letting Agent demanding immediate payment of outstanding arrears.

Most of us, at one time or another, have experienced this kind of letter coming through our letterbox and whether the demand is justified or an administrative error it can cause distress and worry.

Money matters weigh heavily on our minds, and perhaps most acutely at this time of year, as the first Bank statements of the year hit our mats and the full extent of our Christmas excesses become apparent. Building up the courage to get in contact with the organisation or individual demanding payment, involves a mental hurdle which is not always easy to clear, especially if the letter is worded in a threatening or intimidating manner.

Many people today are facing issues in their lives to do with debt, money management and household budgeting and don't know which way to turn for help. When experiencing the confusion, guilt or panic financial demands present, there is always the tendency to avoid dealing with the issue in the hope it will go away.

As debt increases the person in debt can start to feel completely helpless. They may struggle to find a way out of their financial difficulty or the means to cope. The default response to ignore the problem until the debt has spiralled completely out of control sees many people facing the harsh realities of losing their homes.



Often simple advice about debt prevention and money management skills would go a long way to prevent some of the desperate situations of poverty people find themselves in, but unfortunately people in financial difficulty often seek advice as a last resort when they are already in debt above their heads.

A survey on debt carried out by the Citizens Advice Scotland in 2003 found that the average debt owed by their clients was £13,380, which was 64% up on the preceding survey conducted two years previously. 25% of these clients said they had been harassed or pressurised for repayment. Scottish Affairs Select Committee Inquiry on Poverty in Scotland – A Response from CAB Scotland (Oct 2006)

Bethany Housing Support workers provide support to people living in the community who have been, or are at risk of becoming homeless. The majority of these service users are on a low-wage or benefits and for them, debt problems are a present reality or are a constant threat.

Catherine Sawyers of Bethany Supported Housing in Edinburgh explains:

'Most people we support are already in financial difficulty or could slip into it very quickly. Some haven't been able to hold down tenancies as they have struggled with drug or alcohol issues. To them, dealing with financial matters is a huge challenge. In Supported Housing we teach people how to set aside money for bills and other financial commitments and to many, this is a new skill they have never learned

and have to get to grips with. Many of our service users come from chaotic backgrounds and are used to blanking out problems such as debt. Some hide bills away or 'bin' them while others turn to their addictions to escape when they have problems they can't deal with. At Bethany, we want to promote independence for homeless and vulnerable people so we don't simply take over organising their bills for them if they are struggling. Instead we try to teach simple ways to manage their own money.'

Bethany offers Supported Housing and Housing Support services in Dumfries, Edinburgh and Fife. This vital support plays a huge part in encouraging people to maintain a healthy, balanced life in many areas, with managing finances just part of the story.

We are delighted that Mike Pudsey and Andy Murray have joined Bethany as Managers in Supported Housing Dumfries and Edinburgh, respectively. It is greatly encouraging to know that with our excellent housing support teams across Scotland, vulnerable people are being empowered to manage their tenancies through learning skills such as money management. Thanks to Bethany support, service users are given hope for the future as they avoid falling into desperation through burdens such as living in debt and financial hardship.

Q's & A's

In this edition of Bethany News we ask the question...

‘What do you **think** is the **worst** thing about being **homeless**?’

Alistair Cameron – Duke St

‘There’s an overall sense of loss, of loneliness, and a lack of purpose.’

John – homeless person at the Simon Community

‘When you stay in a hostel you have to live by another set of rules and curfews.’

Clive – homeless person

‘Having no privacy, no possessions and nowhere to relax.’

David – homeless person

‘The worst thing is that you can't go to the bathroom and get clean.’

Newsbytes

CHRISTMAS GIFTS - Thanks to all individuals, churches, schools and companies who supported Bethany this Christmas through donating money to keep our services running, as well as individually wrapped gifts of toiletries, personal gifts and food hampers for service users.

PASSING THE BATON - Bethany is delighted that Mark Ballard MSP put forward a motion at the Scottish Parliament in December to recognise Bethany Christian Trust's ‘pioneering work’ among homeless and vulnerable people. The motion offers specific congratulations to Bethany on our ‘Passing the Baton’ pilot project in Niddrie which has successfully resettled 16 homeless people by rebuilding community relationships that tackle the loneliness and isolation which often leads to repeated homelessness

NEW BETHANY SHOP IN KIRKCALDY -

Bethany is delighted to announce the purchase of a new shop premises on the High Street, Kirkcaldy. We hope to open the shop for business in April. All good quality donations of clothes, furniture and household items will be gratefully received.



If you would like to help volunteer in the shop, please give us a call on 0131 467 3030.

Education Education Education



There are activities in the pack covering a variety of curriculum areas.

- Environmental Studies
- Citizenship and social action
- Religious and moral education

The pack also includes ideas and worksheets relating to the organisation of fundraising events, which allows pupils to practise skills such as planning, developing and evaluating a project, the kind of skills described in the Enterprise for Education document produced by the Scottish Executive. Bethany Schools Pack is designed to help teachers understand and communicate the background to and problems of homelessness to their pupils in a creative and thought-provoking way.

There is a part for Bethany to play in educating the younger generation about the background to problems surrounding homelessness.

Correcting misconceptions and raising awareness of the real issues of homelessness is vital for young people growing up in a society burdened by relationship breakdown and family break-ups.

We hope that through education about these things we can help young people to consider an appropriate response to the needs in society around them, and also go some way towards preventing them becoming homeless through making bad choices.

In order to help us interact appropriately with schools, one of our volunteers with experience of education has put together a pack about homelessness and its causes for use in Primary Schools. The aim of the pack is to help children engage with the issues of homelessness, and to learn about the work of Bethany.

In response to Bethany inviting schools to consider using the pack, several schools have responded to the needs of homeless and vulnerable people by donating money and items for home ‘starter packs’ to Bethany’s Homemaker service, and also donating Christmas gifts of food and personal items to give to service users at Bethany House and the Bethany Christian Centre. We are delighted that schools are taking on board our suggestions and choosing to support homeless and vulnerable people in this way.

We would love to support teachers and parents as they communicate about homelessness to children, and to provide a Christian response to the needs we see around us, as demonstrated through Bethany’s work. If you would like to receive a free copy of our Schools Educational Pack on homelessness, please contact Chris McNeil in the Fundraising department on 0131 625 5323.

Day in the Life

Alistair Cameron

In this News Update we speak to Alistair Cameron who has been working in Bethany shops for 6 years. He is currently manager of the Duke Street shop in Leith.



Could you tell us about shop life?

The Bethany shop on Duke Street is visited by an eclectic group of people. Plenty of ordinary Leith shoppers make their way into the store everyday, looking for everything from furniture, to books, to CDs. A small number of people who do the rounds of charity shops make appearances every now and then. There are plenty of experts who come with an eye for a bargain so we have to make sure we don't undersell things. We also have service users who come in and like to use the shop for more than just buying goods. They feel a warmth at Bethany shops that doesn't exist in other stores in Edinburgh. Just yesterday, a man came into the shop who had slept outside all night in the cold and rain. He was shivering and freezing cold, but knew that if he came in and warmed himself up, he wouldn't be ostracized, but welcomed.

Could you talk us through a day in your life at Duke St?

I arrive around 8:15am to set up the shop and catch up on any necessary admin work. When the other staff arrive we start the day with devotions and talk about the jobs that need to be done. When the shop is open, three quarters of my time is spent on the shop floor. I might be cleaning, tidying, explaining, or making a sale. There are also admin tasks that go on all day such as replying to e-mails and being the liaison between Requip IT and the shops. Closing time is 5pm and after that we clean up the shop and close everything down.

What does Bethany give to the service users?

Bethany gives service users security, hope, and a genuine future.

The Bethany shops specifically do two things for service users. Firstly, they help service users turn houses into homes by supplying quality affordable second-hand goods. Secondly, the shops give the service users the respect they deserve.

They're as welcome as any other customer. Even if a service user appears to have had a few drinks, they are still to be treated as a human being and like any other customer. If the shops were to differentiate treatment between regular customers and service users that come in as customers, the shops would be failing to demonstrate our Christian values.

What is your favourite part of the job?

Watching a member of staff make a big sale is fantastic. I love seeing the staff being successful and enjoying their reaction to a success.

What is your least favourite part of the job?

Missing our weekly target. The staff put in so much work in the shop that it can be very frustrating and disappointing when the goal is not met.

Why do you do this job?

I love to work with people, I love Bethany, and I love making money. This job allows me to do all three at the same time.

What does Bethany mean to you?

God used Bethany to put a backbone into my life. I don't know where I'd be without Bethany. Seven years ago I showed up at the Christian Centre. The future seemed so bleak and dark. Bethany helped give me hope and a future.

How can our readers help support the shops?

Continue to pray, donate, buy, and volunteer. Even an hour a week can make a difference in the shops. Everyone matters. Without our volunteers, we'd really struggle and couldn't run the shops.

One Step At A Time

Located at the base of the Grampian Mountains in Perthshire, Compass Christian Centre, founded in 1967, is the longest established Christian outdoor centre in Scotland.

It caters for visitors in groups as well as individuals from every walk of life, offering fun and friendship and a chance to unwind through activities such as climbing, skiing, walking, kayaking or simply sitting in front of a roaring log fire.

In 2006, two service users from Matthew House had their first experience of the Compass Centre when they went up for a weekend to assist with development of the grounds as part of their personal development programme.

There was an air of excitement in the car as the two service users and one member of Bethany staff drove up to the Compass Centre's rural location, with drive-time entertainment including discussions on the local floral and fauna, which surprisingly included llamas(!), as well as enthusiastic singing to make up for the lack of car stereo.

On arrival at the Centre, the young men were given the opportunity to try archery and kayaking which they enthusiastically embraced for the first time, discovering to their delight that they excelled at both. In the evening, they made use of the sports hall facilities on site to play football.

After Friday spent trying new activities, sport and relaxation, the rest of the weekend was taken up with the challenging task of rebuilding some disused outdoor steps for the Compass Centre, which had rotted over the course of 10 years.

The project involved serious graft to deconstruct the existing steps, followed by shovelling gravel to shore up the new steps. Although unglamorous, once

fuelled by a hearty cooked breakfast and stimulated by the challenge ahead, the lads from Matthew House were keen and threw themselves into the job.

By the end of the weekend, after lots of tea breaks and encouragement from the staff, the young men had helped create 36 even steps on a firm foundation which should see the Compass Centre and their visitors safely up the hill for the next 10 years.

Matthew House staff said they saw many benefits for the young men from the weekend away. Bethany staff were impressed by the work ethic which surfaced as they knuckled down to the task and noted the satisfaction and sense of achievement the men experienced from seeing a job to completion. As well as enjoying the opportunity to try out new skills and activities the Matthew House service users also commented on how they had enjoyed being in the countryside in a non-threatening environment, without the possibility of conflict, in contrast to the environment they were regularly exposed to at weekends in their home town.

As our service users discovered, what the Compass Centre offers is more than just a range of leisure activities. As well as the benefits of refreshment and relaxation, working as part of a personal development programme offers the intangible feeling of a sense of satisfaction of seeing a job well done. Thanks to the Compass Centre staff, and the pleasing environment and facilities of the Centre, the improvements and progress the guys from Matthew House have made involved more than just that of a couple of steps.

Caring Christmas Trees

2006 Summary

Christmas is over for another year and with it our Caring Christmas Trees campaign which this year was even bigger than last.

More trees were sold, more volunteers got involved, and more money was raised. Throughout Edinburgh and Fife, individuals and businesses alike showed their support for homeless people by buying trees, donating money, volunteering time, and donating supplies for the project.

We are so grateful to the hundreds of volunteers who were willing to get their hands dirty to make the project work. Ranging from MSPs, Fettes College students, to Bethany service users all working alongside one another. People from all walks of life were able to meet each other, volunteer together, and experience the true spirit of giving at Christmas through their involvement with Caring Christmas Trees.

Overall, 300 volunteers in Edinburgh and Fife handed out over 3500 trees in just 4 days. We are delighted to announce that the total raised is almost £50,000; figures are still being finalised. The money raised will contribute towards the £100K cost of running the Care Shelter, and other much needed homelessness services in Fife.



'Thanks to everyone, volunteers and customers alike, that helped make our second year of Caring Christmas Trees a success.'

Paul's Story

I was raised by my mother and grandmother, because my father abandoned me before I was even born. My childhood was as normal as could be expected. I was shown loads of love and me and my little brother never wanted for anything.

I started drinking at twelve because everybody else was doing it. I was always a shy boy and the drink gave me so much confidence. It helped me talk to girls and be one of the boys. This drinking became a normal part of my weekend. At fifteen, I started to smoke cannabis and take L.S.D. I always wanted to run with the crowd and be jack the lad.

I left school and started a job as an apprentice painter and decorator but it didn't last because I was sacked for not attending college as it was affecting my drinking time. At seventeen I started going to all night raves where I would be taking ecstasy tablets and amphetamines (speed). At this time I was constantly out partying, staying up for days and not sleeping because of the ecstasy, amphetamines and the drinking. Then one night at a night club when I was 20, I took a line of cocaine and that was the start of my coke habit. Everybody that I was hanging around with was using drugs and drinking to excess. I was really enjoying life at this time - out clubbing, meeting different people, going to different places around Britain to go to clubs. However, my job at the time was affected by this as I never went in on a Monday or sometimes even Tuesday as well.

As the years progressed, my cocaine habit spiralled out of control, and I was drinking every day and using cocaine every day. Every job that I ever had I was sacked from because of my poor attendance with my drink and drug habits. I lost everything - my fiancé, my house, my jobs, I wrote off cars, my friends didn't want to know me. I was stealing, I was manipulating, I was lying,

I was a very violent person. I was always getting in trouble with the police. I hated everyone round about me. The only reason that I hated everyone else was because I really hated myself for the destruction that I was causing. I was a broken man and had suicidal thoughts for about a year. The only two people that stood by me were my mum and my brother. I didn't know where to turn to or what to do.

I took a seizure and was in hospital for five days and that gave me a real fright. I swore I would never use drugs or drink again. Once I was out of hospital, after four weeks I started using and drinking again. This was when I finally realised that I had a problem and I needed to get help. By chance I met an old friend who had been using heroin but was now clean who gave me his number. When I phoned him, he was in Bethany due to a relapse and I asked for Bethany's number because I needed help. Now when I look back, I believe the Lord put him in my path. I phoned Bethany and got an interview and was accepted into the Centre. This was the start of my recovery.

My first few weeks were really hard. I kept breaking down in tears due to the guilt and shame for the pain I had caused my family. The guilt was really killing me, I couldn't deal with it. While I was in the Centre, I noticed that the staff had a peace and contentment about them and I wanted this too, so I asked the Lord into my life. Nothing happened right away, but as the weeks went on I felt the burden of guilt and shame being lifted from my shoulders. I could feel an inner peace and contentment. I also experienced



'I thought I was beyond repair, but I now realise God loves all His children just the same.'

a feeling that I could not explain, the closest I could get to it was someone putting their arms round me and saying 'Everything's going to be alright, son'. This was the first time in my life I had ever experienced peace and contentment.

I had always believed in God because I was raised a Catholic, but I had never had a relationship with Him. I never thought I could be forgiven for the things that I had done in my life. I thought I was beyond repair, but I now realise God loves all His children just the same. It's amazing the way things have fallen into place for me since I came to Bethany. The staff at Bethany have been brilliant. My key worker, David Craig, has encouraged me so much and my addiction worker, Cath Turrell, has been phenomenal.

I'm now a student at Telford College doing a course in Work in the Community. The course is based on youth work. I want to do this course because I want to help the youth of today avoid doing the things I did. I do voluntary work in a youth club. I'm now part of a church where I receive support, encouragement and most importantly have people praying for me. I'm planning to do mission work next summer. I know now the Lord has a plan for me and I am free from my previous life. I never need to return to that lifestyle again because I have hope for the future.