

## Dates for your diary

### **Bethany Big Sleepout**

Friday 27 March 2009

Edinburgh City Chambers, High Street

Something you can do to actively support homeless people. Give up your bed for the night and sleepout to help raise money. For further info contact Claire on 0131 625 5320 or email [sleepout@bethanychristiantrust.com](mailto:sleepout@bethanychristiantrust.com)

### **Bethany Annual Celebration**

Saturday 25th April

Celebrate homeless people's lives transformed over the past year.

For furniture uplifts in the Edinburgh area please call 0131 467 3993. For collections in Fife call 0845 062 2211. We would be delighted to accept all good quality donations, white goods and soft furnishings meeting 1988 fire regulations.

Front cover photography by Laurence Winram.

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PLEASE NOTE: Bethany's head office has relocated from Jane Street. Our new address is:

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# News Update



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# Bethany in Aberdeen



## Bon Accord:

**“Happy to meet, sorry to part, happy to meet again”.**

Not just the motto of Aberdeen but a challenge to Bethany as we deliver homelessness services in Aberdeen. It’s a reminder that we need to be welcoming and genuine, relational and offer unconditional love and support in the city.

Aberdeen has had an established mission serving homeless people for over a century. First established as the Sheret Court Mission back in 1886, the latterly re-named Aberdeen City Mission has offered support to thousands of people over the past hundred and twenty three years.

Bethany was therefore, excited to be invited to come alongside the Aberdeen City Mission’s work last year as we brought our Passing the Baton project to the city. Since the resettlement and reintegration service went live last year, we have seen our first Aberdeen Passing the Baton member grow in self-confidence and enthusiastically getting involved in his community by offering support to others who need help. We are looking forward to welcoming more members to the project in the near future.

Working alongside Aberdeen City Mission allowed Bethany to become familiar with service provision in Aberdeen and revealed opportunities for us to support homeless and vulnerable people in the city. Changes at Aberdeen City Mission led the Mission’s board and local leaders in the city to suggest that Bethany might consider operating the Mission’s services in Aberdeen. That was the background for the amalgamation of Aberdeen City Mission and Bethany in October last year, with the hope that homelessness services in Aberdeen would continue to grow and develop.

The homelessness services that Bethany provides in Aberdeen are largely delivered through drop-ins run by a fantastic group of volunteers. Two of the sessions take place in the evening and two during the day in the north of the city, in Tillydrone. The two daytime drop-ins, based at the “Lighthouse Centre” operate on gender specific lines (one for men and one for women).

This year, the Lighthouse men’s drop-in has been very active working to build relationships and encourage service users through activity trips fishing and cycling, life skills courses and work placements. The women’s Lighthouse drop-in has been a real help in building self-esteem and friendships. A couple of the women who attend the drop-in gave us their comments: “The Lighthouse is my only chance to meet up with people and helps with my depression – it gives me a chance to speak to the volunteers who are always helpful”. “It is a great place to meet up with other women and that means making friends as well”.

**The women’s drop in sessions include crafts, cooking, beauty therapy, quizzes, art and last year they had their own mini fashion show.**

As well as amalgamating with Aberdeen City Mission and setting up Passing the Baton in Aberdeen, our newest project to take off in the area is the first ever Aberdeen Care Shelter. The Shelter, run in partnership with local churches and supported by the City Council, ran for a 2 week pilot in January this year, and was well received. We hope we can build on this in future winters. It is so exciting to be able to use this model of services to meet the needs of rough sleepers in a new area.

2009 is sure to be a busy year for Bethany in the North East of Scotland as we look at building on existing services and encouraging service users to move on positively with their lives. Please continue to pray for our work and do get in touch if you would like to get involved. Call Gavin on 01224 647677.

## What's happening in Fife

### As ever, Fife is a hive of activity as Bethany staff work away offering services to homeless people across the Kingdom.

With service user feedback we have made a few changes to the drop-ins over the past year, with more on the horizon. Staff had noted a fall in attendance at the Dunfermline drop-in as a knock-on effect of a town centre ban for anyone with an antisocial behaviour order; (the Dunfermline drop-in is situated in the town centre). This frustrated those who could not get to the drop-in as they were exactly the people who would benefit most from coming. In response to this, one Dunfermline drop-in session a week has been moved to a different location to support those who found the main venue hard to reach.

A plus of having smaller numbers, though, has meant that staff have had more opportunities to work with service users one-to-one, helping them to address their needs and encouraging them to move on positively.

Literacy work has been thriving in the Leven drop-in, with contributions to the Bugle magazine outstripping the column inches available. Tim Porteus, Bethany's Community Education Worker has also been working closely with some of the men encouraging them in storytelling. Through this, several of the service users have been pleasantly surprised to discover a talent for storytelling they never knew they had. It is great to see their confidence increase as they discover what they can do.

Increasing confidence and encouragement are some of the motivators behind Bethany's new Bridge Project, soon to be piloted in the Methil-Leven area, thanks to funding from Reliance Security.

### The project is designed to help bridge the gap between informal learning and structured education such as classroom learning, which many service users have not engaged with successfully before.

Tim explains "We want to help people get into learning in a way that's accessible for them. Many are terrified at the thought of going to college, especially if they didn't get on well with school. We want them to realise that learning can be enjoyable and there are so many opportunities out there. The Bridge Project offers one-to-one learning support for service users to help people grow in confidence and provide the nudge they need to move onto the next step."

To find out how you can help support the new Bridge Project, please call Tim on 0131 625 5411.

## What's happening in Supported Housing

### Bethany's Supported Housing service is vital in helping people maintain their homes, build relationships with others in the community and encouraging service users to realise their potential.



In Dumfries, the Supported Housing team are pleased to have fully occupied flats and be helping the maximum number of people we can. There are 9 service users currently receiving support in Bethany accommodation in Dumfries, as well as a further two receiving support in their own tenancies. We are delighted that the 2 people in floating support were previously in Bethany accommodation and are now getting on well managing their own tenancies. It is also encouraging that 5 Bethany service users are submitting referrals to get their own tenancies soon. Let's hope they are successful!

As well as home visits, the Supported Housing teams work hard to motivate service users by organising activities and taking them on interest trips.

Last year, Supported Housing service users in Edinburgh enjoyed a holiday trip to a country house in Aberfeldy. The group were very glad to get out of the city and into the beautiful Perthshire countryside. The chance to try out canoeing on the loch also went down well. Other activities enjoyed throughout the year were trips to Arbroath, St Andrews and Dundee, as well as day trips to Blair Drummond Safari Park, a barge trip on the canal and a picnic in North Berwick. These trips have provided a great chance for service users to build self-confidence and achieve ambitions as well as enjoying the chance to get out and about, do something different and meet new people. This year 22 Supported Housing service users in Edinburgh have moved on positively. We wish them well in the future and trust they will continue to grow in confidence and independence.

### Day in the life of Alasdair Bennett

In this News Update we speak to Alasdair Bennett who has been working as Manager of the Christian Centre for 10 years.



#### Could you tell us a little about the Centre?

The Centre is a housing support service for men with addiction issues. It is a place for the healing and restoration of broken lives. The men who come to us are broken and vulnerable, seeking freedom from addictive lifestyles, and are ultimately in need of love and acceptance. The Centre is about community and family; we seek to show Christ's love to each individual person and also to share that love as a community. Components of our service include general support, individual addiction support, group recovery programmes, optional devotional meetings, recreational activities, life skills development, and access to therapeutic work and training opportunities.

#### Could you talk us through a day at the Centre?

A typical day would involve breakfast before 8am followed by a diary meeting to run through the events of the day, followed by house cleaning, which is shared by staff and residents together. The recovery group programme runs from 9.30 – 12.30 and starts with devotions. At 12.30 there is a shared lunch prepared by staff and residents and in the afternoon there are further groups for senior residents looking at personal development.

There is a shared tea at 5:30 which might be followed by an evening activity such as a pool competition or cinema trip. During the day, various residents are also involved in other activities such as support groups, voluntary work, Community Education classes, seeing family, one-to-one support with addiction worker or with their support worker.

#### What does Bethany give to the service users?

It provides safety and a sense of security and belonging. It is a place to learn to trust again and hope again and to find freedom from addictive lifestyles. Practically, we provide all aspects of housing support and link people up with a broad range of service providers to assist in meeting the varied needs of the service users.

#### What is your favourite part of the job?

Sharing in facilitation of recovery groups with the residents – seeing them grow in the realisation of their potential and to see that new life is possible.

It's also great when you meet someone who's moved on and is doing really well. It's fantastic to meet someone in a shop, or in the street, or you hear about them on the grapevine and you hear of their continued enjoyment of life.

I also love working with the staff team who are an amazing group of people; they have so much passion and commitment and demonstrate the great love of God.

#### What is your least favourite part of the job?

If somebody relapses and slips back into addictive behaviour, especially after a lot of progress. You hope the best for each person and want them to keep on taking positive steps forward. Because we are a close community, everyone in the Centre is affected when someone has a set back.

#### Why do you do this job?

Because of a sense of Christ's calling, coupled with a love for those who are vulnerable and who need to find freedom.

#### What does Bethany mean to you?

I think it's an amazing opportunity and privilege to share in God's work and to see lives changed.

#### How can our readers help?

Please pray for everyone in the Centre; staff and residents. Pray that service users would find freedom from their addictions. Financial gifts are also welcome. We need to redecorate the lounge and there are also some building repairs to be done.

## Streetwork Updates



Inverness City Council hosted a Civic Reception for Bethany. We were delighted to receive such a warm welcome, especially as we have not worked in the area before.

Following on from our last newsletter highlighting the importance of our street work we are delighted to report back on how things are going.

The Edinburgh Care Shelter has been a constant support over the last few months. Paul Oliver the Care Shelter manager reported that the service got off to a busy start with record numbers in its first week of opening. It has been a challenging few months for staff coping with undercurrents of unrest between service users and a few volatile situations. Staff teams have showed great professionalism and commitment.

Paul shared one story of hope which particularly struck him: "There was one man who had been coming to the shelter for a few weeks. He was from Aberdeen. I had the opportunity to speak to him on several occasions about his addiction; he really needed help. I told him about the Christian Centre and tried to encourage him. One day he just took himself off to the Centre, arranged to have an interview, was accepted and moved in. That was just brilliant and such an encouragement for the team. It's great that the Care Shelter has been a stepping stone for this man to start to confront his addiction and get his life back together."

As well as our Edinburgh Care Shelter, the start of 2009 has been particularly busy on the streetwork front with the pilot of two new Care Shelters in Aberdeen and Inverness. A lot of preliminary work has gone into preparing for them, both in building up support with the local community and also getting in contact with rough sleepers to let them know about the services and how they could access them. Inverness City Council hosted a Civic Reception for Bethany where local church leaders, councillors and business people were enthusiastic about the new Inverness Care Shelter. We were delighted to receive such a warm welcome, especially as we have not worked in the area before.

Our other good news is that, along with Edinburgh City Mission, we have been able to purchase a new Care Van, thanks to the generosity of Charlotte Chapel in Edinburgh, who donated money from their 200th Anniversary Appeal to replace the old van. As the new Care Van needs to be modified to make it fit for purpose, we need to raise £6,000 to refurbish it. All gifts are welcome to help get the new van kitted out so we can get it on the road as soon as possible.

## Bethany and You

We want to say a big thank you to everyone who has supported Bethany and our service users over the winter.

### A special thank you goes to:

Beeslack Community High School for donating Christmas gift boxes for service users.

KPMG for donating Christmas presents for children of service users and for providing and helping with their Christmas party.

Kilsyth Academy for donating shoebox gifts full of toiletries and lovely personal gifts.

Blackhall Primary for donating money from their Christmas service.

The many companies and organisations who gave money in lieu of sending Christmas cards to each other.

We were also delighted to have Michael Page Recruitment staff volunteering in our shops in December.

A final HUGE thank you to everyone who bought a Caring Christmas Tree and to all the volunteers who stood out in all weathers handing out the trees. You are all superstars!

**Thank you all for making a difference in people's lives.**

Poem from the Bugle  
(Quarterly magazine created  
by Bethany service users)

## A Room With A View By Automatum



The view from my room,  
A curious mixture of religious antiquity and modernity.  
From steeple spire to the new Scottish executive,  
Nestling in the port.  
A thing to do, get on my bike,  
And explore, find a place to reflect!  
Edinburgh – a museum to a past Victorian age,  
Yet springing forth with vibrant diversity!  
Decrepit yet maintained  
Its own authoritative splendour,  
Asserts a future in question!

## Bethany and Me – Gary’s Story



### **If I hadn't come to Bethany my life would be a mess.**

I was living a life of despair; I was very lost. There was no security. I was just out for what I could get. I didn't feel good about myself; I felt totally rubbish.

I was brought up in a nice Christian family in Perth. We had a very normal family life. After I left secondary school I completed a 3-year apprenticeship as a plumber. I could have stayed on there, but I left and started doing bar work. I wanted to travel so I went and worked in Gran Canaria for 6 months and when I came back I did hotel work all over the UK.

During my apprenticeship I started going out at weekends and drinking. I liked the social scene and loved the party life and going to pubs and night clubs. From then on, throughout all my jobs alcohol was a big thing. I looked forward to going out.

I would go out drinking with colleagues; there was always someone around who would go out with me. I started drinking more frequently and it began to affect my life. I would come in to work late or would come in still drunk. Going out drinking became my life. I used to go on big “benders” which affected my family relationships, my relationship with my girlfriend, my accommodation, everything. But for a long time I was in denial that I had a problem.

I continued stumbling from job to job, living in different places. I always had a roof over my head. Sometimes I stayed in hotel accommodation that came with my job, or with friends, or with my mum, but sometimes she couldn't take it any longer. I came to Edinburgh when my mum moved away from Perth around 3 years ago. My mum got me a job at the Faith Mission bookshop, through her church, but after a while we both agreed it wasn't working out.

When I lost the Faith Mission job I stopped staying with my mum and moved to Newington and I went on the biggest bender ever. It lasted 6 weeks. I spent a fortune; I just went ballistic.

By this time my life was a mess. One night I couldn't take the pain anymore and I cried out to God. The next day, through my mum, I got invited out for coffee with John Rodgers from Bethany. He told me about the Christian Centre, but I didn't really bother too much about it. The next weekend I went out and got totally out of my face again and at that point I knew I had to do something. John had given me his mobile number so I gave him a call. He was really nice and arranged to meet me again the next day. I wasn't sure why I was meeting him but I prayed on the way down the road that something would change for me this time for the good. I got an answer to my prayer. When I met John he suggested coming into the Centre and arranged an interview. Everything ran so smoothly, it was weird how it happened. I had an interview and they said they'd call me, and before I had even got to the end of the road my mobile rang and it was them telling me I could move in the next day.

I'm so grateful to be in the Centre. I've never done anything like this before but it's very homely and the food's great. I've completed the 12-step programme which helps you deal with addiction. The staff are kind; they're not like staff, they're like friends. They help you, not just with your addiction, but with every aspect of your life. I became a Christian about 8 months before I came to Bethany, but I didn't really have anyone to help me, I was just intent on partying. Since I've been here I've got help with my faith. I got baptised at a local church a couple of months after I moved into the Centre.

When I first moved into the Centre I was tempted to go out drinking again, but now I feel like it's just not an option for me anymore. God's changed my desires. I haven't been cured overnight, but they teach you how to live your life without your addiction. I think the staff are great. I can't thank them enough for the help, guidance and care I've been shown and for helping me change into a better person who's got a future.

I'm hoping I'll be ready to leave in about 5 months. I'd like to give something back. Because I've struggled with addiction I'd love to work with others who are struggling. I'd love to work at the Centre or somewhere similar. I'm about to start voluntary work with Move-on. I'll be going into schools and talking about housing options to young people with behavioural problems.

Since coming to the Centre, every aspect of my life has been built up. My confidence, my family relationships, my relationship with my son who is 21/2 years old; I'm able to see him now. Before I came to the Centre I was selfish, caught up in my addiction. Being here has helped me come to terms with who I am. Before, I felt lost, unsure of my future. Now I look forward to the future. I'm a lot more at peace with myself and more secure. That's what Bethany has given me; security.