

## News Bytes

### 25th Anniversary Walk for Homelessness

Saturday 20th September 2008

Beautiful Midlothian route – 12 miles (6 mile option)

For an info pack call **0131 625 5320** or email [events@bethanyct.com](mailto:events@bethanyct.com)

### Bethany's 25th Anniversary DVD

Call **0131 467 3030** to get your copy. Suggested minimum donation £7 (including P&P).

At Bethany we are delighted to be able to keep admin costs at a minimum thanks to generous skills donations from designers, photographers and other professionals.

To make a furniture donation in Edinburgh please call 0131 467 3993. For Fife collections please 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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# News Update



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# Challenging Times

**We've all heard plenty about the credit crunch, the downturn in sales on the high street and the growing costs of energy, food and raw material.**

The ripples caused by the uncertain financial climate have had an impact on Bethany's shops, with managers noting the slow-down in takings. With the added challenge of competition from online retailing and cheaply available imported goods, charity shops are seeing fewer customers through the doors.

Iain Gordon, Bethany's Chief Executive, shared his concerns about local authority and government funding reductions with us in the February news update.

This worrying situation means charities, including Bethany, are finding it increasingly difficult to bring in funds to keep services running. Some organisations are stopping projects, considering mergers or facing closure.

## So, what is Bethany doing?

Despite the pressures, we believe the wellbeing of homeless and vulnerable people must always be at the heart of every decision we take.

We have looked at all services in detail – Do they change lives? Can they be improved? Can they be as efficient with lower costs? For some services this decision was more difficult than others. Bethany struggles to fund many of its services and we had to think long and hard about whether we could afford to continue to run them – the Care Shelter, Homemaker and Community Education in particular are difficult to find funding for. However all these services are unique, no-one else is willing to stand in these gaps, Bethany has the only dedicated Community Education service in a homeless charity in Scotland. All our services either have waiting lists or have to turn people away. Most importantly, they work – people's lives are transformed.

Bethany is not prepared to leave people sleeping on the streets over winter, or in houses without beds, or without the education to lift themselves out of poverty.

If we aren't prepared to cut our homelessness services, how can we tackle the problem of decreasing income and increasing costs?

After much prayer, planning and hand wringing, we have tackled the problem with a threefold solution: structural reviews, asking for help, and innovation.

We have reviewed our internal support structures and made some cut backs, sadly this has included some redundancies.

The response to publicly sharing our situation was truly amazing. We are aware of support across the country, we know that people have given truly sacrificially, because you share our desire to give hope and a future to homeless people. We cannot thank you enough.

Finally, Bethany is constantly exploring other social enterprise ideas so we don't have to rely on single income streams.

Bethany founded EQUIPIT in 2005. Initially focussing purely on IT refurbishment, it has now merged with our already successful electrical workshop to sell refurbished electrical goods to other charities, the trade and landlords.

EQUIPIT General Manager Colin Foskett is pleased with the way the organisation is developing.

"There will be ongoing changes and adjustments over the next few months, but already we are ahead of where we expected to be with sales. I'm delighted we have had some big customers coming on board."

Times are hard, but Bethany is staying vigilant and working to stay ahead of the game. Please keep supporting our work. We hate having to turn homeless people away because we don't have suitable resources to meet their needs. If we don't help them, who will?

## Bethany and Us – The Bugle

**We are the Bugle Press Team;** a group of homeless and former homeless people who put together a quarterly magazine with help from the Bethany Community Education Team to share our thoughts.

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### **“The Duke of Leith” By Jimmy McCurdie**

After 10 years of wanting a cat I eventually got one after moving into a house of my own. A big black cat, a male named “Dukey”. He’s black and has yellow shiny eyes. And has a problem with flatulence and likes his food. He knows he’s boss of my house and he knows I love him a lot. And he knows I would give him my last penny... He

knows he’s the love of my life and I’d do anything for him, Dukey my cat that is, and he’s the love of my life

**Xxx My wee pal Dukey xxx** – (There’s only room for one alpha male – that’s DUKEY! I think Dukey knows that he’s boss!!)

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### **“Parting is such sweet sorrow”**

My name and photo will soon have to be taken off the list of the “Bugle’s” Press Team; why? Because Bethany Christian Trust together with Bethany Supported Housing have done the job that they both have always set out to do: namely giving me the confidence, new skills and a genuine feeling of newly found independence to be able to go back out there into the big wide world, and try again.

Consequently, I will be moving into more independent accommodation in the not-to-distant future, and some voluntary work I’ve recently been involved in looks set to become something a little more permanent.

Acknowledgements to all those at, in, or to do with Bethany’s various departments past and present, would take too much space today... Thank you all, each and everyone.

Goodbye – Keith Janes

## Bethany supporting... Young Women

### **May was marked by an important event at Martha House.**

The House had its first ever award ceremony for resettlement. Chief Exec, Iain Gordon presented 3 young women with certificates, marking their achievements over a 12 week period.



Martha House’s resettlement programme helps develop skills for when service users are ready to move into their own home. The programme encourages:

- Social interaction and integration
- An interest in current affairs and interaction with the wider world
- Education
- Building self-esteem.

The young women staying at Martha House also benefit from valuable input from volunteers. One of the volunteers is a school teacher who is granted a day off to come and run the self-esteem class. She arranges social activities and takes the young women out to community meetings and church events so they can mix with people who can be positive influences in their lives. Martha House is currently developing contacts with churches in Whitburn, Livingston and Linlithgow to provide a network of support to help the young women reintegrate successfully into the community.

Glenn Rogers, Manager at Martha House says there are daily challenges at the unit. “The girls often have challenging behaviour and can be angry and unco-operative. In some ways they find comfort in the chaotic lifestyle and the drama of a situation. Some of them have been in Care since before they turned 16 so they don’t know what a stable home life is like. The awards ceremony was very encouraging for all of us. It helped the girls to realise how much they have achieved and gave them something to be proud of. Every girl learns things staying at Martha House, even those who break all the rules.

One of our service users said this to me: “my confidence is sky high since I’ve come to Martha House. I used to be shy and reserved but now I’m confident around people.” That, for me, is what we’re about. Martha House gives young women the opportunity for a successful, independent lifestyle.

### Day in the life of Gordon Kingsford-Smith

In this edition of News Update we speak to Gordon Kingsford-Smith who has been working as Project Manager at Homemaker for the past 2 years.



#### Could you tell us a little about Homemaker?

Homemaker provide furnishings such as beds, wardrobes, appliances, carpets and vinyl to vulnerable people who have just moved into a new home, people who could not otherwise afford the essential household items they lack.

#### What do you do as Project Manager at Homemaker?

I manage a team of staff who interview, support and fundraise on behalf of people in need of furnishings. I monitor the logistics of the deliveries, oversee the quality of items going through our door and the speed with which everything happens. I'm also responsible for health and safety; which is crucial when you're cutting carpets!

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

The vital thing about Homemaker is that we give service users the element of choice of furniture. They can come and choose the furniture they want for their house, instead of just receiving a hand-out. If you are proud of your house, you feel good about yourself. We believe that if you or I wouldn't be prepared to have a certain item in our homes, why should a service user?

As well as providing furniture, Homemaker also offers work placement opportunities. We have 3 volunteers who work as showroom and delivery co-ordinators, their role is vital. Homemaker couldn't run without them. Two former service users have even come back to us as volunteers. Another was staying in Bethany accommodation and now has his own tenancy. One has just received an Inspiring Volunteers award.

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

Seeing over 70 households furnished every month. Also to see definite indicators of improvement. I also love to see the great team spirit as the staff and volunteers work together.

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

The most disappointing aspect is if we've done our best but are not able to raise sufficient funds to get a service user more than one basic item. We are successful in 91% of cases, however.

#### What is Homemaker's greatest challenge at the moment?

Making sure we are helping the maximum number of people possible. We offer such a great service to vulnerable people on low incomes; we have great quality goods available at cheaper prices than you can get anywhere. We need to spread the word among referral agents so that they encourage vulnerable people to spend their Community Care Grants with us rather than taking the money and blowing it in high street stores.

#### Why do you do this job?

I feel called by the Lord to do it and I really enjoy it. I'm glad I get a chance to contribute to Christ's love in action.

#### What does Bethany mean to you?

I think it's a wonderful organisation with a quarter of a century of success helping homeless and vulnerable people. I love the focus of the charity's mission. It's like an A-Z of helping homeless people; moving people on from sleeping in cardboard boxes and supporting them right through to getting their own tenancy and re-employment with everything in between. The complete range of support we offer makes Bethany unique among homelessness agencies.

#### How can our readers help?

Homemaker needs support in so many ways. Financial gifts will help us to furnish peoples homes. Supporters could donate items for starter packs and furniture. We are also in need of volunteer and prayer support.

## Passing the Baton

### Progress Report

Passing the Baton, Bethany's resettlement support project, began as a pilot in January 2005. It has proven so successful at stopping people becoming homeless, that Bethany have employed a full-time Lead Facilitator to develop it across Scotland.

To date Passing the Baton has worked with thirty individuals in Edinburgh, only one of which has experienced a resettlement breakdown. Given that on average one third of people who have been homeless lose their homes again within 6 months, this is an amazing figure.

Three former 'Members' of the service have gone on to become Volunteer Community Representatives, giving their expertise to develop the project and help others.

Two of these Volunteers, Dougie Paterson and Eddie Klimek have been awarded certificates at the Edinburgh Neighbourhood Volunteering Awards 2008 for their contribution to society.

Passing the Baton now has a regular Quiz Night, run in partnership with Casselbank Free Church and Buccleuch Free Church. The Chess Society meets every two weeks. All activities are designed to help formerly homeless people make new friends, develop new skills and are open to members and non-members.



In March, Passing the Baton was launched in Aberdeen. Working in partnership with Aberdeen City Mission, it currently has one Volunteer Community Representative, Douglas Hutcheon. Additional volunteers are being recruited to expand the project, take on more 'Members' and develop Hit Squads and Social Events.

Through Passing the Baton, Bethany plans to support survivors of homelessness in Fife, West Lothian and Dumfries & Galloway by the end of the year.

**If you would like to find out more, or would like to see Passing the Baton in your area, please call Gavin Lawson on 0131 625 5318.**

## Bethany and You

### Over 250 Guests attended a sparkling Black-Tie Charity Dinner Dance at Prestonfield House on Saturday 5th April, to celebrate Bethany's 25th Anniversary, and to raise funds towards Bethany's work.

A remarkable total of over £40,000 was raised. This was a marvellous result, and all who attended seemed to have enjoyed the evening tremendously.

Our grateful thanks go to all who contributed in so many ways to this memorable occasion, with particular thanks to the Volunteer Committee – Gail Aston, Fiona Gormley and Lesley Dodds – who gave so much of their time and talents to ensure the event was such a great success.

“Bethany's 25th Anniversary Ball was a great success, everyone involved worked very hard to drum up support to finance the evening. I felt it a privilege to be part of such a successful evening and blessed to see so many people give to such a worthwhile charity”.

**Gail Aston**



### Thank you

Reponses to our recent funding cuts have been amazing. Thank you to all the churches and individuals who prayed for us.

**Please continue to remember the plight of societies most needy in your prayers and actions.**

Thank you also to the generous individuals who have made donations and set up standing orders to support our work.

## Bethany and Me – James' Story



**If it wasn't for Bethany I'd probably be living on the streets.** I started binge drinking at an early age after my mum and dad got divorced. I had to stand up and testify in court and give evidence against my dad for hitting my mum and it made me feel totally separated from him. Then my mum moved to Turkey and I felt totally separated from her too. I've been drinking ever since; for the last 20 years. I like working but I kept losing jobs due to my drinking.

I came to Bethany for help 5 years ago and stayed in the Centre for 18 months. After I left, I got married but the woman I married also liked a drink so we would drink continuously. I was working in the hotel business in Oban, but my marriage broke down and I started drinking heavily. In the end I was given the sack due to my drinking, which left me homeless.

I came back to Bethany for help. I've been in the Centre for 9 months now and have completed the 16 weeks programme and that has definitely helped. I've adopted the teaching that I got from that. It has helped me realise that I can't start drinking again because it will just lead to continuous drinking.

I've started doing an Introduction to Counselling evening course at college and I'm getting lots of encouragement from the staff there and at Bethany. I'm hoping to go on and do a certificate in Counselling. From the help I've had, I would like to help others; to show them that recovery is possible. I'd like to give back the help that I've had.

I would say to other people who have addiction problems, through Bethany there is hope; through the help that is given at the Centre. The programme can work. There is a good atmosphere and the staff are continually there,

whenever you need them. With the 12 Steps programme and encouragement from the staff, they help you develop your strengths. They tell you options that are available to you like voluntary work. You can improve your skills; they teach you cooking and housekeeping. They give you helpful patterns to follow. The Centre day trips are good. I've been paintballing and go-karting and they are planning a Centre holiday too. These are good because they bring the whole house together and it gives you new hobbies to learn. Before that my hobbies were nightclubbing and going out drinking. These activities are teaching me new hobbies.

I am looking at my housing situation just now and am completing the paperwork to apply for houses. It's nerve-wracking. I don't want to live in a bad area.

I'm volunteering at Homemaker as Stockroom and Delivery Co-ordinator 3 days a week. I make up starter packs and bedding packs and cut carpets and also train other volunteers. I find it really good. Volunteering at Homemaker has helped me to regain my confidence about working again without the alcohol abuse I was putting myself through. I've just received an Edinburgh Inspiring Volunteers Award under the "Impact" category, which is an achievement.

I would say putting in time at the Centre pays rewards in the long run. I still have my bad days, but the longer I've been there, the easier I'm finding it to tackle my depression, anxiety and cravings. The times between cravings are getting longer. It used to be in 7 days I would feel down on 5 of them. Now I'm having maybe just 2. I can see progress. Some days you need people around you and at the Centre and Homemaker there's always someone around to talk to. I don't have any family so having people around is important.