

Please support your local Bethany Shop

We have excellent bargains on white goods and furniture in store. Why not have a pre-Christmas clear out and donate your unwanted items to your nearest Bethany Shop?

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.

Front cover photography by Laurance Winram.

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.

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

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Registered Charity Number SC003783

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News Update



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Do homelessness services keep rough sleepers on the streets?



It feels uncomfortable walking past a rough sleeper who is begging, doesn't it? You don't like to see someone in such a desperate situation. You want to help them, but the question is; what should you do? It's a dilemma. If you offer food and money, the person may go on living on the streets. If you do nothing, the person may go hungry or worse, they might die.

Rough sleeping is a perpetual problem which seems insurmountable. Despite the raft of charities offering homelessness services across the UK, the problems persist. Hardliners have started calling for a tougher approach to offering support with fewer "handouts". Many charities and organisations have come under fire for their street-level services providing for the practical needs of rough sleepers.

Opponents of the "soup kitchen" believe that providing day-to-day practical help for rough sleepers reduces their motivation to move off the streets. They argue that by cutting handouts to homeless people, there will be less incentive to stay on the streets and they will be more likely to make long-term changes to their lifestyle. Just a couple of years ago, even one major homelessness charity in London chose to close down its 20-year soup run service deciding it wasn't addressing long-term needs.

In light of this shift in attitude, should Bethany also close down its street-level services? Bethany's Care Van currently offers nightly soup, rolls and blankets to people who find themselves living on the streets of Edinburgh. For over a decade now, Bethany has also run an overnight emergency winter Care Shelter thanks to support from local churches. At the Care Shelter, homeless people receive shelter, hot food, a bed for the night and support for their problems. With the help of dedicated volunteers, Bethany also runs drop-ins in Dunfermline, Leven and Aberdeen to provide homeless people in need with food and other practical support.

Despite the arguments against giving "handouts", Bethany knows first-hand that our services have been a life-line to many service users over the years. While some who use the services may not be motivated to move on, others come to us in great emotional distress and are desperate to make a change. For these people, the support from volunteers and staff has been invaluable in referring them on to other services where their longer-term needs

could be addressed. Jim Heron, featured in a previous newsletter, told us that he went to the Shelter because he had nowhere else to turn. This led to him being housed at Bethany's emergency hostel and within days he had been given assistance to get a new job and a new home. For him, the Care Shelter made all the difference.

Bethany does all it can to help people break free from homelessness. We know our front-line services are instrumental in this. Our Care Van, Care Shelter and drop-ins are often the first-step for isolated and excluded individuals to build up trust and access the support they need to move on.

What Bethany offers at the Care Shelter and drop-ins, as well as meeting the basic practical needs of accommodation, warmth and food, is experienced staff to get alongside service users and help them identify their underlying problems that have caused them to become homeless. This means we can work with them and support them to address the causes rather than simply treating the symptoms, so that they can start to overcome the difficulties in their lives for the long-term.

Bethany's street work offers rough sleepers hope for the future and could be the difference between life and death for some. The alternative of not offering these services and leaving people hungry and alone out in the cold, unable or unaware how to access the support that they need is just unthinkable.

Bethany's street work is funded entirely by voluntary donations. We are indebted to everyone who gives to support these services and to the hundreds of volunteers who help run the Care Van, Care Shelter and drop-ins.

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.



Thank You

I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to the Bethany Support Workers at Bonnington Road. If it had not been

for you giving me all the support that I needed I don't know where I would have been.

I have been with Bethany Supported Accommodation for the past six years and have lived in three different flats, twice on my own and then with my husband Lee. The big thing in our lives now is that we have a daughter; she was born on the 18th of May 2008

We have now moved out of Bethany Supported Accommodation and are living in a council flat out with Leith. We are both receiving support until we get on our feet and settle into the flat.

Being Me!

Woman, enigmatic woman
Sad, happy girl
Mother, Father, Daughter, Lover
Some say you're such
A paradox

Not "just a housewife",
Not always free
But yet it's nice,
Sometimes, to
Just be me!

By Marion Crawford

It is taking a lot of time and energy to empty all the boxes and put things away into the right places. It was a nightmare at first but now it is getting easier by the day.

I feel that my support worker has been there for me through thick and thin. If it had not been for her being on the end of the phone or seeing her twice a week I don't know where I would be.

I am still going to go to some classes at Bethany. I would miss my friends if I didn't go and see them. I enjoy the chat and the laughs. We cheer each other up if we are feeling down.

So once again, a very big thank you to Bethany Supported Accommodation.

By Jan Lyons

Bethany supporting... People with Addictions

One of Bethany's Addiction Workers describes addiction as "an abnormal Love and Trust Relationship" or "an on-going relationship with a substance or event (such as shoplifting) where the addict is attempting to have his/her needs met by using substances".

The majority of people with addictions who Bethany helps are struggling with drugs, alcohol or gambling, or a combination of these. Many have lost everything through these habits.

Bethany's Addiction Workers recognise that an understanding of the issues leading up to addiction is the key to successful rehabilitation.

Offering support from day one, Bethany works closely with service users to discover and acknowledge the root of their addictions. Through reflection on the past and the development of trust, those struggling can begin to confront their addictions and develop greater self-belief and confidence.

Bethany currently has three Addiction Workers, one based at Bethany House and two at the Christian Centre. Alex McGowan at Bethany House, is part of a team committed to providing a solid support network for service users, many of whom have suffered relationship breakdown and have become estranged from family.

Alex explains that "the addiction is usually the symptom rather than the problem. Most substance misusers are actually medicating their emotional, psychological and spiritual needs. Three important emotional needs are a sense of security, a sense of significance and a sense of self worth. Ideally, these needs are met through close relationships with family and friends; but if we are denied these needs, we will often try to fill the void with other things. As with all issues facing humans, there is not a 'one size fits all' remedy."

The journey from addiction to rehabilitation is a rough one with many set-backs along the way. Having someone to turn to for guidance without judgement is hugely important. Those who seek help for their addictions through Bethany benefit from non-judgemental support in a rehabilitation process that is full of encouragement and hope for a better future.

By Lucy Morgan

Review of Jekyll and Hyde

The Bethany Men's Group recently went to the Storytelling Centre to see a modern day version of Jekyll and Hyde. The play was good. To be honest I was expecting something totally different, not just two actors. But the acting was great and they played different characters. The play is based in Edinburgh and makes you think about Edinburgh and drugs.

As an ex user of drugs myself, and still on the methadone, the play really made me think. It showed you drugs have been around a long time, even when it isn't in the public eye. The play showed the dangers of it. Especially nowadays with all the stuff that gets mixed in. One of my pals has just died of a heart attack after taking a real bad mix of stuff, just like in the play.

By Michael Whitson



Day in the life of Doug Drysdale

In this news update Catriona Beaton speaks to Doug Drysdale who is the new Manager of Housing Support Services in Fife.

Could you tell us a little about the Housing Support service in Fife?

We have two bases in Fife, one in Dunfermline where we have three support workers and one in Methil, where there are four support workers. Our main job is to provide housing support which helps our service users maintain tenancies and address any issues they may be having difficulty with. We work with a wide range of people, from those with addiction problems, or a mental health illness to those who have no support and find it difficult to manage on their own. We are brought in to work with these people and assist them in progressing from this stage to hopefully become more independent.

Could you talk us through a day in your life?

Being the new Manager in Fife, having previously worked as a support worker, it's quite a change of role and a bit of a learning curve. My day as Manager involves supporting, encouraging and enabling our staff, both practically and spiritually. On any given day I could be in Dunfermline in the morning and Methil in the afternoon. It's my job to manage any unforeseen issues that occur, and generally review the support which we provide for our service users. I'm also responsible for representing Bethany Christian Trust at other homeless groups which I attend such as the Fife Homeless Group.

What does Bethany give to the service users?

Too often, work with service users is on a long term basis, for maybe one or two years, so building relationships is a key factor in the work we do with them. Often we are the only main contact within a service user's life so it's important that we are able to offer support for any number of issues that they might be struggling with. A lot of service users who engage positively with us have commented on the difference this has made in their lives and how much they relied on the support of Bethany's workers to get through their most challenging times.

“Ultimately our aim is to enable service users to become more independent.”

What is your favourite part of the job?

My favourite part of the job is definitely witnessing service users regain control over their lives and become independent. Seeing them be proud of their achievements gives me great incentive to keep going. I also enjoy encouraging our staff, and having been in the position of a support worker myself, I can appreciate the need there is for this.

What is your least favourite part of the job?

My least favourite part of the job is probably the administration side of things. Trying to cope with budgeting and finance is difficult, especially when you find there's a real need for something and want to provide for it but the money might not be available to do so.

Why do you do this job?

I do this job because I find it worthwhile and satisfying. There are tremendous challenges and we are faced with highs and lows everyday, but that's what makes it interesting. I enjoy the diversity of the work, not only from the job itself but also from those with whom we work; everyone is a real individual and it's great to work with so many different characters.

What does Bethany mean to you?

I've known and supported Bethany since it began and working for Bethany gives me the opportunity to serve God on a daily basis. It enables me to put my Christian faith into practical action day to day.

“It's a great place to work and while we don't always agree on everything it's wonderful that we are unified through the fact that we're serving the Lord together.”

How can our readers help?

Financial support is obviously a continuous need; the work that Bethany does can't go ahead without funding. Please also pray for the staff and many vulnerable adults who use our service that God will use us to bring hope and peace in their lives.

“It can be extremely demanding and emotionally draining and can often be years before we see encouraging outcomes, so prayer is definitely important in these circumstances.”

Bethany at Christmas

Making a difference this Christmas is easy with the return of Caring Christmas Trees, now in its 4th year. It's such a fun, festive way to help us raise the funds we need for our life-line homelessness services in Edinburgh and Fife. Caring Christmas Trees helps fund our Care Shelter and Drop-in services providing for the neediest in our community.



Your support is vital in making this year's campaign a success.

How Can You Help?

1. Buy a Caring Christmas Tree

Trees are available for purchase via our website until 17th December. Our trees are top quality, competitively priced and freshly cut. You can choose your preferred size of tree, as well as date and location for pick up.

2. Get Involved

Just 4 hours of your time will make a huge difference. We need promotional, distribution and set-up volunteers to help with the campaign. We can't do it without you – please sign up on the website to be part of this year's team.

3. Spread The Word

It's easy – the more people hear about Caring Christmas Trees, the more trees we sell and the more money we raise to help the homeless and vulnerable people in your local community. Tell your friends, relatives, neighbours, colleagues and members of your church. Just ask us for leaflets!!

Funds raised by Caring Christmas Trees go to help homeless people at our winter Care Shelter in Edinburgh, and at our Fife Drop-ins. The need for these services is immense. The Care Shelter provides hot meals, a safe place to sleep and advice for around 600 people every winter. Our Fife Drop-ins provide practical support and advice to about 700 people each year.

Please support Caring Christmas Trees to help relieve the suffering of homeless people this Christmas. Your help really makes all the difference.

www.caringchristmastrees.com

New: This year, as well as Bethany's operations in Edinburgh and Fife, Caring Christmas Trees is being run in different parts of Scotland by 3 other charities in need of funds for their services. Don't be surprised if you see adverts for Caring Christmas Trees in Glasgow, Paisley, Dundee and Perth as well this year. Plus every tree bought in these places also raises some money for Bethany!

Bethany and You

Over the past few months, our supporters have been very busy getting involved with events and activities to help homeless people in our communities.

We want to say a special thank you for all of your efforts. Below are just a few examples of the diverse ways people have raised funds recently.

180 walkers took part in Bethany's 25th Anniversary Walk for Homelessness. The cheerful crowd helped to raise over £12,000.

20 schools, 12 churches and several companies donated household items for starter packs and non-perishable food stuffs for Harvest.

St Andrew Blackadder Parish Church held a gift day raising £6,480 towards the Care Shelter.

St Mungo's donated £10,000 towards our Community Education work.



George Geddes and St Andrew's Baptist Church made and sold jam.

Friends and family of Margo McDowell and Laurie and Sheila Bruce donated money in lieu of presents in celebration of their Birthday and Golden Wedding Anniversary, respectively.

Newsbytes

Bethany in Aberdeen

We would like to announce that Aberdeen City Mission has recently amalgamated with Bethany to help continue to deliver homelessness services in the Aberdeen area.

We are pleased to be invited to join the work among homeless people in the North East which has been officially running for nearly 125 years. Bethany is now situated in the Credo Centre, John Street, Aberdeen, to be on-hand to support the many volunteers who have been running the Aberdeen City Mission services so faithfully over the years.

Currently, homeless people in Aberdeen can go to drop-ins in different parts of town, a thrift shop and get involved with Passing the Baton resettlement project. It is exciting to have the opportunity to get involved with the excellent work already being done in Aberdeen and to ensure that the work among homeless people continues and goes from strength to strength.

Bethany was delighted to win an award from the Centre for Social Justice for services to homeless people in Fife. One of our service users and members of staff were delighted to be invited down to London to collect the award.

Bethany and Me – D's Story



I split up with my partner last year and ended up homeless. My partner had mental health problems which caused strain on our relationship.

Previously, I had been working as a builder and when my partner had a mental breakdown I gave up my job to look after her. As well as mental health problems, she had problems with alcoholism and after a while it became too much for our relationship.

I left and went to stay with friends for a while and then went back to my partner but it didn't work out and I had to leave again. For the next 7-8 months I was back and forth but my partner kept throwing my stuff out. I had always been a worker all my life and suddenly giving up work to look after my partner and coping with the stress in my relationship was too much so I started drinking; it was escapism. Staying with friends also wasn't a good environment for me as a lot of them had drink problems.

In the end, I couldn't keep staying with friends so I went to The Access Point and told them I was homeless. I was referred on to several different B & B's, hostels and hotels, but wherever I went there was always drink and drug users using on the premises. I ended up rough sleeping; sleeping in a tent to avoid it. I went back to The Access Point and begged them to send me somewhere that was "dry". They told me about Bethany so I went down and had an interview at Supported Housing. They told me they would like to offer me support and had a flat, but it needed to be done up so I was referred on to Bethany House (emergency hostel) to stay for a few weeks until the flat was ready. The House was nice, the staff were good and they made you feel comfortable.

I've been in a Bethany Supported flat in Leith for 5 weeks now. I have a support worker, Mike, who I see twice a week. Mike's a good lad; he helps me with bills and makes sure things are okay in the house.

If I hadn't come to Bethany, I would probably have ended up going back to Fife where I come from, but I know I wouldn't have got any work there. At the moment, I'm volunteering doing up Bethany flats. I do painting, repairs and get them ready for people moving in. It's good to be busy. I'd like to get back into paid employment and get my own place in the future.

Bethany Supported Housing

- Bethany provides support to over 200 service users every year through Bethany Housing Support in Edinburgh, Fife & Dumfries
- Over 35,000 hours of housing support were given last year
- Bethany has 50 supported flats with 62 bedrooms in Edinburgh and 9 flats with 12 bedrooms in Dumfries.