

# Transforming **LIVES**

Spring - Summer 2016



Bethany  
Christian  
Trust

# Welcome

Welcome to our Transforming Lives publication. We hope you are inspired by these real-life stories that show how much your support matters and how much we can achieve together.

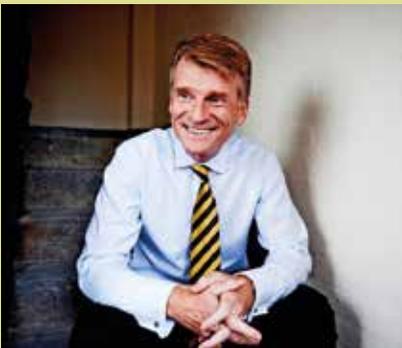
Over the course of any one year, Bethany staff and volunteers support over 7000 people. When people approach Bethany for support, very few are looking for something just a little better than what they have. Everyone who comes to us is looking for something much better; something that will really transform their lives.

Everyone has their own view of the transformation that they would like to see happen. It could be the hope of recovery from the trap of addiction or the process of rebuilding broken relationships. We believe that it is absolutely vital that we listen and understand how each person wants to change. Our services strive to be open and flexible so we can respond to each person individually.

Bethany is known for our work around homelessness issues and the way we do this has changed over recent years. Of course, we still work to get people off the streets and into their own secure accommodation. However, as you will read here, our new and creative services are also designed to help people avoid becoming homeless in the first place.

As loneliness becomes an increasingly common issue, training volunteer befrienders is really important. As we see families under pressure and children in difficulty, we want to reach young people as early as possible so that they can flourish in later life.

We are learning to stop talking about obstacles, problems and what is missing from someone's life. We are much more focused on realising goals and ambitions. We see wonderful things happen when we focus on what a person has, on their strengths and on their hope for a better future.



Your support of our work is much appreciated. Whether you give, pray or volunteer, let me assure you of our heartfelt thanks and that you really are making a difference to people in need. Let's transform even more lives in 2016 as we seek to change Scotland for good.

iain Gordon

# Transforming lives...



## Nikki's story

I can't explain why I find being a volunteer befriender fulfilling, but I do. The ladies' group I volunteer with is one of my favourite events. I look forward to seeing those ladies every week. People just enjoy the company. We sit and have a laugh for a whole two hours, eating choccies and drinking endless cups of tea.

One weekend Bethany organised a barge trip for us and we had an absolute blast, enjoying the scenery and getting the ladies singing on the boat. The trip was more than just a day out. It encouraged the ladies to come out of their shells. You see, many of the ladies experience loneliness and are isolated.

Isolation is a terrible thing and putting yourself out there is difficult when you feel trapped and lonely. I empathise as I understand myself what it's like to be on your own and it's not easy. My personal experience with isolation is what brought me to the place where I want to help people move past that. That's why the support of one friend can make the largest difference.

**Did you know that studies have shown loneliness and isolation to have harmful effects equal to those of smoking?**

Being a volunteer befriender might be one of the greatest experiences of your life. For me, I'm trying to start my own social business, which will hopefully support projects like those that Bethany offers. For a friend who volunteers alongside me, she's completing her dissertation on homelessness, inspired by her time with Bethany.

Our volunteering experiences are shaping us as people: shaping my career and my friend's education. It's funny. At first you're expecting to spend an hour or so a week helping someone else, but then you realise the positive impact it has on your own life. Bethany changes lives by making a real difference not just to the person being befriended but to everyone who volunteers too.

# ...through volunteering

## Andrew's story

It was through my housing officer that I first connected with Bethany. I was having a hard time with my addiction and was in loads of debt as well. It was a really overwhelming situation.

From the day I walked in to Bethany, I've had nothing but great support. You find everything you need here, from addiction workers to help with housing and life skills. You feel constantly supported. At the Centre, everyone is working through similar addiction issues but it's like everything is tailor-made just for you.

Me, I'm a footballer. The staff found this out and started up a football league every Tuesday just because they knew I liked to play. They go out of their way to emphasise all your good points. From budgeting skills to cooking skills, to art classes and writing classes, Bethany has something for everyone. If you're good at anything, which I believe everybody is, they hone in on that. It's a great atmosphere where the theme is positive, caring encouragement.

**Latest figures estimate that drug and alcohol misuse in Scotland costs around £7billion per year.**

In any contact I've had with Bethany, this theme of loving people remains. I want to at some point be in a position where I can give a little back, and no matter what I'll be spreading the same love that Bethany has shown me.

If I had to sum up my future in one word, I would say hope. Through the Centre, I have gained hope and a future. I can see a future now, whereas before, all I knew was doom and gloom. Bethany has instilled that hope and confidence back in me. Thank you.



...through **recovery**

# Transforming lives...

## Laura and Caleb's story



Last autumn Bethany joined forces with the Family Life Centre in Stirling to take forward the amazing work already being done, and to reach more families in need of support. One of our newest initiatives, a play therapy service, gives children creative outlets to

share and process the difficult and stressful situations they're facing.

Parents like Laura come to the Family Life Centre seeking a way to better their children's lives, and the transformation they've experienced is very plain to see. This is Laura and Caleb's story.

"Caleb was always a bright, talkative boy. However while at nursery, his teachers noticed that he might not always follow instructions easily and was very distractible. At this point nobody knew what was behind this.

Soon it became clear. All in the space of one year, Caleb's brother had left for university. His dad trashed the house and left. Then, as if this wasn't enough, his gran died. Caleb tried to understand all of that, but he started to question everything. Dealing with such challenging circumstances is hard enough for an adult to handle, let alone a child.

Caleb's nursery referred us to HomeStart and our support worker suggested play therapy, so we came to the Family Life Centre.

**Generally speaking the younger the child the greater positive change; 80% of children at age 6 show a marked positive improvement.**

Since coming to play therapy, I've now got my boy back. I don't know what Yvonne did, but Caleb loves her to bits. Before play therapy, Caleb threw tantrums and was constantly angry. Now, that has all stopped. He's back-to-normal Caleb. He's himself again.

What do I want for my Caleb's future? Everything! I want him to be happy and content. I want him to know that he is special.

He has dreams for himself too. He says he will have a farm and a family, even some farm animals. Play therapy is keeping these dreams alive for us. Since starting back to school, and since our last few sessions, we've had no problems at all."

# ...through play

# Please help

When you give a gift, you enable us to transform lives in Scotland. Some of Bethany's projects do receive funding but much of what we do would not be possible without the generosity of people like you.

**It doesn't matter how much you give. We are thankful to everyone who supports us in some way. If these stories of transformation have inspired you, please help us reach more people in need.**



A donation of **£30** will enable a resident in one of our hostels to travel to a course of community-based counselling and therapy, vital to the person's addiction recovery and resettlement.



A donation of **£55** will provide a child in need of support with individualised play therapy, while the parent receives respite and access to services to further strengthen the family for the long term.



A donation of **£120** or **£10** per month will enable us to professionally train and support a volunteer to befriend a lonely or isolated person and help them to be fully active in the local community to which they belong.

## Giving is simple.

To speak to us please call **0131 561 8927**.

To contact us by email, you can reach us at **[supporters@bethanychristiantrust.com](mailto:supporters@bethanychristiantrust.com)**

Alternatively, visit **[www.bethanychristiantrust.com](http://www.bethanychristiantrust.com)**



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