

THE PASSAGE

to ending homelessness

Founding patron:

Cardinal Basil Hume

Patron:

Cardinal Vincent Nichols

St Vincent's Centre

Carlisle Place

London SW1P 1NL

Registered Charity Number

1079764

Telephone 020 7592 1850

Fax 020 7592 1870

info@passage.org.uk

www.passage.org.uk



Detail of

Mary Magdalene

Giovanni Girolamo Savoldo

Courtesy: National Gallery

Easter newsletter, 2014

Dear Friends

What a relief to feel Spring in the air after one of the wettest winters on record.

It was a real challenge for people on the streets to cope with such extreme weather conditions during those months. Our Outreach Team was out on the streets every day, without fail, making contact with, and supporting, those who were sleeping out. We were able to help many of them off the streets, into a warm, dry environment and on the way to start a new life.

Easter is a time of great hope: a time of anticipation and new life. With your support, The Passage has the privilege of being able to help many people to achieve a new beginning – sometimes when that has looked practically impossible.

Since writing to you at this time last year, we have helped more than 500 people off the streets.

Once off the streets, people still have a long journey back to stability. A vital part of helping them make this journey is to organise their finances, whether that is helping them with debt problems, with the administration of applications for help, or with opening a new bank account. Without these being in good order, it can be impossible for them to find housing or to return to work.

Since last Easter, The Passage has helped 416 people to sort out their finances – a 30% increase from the previous year.

Support along the journey

We continue to help many people on their journeys from the street. One of the ways we keep in touch with them, when they no longer need to visit our Resource Centre, is through our volunteer mentoring scheme.

For nearly 14 years, our mentoring co-ordinator, Anne-Marie, has got to know clients as they embark on change – moving into self-contained

accommodation and/or employment. At this stage, people often need the type of support that most of us would get from friends or family. Anne-Marie recruits and trains volunteer mentors who get to know, and support, former rough sleepers, their mentees, on a regular basis. These meetings enable mentees to share the difficulties they are facing.

We all need at least one person we can trust and talk to and, for many of our clients, that person is their mentor who helps them to the next stage in rebuilding their lives.

Anne-Marie keeps in regular contact with the mentors, making sure meetings have gone well and seeing if further support is needed.

Harry benefited from our mentoring scheme.

A former soldier who suffers from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, as well as a serious back injury that he sustained on active service, Harry ended up on the streets. He met Anne-Marie after our Outreach Team got him off the streets and into Passage House, our 40-bed hostel. He was interested in being mentored, but made it very clear to Anne-Marie, over a cup of tea and a chat, that he did not want to be mentored by a young person and did not want to be patronised. After a number of meetings Anne-Marie matched him with a mentor named James.

It is important that a mentoring relationship does not lead to dependency, but is used as a bridge to lasting and sustainable links to good support networks. The relationships are, therefore, time-limited. During the 18 months that James mentored him, Harry moved out of Passage House into his own flat and, because things like paying bills worried him, James devised action plans to help him maintain his accommodation.

Harry has now been in in his home for more than a year, the longest period he has been in accommodation since he left the army. He says it is great to have someone outside “the system” to



talk to and continues to build on the positive networks he has established.

Fiona also benefited from our mentoring scheme.

A graduate in Business and Marketing, she became homeless after a dispute with her family. She was, understandably, afraid to be out on the street and travelled around on night buses rather than sleep out. Through The Passage, she got a place in a hostel and met Anne-Marie when she was job hunting at our Education, Training and Employment Suite at The Passage.

Over the weeks, they got to know one another and Fiona was matched with a volunteer mentor named Stella. They were of a similar age, shared interests in travel and music, and got on well. Then the unexpected happened: Fiona became pregnant. Stella and Anne-Marie continued to support her throughout her pregnancy as she moved into more suitable accommodation. She was still job hunting, but employers were not willing to take her on. She was desperate to find work, particularly as she had no help or support from the father of her child.

Fiona didn't give up, and nor did we; 18 months

A mentor and her mentee meet over a cup of tea.

on she now has a flexible job (working around childcare arrangements) that matches her skills in marketing. She believes that mentoring gave her a significant person in her life when she was going through a very hard time, and that Stella helped her to see the positive things in her situation and inspired her to continue to search for a job.

Going into the next financial year, our mentoring scheme has a significant funding deficit, but given the impact the scheme has on the lives of our clients we are determined to ensure that it continues to be there for those who need it.

Support for The Passage

The work we do is possible only because so many people give their time and/or financial support. The statutory grants that we will receive in 2014/15 will, again, be lower than in the previous year, as public expenditure cuts continue.

Each year since the public expenditure cuts began, however, your generous support has ensured that we have been able to continue our vital work. I really can't thank you enough for enabling us to do this.



We continue to make the maximum use of volunteers in fundraising and administration so that donated funds go direct to our work with homeless people and are not swallowed up by administration costs.

We really are fortunate to have such dedicated volunteers in this area of our work. If you, too, would like to help with fundraising, either in our central office or in your local community, please contact Andrew Hollingsworth on 020 7592 1855, andrew.h@passage.org.uk, to find out more.

Fundraising events

We are holding our three annual events again this year:

Our Garden Party in the College Garden, Westminster Abbey, from 6pm on Friday 11 July;
A Night Under The Stars, at the Royal Festival Hall, at 7.30pm on Thursday 9 October; and
Our Carol Service at St Margaret's Church, Westminster Abbey, at 6pm on 16 December.
Flyers for the first two events, which I hope you will be able to attend, are enclosed. I really look forward to meeting you at one or more of them.

We will also benefit from the Radio 4 Appeal, on Sunday 27 July at 7.55am; do listen if you can!

Laura, a member of the Housing and Advice Team, talks to a client about accommodation options.

In the Summer, quite a few people help us to raise funds through sporting events, such as sponsored runs, bike rides, and swims. We will keep you updated on events on our website and can facilitate some entries in the less-expensive ones. If you, or someone in your family, would like to raise funds for The Passage in this way, please contact Andrew.

Thank you again for your continued support for our work. Like Harry and Fiona, we all need that bit of help in our lives when things are tough; your support enables us to be there for them and to empower them to begin a new life.

I wish you and your family a blessed and peaceful Easter and, once again, thank you all for your support.

Mick Clarke, Chief Executive