

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

Imitator of Andrea Mantegna

The Maries at the Sepulchre

Courtesy of

The National Gallery, London

Bequeathed by

Lady Taunton, 1892



Easter newsletter, 2016

Dear Friends

It is wonderful to see the days slowly getting longer and, hopefully, the promise of Spring weather on the way. While a respite from cold and wet weather will be welcome for those on the streets, we know that (whatever the weather) the streets are no place to end up.

Our work continues, either to prevent people ending up on the streets in the first place or, for those who do, to help them off those streets as quickly as possible and to transform their lives for good.

Coming home

Paul is from Birmingham but ended up sleeping on the streets of Victoria. When he arrived at our Resource Centre he was very clear that he would rather stay on the streets than go back to Birmingham. We didn't know why, but it became clear that he needed some mental health support, which we arranged.

After some time, Paul began to trust us and told us that he had a flat in Birmingham, but over the previous three months had experienced major traumas: he had been the victim of a violent mugging and a close friend had died.

As our relationship developed, he allowed us to contact his family and support services in Birmingham and, after further help, he was able to return home to the safety of his flat.

A few days later Paul phoned The Passage to express his thanks for the support he had received, and for helping him to go home.

Easter is a time when we celebrate new life! I am thrilled to say that the extensive refurbishment of St Vincent's Centre is nearly complete. It will create a new centre where lives that have been broken by the trauma of homelessness can be transformed.

In January 2016, compared with the same period of 2015, there was a 25% rise in demand for our services. Despite further statutory cuts, and this increase in demand, thanks to your support we have been able to bring about real transformation for many people, including Paul, James and Sam.

Back to work

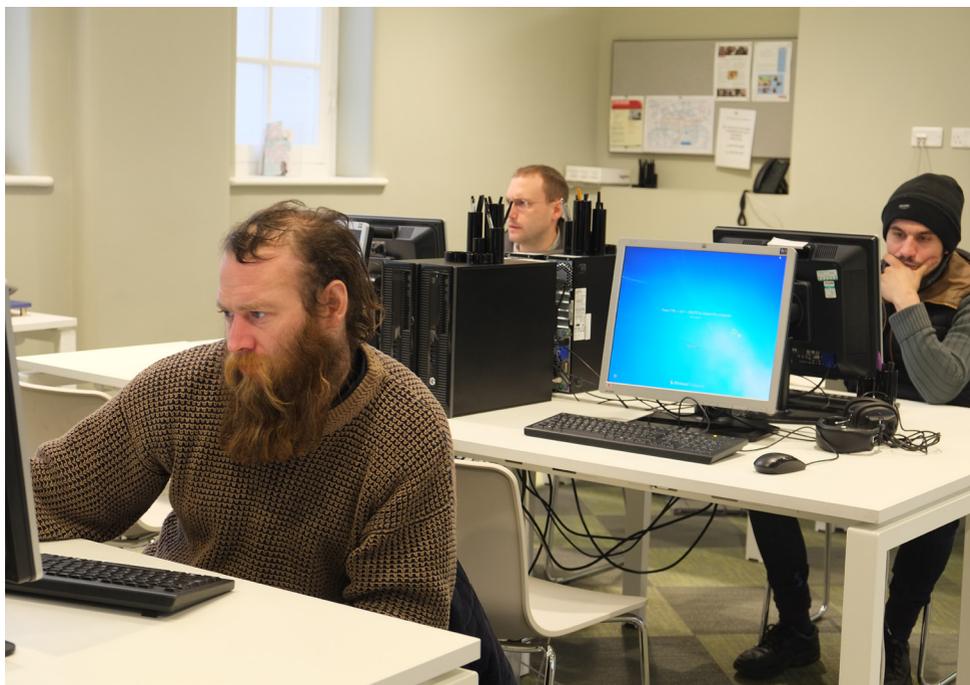
We see people from all circumstances and backgrounds at The Passage, including people like James who have served in the army. When he left the army James came to London to look for employment, but things didn't work out. After staying in temporary accommodation and being unsuccessful in his search for employment, he ended up with nowhere to go other than the streets. That was when he met The Passage.

James's confidence had understandably suffered so we linked him into our Employment and Training Team to help him with his search for work, and with our Housing Team to help him find somewhere to live. We discovered that he had been a mechanical engineer in the army and, through the brand-new employment and training suite at our Resource Centre, in February 2016 he found a well-paid job as an engineer.

He still, however, needed somewhere to live. We paid for temporary accommodation until his first pay cheque arrived and then helped him secure something more permanent.

The lack of cheap, affordable, basic accommodation in London for people who have been on the streets and are going into employment is something The Passage is working to address. We have helped more than 1,000 people into employment and could help many more make that journey

if they had access to affordable accommodation. We are determined to develop this service. For now though, James is simply pleased to be off the streets, in a good job, with a positive future to look forward to again; we will be with him every step of the way.



The new Employment and Training suite at the refurbished St Vincent's Centre.

The Apprentice

The Passage is always looking for ways to help its clients back into employment. As part of that, we recently formed a partnership with a café chain to give our clients opportunities for apprenticeships.

Our employment and training staff sharpened up their customer service skills by spending a day in one of the stores in an apprentice role to get a first-hand understanding of how the

scheme would work for our clients. While our staff did very well in their one-day trial, they were eclipsed by Passage client Sam. By the end of his first day on the apprenticeship scheme, he was offered a full-time job with the store!

Sam continues to do really well and our staff are back to focusing on their real job: helping people like Sam get the opportunities to shine that they deserve!

Events

We will be holding our three annual events again in 2016.

Our Garden Party, in the College Garden, Westminster Abbey, will be on Friday 15 July from 6.00pm.

Our Night Under The Stars concert at the Royal Festival Hall will be on Tuesday 8 November at 7.30pm.

Our Carol Service will be at St Margaret's Church, Westminster Abbey, on Friday 16 December at 6.00pm.

Flyers for the first two events are enclosed. I do hope you will be able to attend.

Thank you for your support

We are thrilled that the refurbishment of St Vincent's Centre is now coming to an end. We now have much better facilities to offer our clients to help them off the streets, into employment and back into playing a full role in society. If you would like to come to look at our new facilities, and to see the real difference they are making to our work, please do contact us.

We know that there are real challenges ahead: further cuts to statutory grants while, at the same time, there is an increasing demand for our services. We also know, however, that we are truly blessed to have such good support for our work, from so many people like you. I therefore really thank you for that support – support that truly does make a difference.

We are also fortunate to have such dedicated volunteers to help with our fundraising work. If you would like to help with fundraising, either in our central office or from home, please contact Andrew Hollingsworth on 020 7592 1855, or email andrew.h@passage.org.uk to find out more.

Thank you again for your continued support for our work. It enables people like Paul, James and Sam to have the opportunities we can sometimes perhaps take for granted; the support that we hope would be there if it were ever us, or someone we love, in that desperate situation.

So, thank you again for enabling The Passage to give hope this Easter; empowering our clients to bring about real transformation in their lives.

I hope you and your family have a blessed, restful and very peaceful Easter.



Mick Clarke, Chief Executive

Thank you if you have recently supported The Passage with a donation or if you support us regularly with a standing order. We write to all our supporters at Easter: those who have given and those who are about to give.
