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One to *One*

○ SUMMER ISSUE ○ 2007

SPECIALISTS IN TRAINING THOSE INVOLVED IN THE PASTORAL CARE OF CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

Schools Outreach, Registered charity 516184

Note from the Chief Executive

My wife Corrine and I became parents in 1959 when our son Andrew was born. In the 1960s three other children were born, all girls. In 1985 we first became grandparents and now have seven grandchildren. Our experience of parenting has been a source of joys and anxieties, delights and challenges, happiness and heartache. Two of our children have suffered through painful divorces. All our children have had to work their way through challenging situations of one kind or another. Yet we can rejoice in the good and positive relationships we enjoy with both our children and our grandchildren. We are already planning our annual Christmas family get-together in December, an event to which we look forward eagerly.

However – not all parents enjoy good relationships with their children, and far too many children fail to find pleasure and safety, encouragement and freedom from harm in their homes.

Our pastoral care specialists regularly report how children bear the consequences of poor parenting. They also report positive ways in which they seek to help parents. One specialist, Caroline, has started a 'Desperate Mums' Association'; a group which has become a sanctuary and a source of encouragement; a group within which creativity and fun go hand in hand.

I have to report that we are experiencing a serious shortfall in core funding, the funding that makes it possible for us to provide effective pastoral care and on-the-spot support for all our school-based workers, as well as ensuring good administration of the charity's work and finances. Our school-based workers are funded through until 2008 and beyond, but it is proving to be a challenge to acquire sufficient funding to maintain and staff our Bromsgrove office. Many smaller charities face exactly the same problem. We are giving serious consideration, yet again, as to what we can do to help resolve this situation. We will keep you informed.

Dr Gordon Bailey

Editor's Note: Please see page 2 of this newsletter for some ideas on how you can help.



Please note that the illustrations in this publication are royalty-free stock photographs and are not pictures of children involved in the cases mentioned

If you would like a large print copy of our newsletter please let us know

Get involved & make a difference

As Gordon mentioned in his report we are experiencing cash-flow difficulties at present but we recognise that there are so many calls on your limited finances that it can be difficult to find money to support everyone who asks. The following are some ideas of how you can help us support children in schools:

SHOP

We have just opened a webshop where there are over 600 shops listed including Marks & Spencer, Debenhams, Viking Direct (for all your stationery needs), Play.com for your favourite films and you can even book your next break with Thomson Holidays! The retailer makes a small donation to Schools Outreach for every purchase you make through our shop. www.fundappeal.com/schoolsout



SHOP



RECYCLE

RECYCLE

Recycle your old mobile phones and ink cartridges by visiting www.recyclingappeal.com and click the 'recycle now' button and type in 'Schools Outreach' when it asks for the organisation name, or phone 08451 30 20 10. On average a mobile phone can raise £5 for Schools Outreach when you recycle it!



EVENTS

EVENTS

Another idea is to organise a sponsored event. For example a sponsored silence for chatterboxes, a fancy dress tea party or if you're planning on going on a diet—pounds for lbs i.e. earn a pound for every pound lost. Let us know if you'd like to organise an event on our behalf and we'll design sponsorship forms and event flyers for you.



DONATE

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You can also support us directly by sending a cheque or perhaps setting up a standing order. We can also accept donations online at www.cafonline.org (type Schools Outreach into the 'search charities' box and click on the link to Schools Outreach Ltd).

Focus on ... working with parents

Our pastoral care specialists don't just work with the children in their schools but find it beneficial to also offer assistance to parents where needed

"I have continued to work with several parents—mainly through telephone contact—I am in regular contact with two parents—they will always ring if they're having difficulties to chat through how life can be made easier—both parents always appreciate the support I give them."

"I have visited a couple of parents at home to offer advice/support. One home visit was quite upsetting. The mum was basically at the end of her tether with her son. I spent quite a lot of time with her. She obviously felt comfortable with me as she poured her heart out. I agreed to make an appointment for her son and to keep her informed of the outcome. She thanked me for spending time with her, she also felt much better for being able to off-load some of her anxieties. Again, a listening ear goes a long way."

"I feel I am at the place where the majority of families know who I am and they are not afraid to approach me. I am receiving more referrals from parents asking help for their children. I also keep regular contact with the families of the children that I work with—they know that they can pop into school to see me or telephone at any time. I try to be available to chat to parents whether it's at the school gate or the classroom door."

"During the last term I have had contact with 21 families—some contact has been quite intense, some has been the odd telephone conversation asking for advice/support. I have worked quite intensely with four families which has involved me visiting them at home and inviting some into school for meetings. Many parents have thanked me for my support and have stated how much they appreciate having someone they can come to when situations get too much."



Who's Who?



Name

Christine Wickham

Occupation

Secretarial Assistant

What is your connection to Schools Outreach?

I potter around the office a bit!

How did you first become involved with Schools Outreach?

Outreach?

I was fed up with commuting to Birmingham everyday and decided to look for work in Bromsgrove. Somebody gave me details of the Schools Outreach job and Andrea seemed to

think I was qualified—despite the fact that I failed the Star Trek question at interview!

Editor's Note—Trekies are so hard to come by!

Which class did you like most at school?

English—found it interesting and had good teachers

What was your least favourite class at school?

Ooh PE! Because I hate doing anything energetic!

What is your fondest childhood memory?

Helping my dad on his allotment.

Tips - Parents & Schools

- Parents often feel uncomfortable when in contact with their child's school. Children can pick up on parental anxieties and have poor expectations from their school or schooling. Parents need to be positive and show children that education is important and will benefit them, even if they are unfamiliar with the language, the curriculum or the school system.
- Children's feelings and behaviour, and their ability to fit into their school and take from it, will be affected by what happens in their lives. Carers need to keep schools informed and schools need to listen, acknowledge any difficulties and offer appropriate support.
- Parental involvement in their child's school tells children that education is important and that their concerns will be listened to.
- Children benefit from having both their parents show an interest in their schooling, even when they do not live together. Parents living apart can still share this role and can ask the school to make sure information is sent to more than one address.
- Schools should have a home-school agreement, which sets out expectations and responsibilities. All parents, but particularly those from black and minority ethnic families, may have particular concerns they would like to raise with the school and can check what topics are included and use the home-school agreement as a way of raising issues.
- Parents need to talk to their children, show an interest in what happens in school and listen to their child's concerns.
- Parents can support their child's learning by appreciating their efforts and achievements.
- All children have problems at school at some time so parents need not panic or feel bad when a conflict arises. It would help to talk to your child and then to the class teacher. If you still feel the problem isn't being addressed, you can ask for a meeting with another member of staff such as the deputy head. If you still aren't satisfied, you can take the problem to the head and then to your local education authority. It helps to get to know the school and staff before there is a problem so if something comes up, you aren't trying to find your way around at the same time as sorting a problem.

Many Thanks!

We are very grateful to Parentline Plus for allowing us to reproduce this article from their website

Please visit their website for further information:
www.parentlineplus.org.uk

or telephone:0808 800 2222



- Parents can ask for a friend or an interpreter to be there in any meeting with the school and for some meetings parents may want the support of someone like an Educational Welfare Officer. It helps to write down all the questions you want to ask and the points you want to make so you can keep to the point and not forget anything. You can also make notes and ask the school to agree and confirm any decisions made at the meeting.



Case Study - 'Philip & Margaret'

(To protect the person(s) involved names and locations have been deleted or changed)

"Philip was referred to me through the Head Teacher. His mother Margaret had come into school quite upset about circumstances at home and concerned about him. Although his behaviour at school was generally good, it was a different picture at home. Margaret said that he was constantly attention seeking and getting into quarrels with his sister. She admitted that she couldn't cope and had to be medicated with anti-depressants.

The Head Teacher referred the family to an external agency that also works in the school, and to me on a one-to-one basis so that Philip would have support and space to talk.

In the counselling course, we were taught that it is okay to have silence because the person is working things out in their mind, but to be honest this was frustrating. My time spent with Philip was hard as he would not speak or do anything I would ask him. It wasn't that he was being awkward but it appeared that it was too hard and a challenge for him to talk or share things with me.

I found out that he liked chess so I asked him to teach me. The following week he brought his chessboard. He had to explain all the moves and the rules to me, which was no problem for him to do. This became a pattern for a

few weeks in which he flourished in chat and conversation. He would talk about his father and frustrations he had at home. He would talk about his loneliness and lack of friends in school.

In the meantime, I invited Margaret to a mums' coffee afternoon that I hold every Monday. I felt that she needed more support and confidence that can be gained in this mums' group. She came that week and was very quiet and didn't join in much conversation but she kept turning up every week. She joined in the dancing, craft and the aromatherapy and as the weeks went by; she came out of herself, became more confident within the group and made friends.

Chatting to Margaret one day, she couldn't wait to tell me that her son was now sharing with her. She said that he never spoke to her about anything that might worry or upset him and that he always bottled things up. She said that Philip's behaviour had improved at home too.

I feel that a simple game of chess had opened up a floodgate of emotions. He had had tremendous trouble to express himself and therefore reacted the way he did. He wanted to talk and share with his mum but couldn't. He just needed an avenue to open up."

SCHOOLS OUTREACH



As well as offering training to schools, youth organisations and churches, Schools Outreach offers recruitment, training and employment of pupil pastoral care specialists for placement into primary or secondary schools across the UK.

The Pastoral Care Specialist's aims are:

- To establish friendships with the children and young people and all who care for them
- To encourage understanding of the potential for wholeness of the individual child or young person
- To enhance self-worth in the children and young people and everyone involved with them
- To endow with time the child or young person at risk
- To engender wisdom by all means, so promoting a better future for the child or young person, as well as preventing the onset of serious problems